

horticap

Growing Together



Supporting and educating
at Bluecoat Wood Nurseries

www.horticap.org

Issue 3 2023

A warm summer welcome to our latest Newsletter...

... although we could all agree that the weather has been rather topsy-turvy this year! Gardens have appreciated all the rain and conversely, our fabulous Nature Trail has given welcome shade to students and visitors alike when the temperature has soared. But the changing weather doesn't stop Horticap being a hub of activity! So what have we been up to?



Our own garden, planted up in the early summer is looking spectacularly colourful, and the children's play area has had a makeover by our students. As always, it is proving ever popular with our younger visitors, as is our magical and rather special Nature Trail.

We are delighted that our fabulous Hopkins café and shop are hitting the spot with customers, and that more students are gaining work experience in both areas.

Horticap is all about its students and it is fantastic watching them develop their skills. They all have regular appraisals with Phil to ensure that they have access to any opportunities Horticap can offer. **It really is true that we "grow people and plants"**.



We have started work on extending our plant sales area. Whenever possible, this kind of work is completed by students and instructors, under the guidance of Ian, our General Manager. Our students love this kind of work, as they enjoy developing and improving their place of work.



Along with this, we are busy upgrading some benches that have been kindly donated to us by RHS Harlow Carr. Our students have given them a mend and a lick of paint, preparing them for the new sales area.



The intention is to extend and improve the facilities that the students work in, the customer experience and to provide a better environment for our quality plants to grow. We pride ourselves on the range and health of plants we sell, and this enables us all to do it better!

This time of year is always a busy time with the summer season in full swing and our time here flies by. We are always very mindful that without the support from our volunteers being active both on site and at the shows, we wouldn't be able to do half of what we manage. We also appreciate the loyalty of our customers and how they "spread the word". We take this opportunity to thank everyone for their unwavering support!

The Horticap Team

WE WORK CLOSELY WITH YOU TO ADVISE ON SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS AND PROCESSES, MINIMISING WASTE THROUGH INNOVATION FROM THE INKS AND PAPERS WE SOURCE TO THE WAY WE MANUFACTURE AND DELIVER. TEAM HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABSOLUTELY COMMITTED TO REDUCING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF PRINT.
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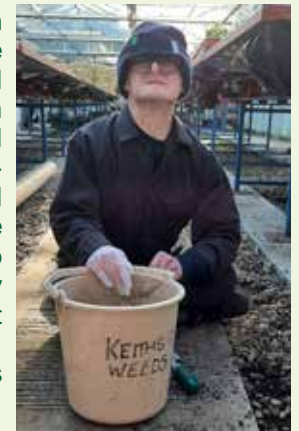
In early July, we all said a sad farewell to one of our founding students, following his brave struggle against cancer. Paul (POB, Stoker, No1) O'Brien was a founder student at Horticap having joined us in 1985 - a fact he never missed an opportunity to tell everyone with great gusto. Not only was he a remarkable, larger than life character at Horticap, he was also well known in and around Harrogate and Knaresborough, where he was often seen in his trademark sailor's cap and with his faithful dog, Pip.



Paul always took pride in the Bluecoat Wood site having been a major contributor to all the developments that have taken place over the last nearly 40 years.



This summer has seen several students retire from Horticap. David and Keith have worked with us for many years and are now enjoying a well-deserved rest. It is sad to see them go, and we take this opportunity to thank them enormously for their hard work, but mostly for their company, compassion and senses of humour.



We are delighted to welcome aboard two new students to the Horticap family.

Andrew and Stephen have now joined us and are enjoying both the variety of work, and getting to know their fellow students, staff and volunteers.

It's great to have them here and we wish them every success.



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“We aim to help students extend their knowledge and skills, through structured training using professionally qualified staff and volunteers”

Our Horticap vehicles are a familiar sight on the roads around Harrogate, and sometimes further afield too. We have several contracts with local organisations and individuals, where the students, through the guidance of Instructors, maintain gardens and grounds.



Every member of staff at Horticap takes safety extremely seriously, which means that the maintenance of all our gardening equipment is done regularly and thoroughly. We need to ensure that our students, staff and volunteers remain safe whilst making sure that contracts are completed to the customer's specifications and satisfaction.



Naturally, the majority of gardening contracts are done from Spring through to late Autumn. Students are instructed how to use mowers, hedge cutters and other machinery safely to complete the contracts, along with appreciating the importance of using the appropriate PPE correctly. This includes high vis jackets, ear defenders, gloves and boots that satisfy safety standards.



Many of our students like nothing more than being out and about in the community and getting to know customers and the specifics of the contract. They become very knowledgeable about garden maintenance and put their heart and soul into the work! They arrive back from a job and love to share with us the work they have done, and it feels special to be able to see the job satisfaction they have on their faces.

It's Show Time!

Horticap has a proud tradition of entering show gardens (and getting gold medals!) at the Great Yorkshire Show, and this year was no exception.

Show gardens are a wonderful opportunity to showcase the work and skills of our students to the wider public, and share information about our charity. Our participation in such shows would not be possible without the dedication of our volunteers, who offer their time to man the stall, sell plants and publicise Horticap. We thank them all!



Of course, show gardens don't just happen! The planning starts months in advance and involves lots of care, attention and creativity by staff, students and volunteers to ensure that the garden is presented to reflect the effort put in by everyone at Horticap. We are also proud to contribute to the Great Yorkshire Show by planting up and supplying the beautiful troughs seen outside the President's Box.

This year, the theme was inspired by our refreshed kitchen garden and allotment. The veg plants and flowers were all sown from seed and the woodwork completed in our workshop. Our 'trademark' papier-mâché creatures were made by volunteer Helen, which elevated the garden to a level which was rewarded, not only with a Gold medal, but also the President's Cup!



Needless to say, we were all thrilled and very proud with our fabulous award. We love being at shows, it is always great chatting to the visitors that visit our stand!



What an achievement!

Hopkins was also proud to be nominated in the 'Team of the Year' category at the Harrogate Hospitality and Tourism Awards, 2023. Despite not winning, the students, volunteers and staff that attended, representing Hopkins, had a wonderful evening at this prestigious black tie event!

The Hopkins team work very hard to provide excellence in all they do for our customers. The cakes they offer are all made in house, and there is a policy of only using and selling produce sourced locally. This brings us to the Hopkins update!



The students are taking over!

It is clear that our students are enjoying their work in Hopkins, and that being in the café is helping them to build confidence and develop life skills. In fact, students being in the café has been so successful that they are now even more involved! The menu has been simplified to enable them to do more baking, and to make serving customers more manageable. Most importantly, this has meant more students have the opportunity to work in Hopkins, reflecting the valuable work done here at Horticap in enhancing their lives. It is also obvious that the staff team are enjoying working alongside them!



Student focus

Stuart has been at Horticap for over 21 years, having started in 2002, he attends three days a week. He is never happier than when he's out in the community on a contract, and has achieved success on many horticultural City and Guilds qualifications which helps him, and us, in his work.



Stuart is very accomplished with all the tasks he does, is an expert on the ride on mower and attributes his training on it to Paul O'Brien! He now shares his knowledge with our newer students.



Back by popular demand!

7.15pm
Thursday
23rd November
2023

We look forward to seeing you there!



Earlier this year, Caroline Campbell and her team, held a very successful Quiz Evening raising a whopping £1,400 for Horticap. By popular demand, they are organising another Pub Quiz evening!

Tickets will cost £60 for a table of 4 people, and a hot supper, with a vegetarian option, will be served by the fabulous Hopkins Team. Please state how many veggie suppers are required at the time of booking. Wine, beers and soft drinks will be available at the bar.

Tickets will be available to buy from the shop, or Caroline Campbell on 07957 225755



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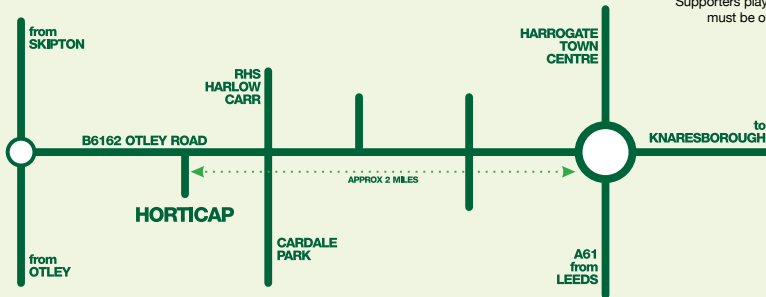
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