



horticap 
Growing Together



Supporting and educating
at Bluecoat Wood Nurseries

www.horticap.org

Issue 2 2024

What an amazing few months we have had, here at Horticap!

Our 40th Anniversary celebrations have really taken off and we are enjoying our events. The Harrogate Spring Flower Show was an opportunity to showcase our 40 years through the show garden, and for launching our Grand Raffle with a chance to win some amazing prizes. We are now looking forward to other events, so keep an eye out on social media and our website, and the link to buy your raffle tickets.

Of course, we are also very busy on site keeping the greenhouses full of glorious plants for gardens, our contract work, serving delicious food and drinks in Hopkins and selling plants and gifts from the shop. Our students are involved in it all, and work so hard.

We are looking forward to the Great Yorkshire Show in July and seeing some familiar faces. Our students and volunteers will be on the stand so do come up and say hello to them, and of course we shall have plenty of choice plants to buy, to cheer up any garden.

Our own garden is looking wonderful, with our students doing a great job of maintaining it to a high standard. The kitchen garden is all planted up, under the guidance of Chef Chris, who has chosen fruit and veg plants that he can use in Hopkins. The rain has certainly proved useful for them to have a good start, even if sometimes it's been very soggy for us!

This Newsletter continues to celebrate friendship in our special year, with contributions from more of our dedicated volunteers, profiles of two students and of course features of both the Harrogate Spring Flower Show, and our spectacular Horticap Students Awards Ceremony. We all hope that you enjoy reading about us, and that we can look forward to seeing you soon!

The Horticap Team



A message from Peter, our Chair of Trustees and Horticap's Grand 40th Celebration Raffle

In the last issue I mentioned the fundraising initiatives that we are undertaking to be able to improve our on-site student facilities. We now have a full schedule of special events running through the year including a bingo night for students, volunteers, parents and carers plus a stylist fashion event and a "Cash in the Attic" type art auction.

A special mention must be made of the Grand Raffle. Caroline Campbell, a long-standing supporter of Horticap, has energetically engaged with seemingly everyone in Harrogate. Her efforts mean that there are now over 70 raffle prizes including a 5* hotel stay, train tickets to London and of course a year's supply of Yorkshire Tea. The draw will take place on 5 July so please don't delay buying your tickets. Thanks for your support, Peter.

As Peter mentions, we are marking our 40th Anniversary with a Grand Raffle, with a range of many impressive prizes to win. The money raised from the raffle will go towards much needed funds to improve some of the student facilities, that are now nearing 40 years old themselves! We hope that you will enjoy participating by following the QR code here, or following the link on our website www.horticap.org.

Together, we can keep on
Growing People and Plants!



Scan the
QR Code
to buy
tickets



Over 70
Prizes to
be Won!

Tickets
£1 each

(Min £5 via QR code)

Our trip to RHS Harlow Carr

It was a grey and chilly March morning when our students, volunteers and trustees joined the Horticap staff for a walk to, and around, RHS Harlow Carr.

This was a wonderful opportunity for us all to get together again after the volunteers' winter break. We were all delighted to see them, and they were very pleased to be back!

The winter colours in the Harlow Carr garden were stunning, with the promise of more colour to come as the season moves on.

We were particularly fascinated to watch the dry-stone wallers, who were constructing the most amazing bridge wall. It really is spectacular!



We all loved the Alpine House, the scent of the Daphne in the garden borders was lovely and the Snowdrops and Cornus were simply beautiful!



When we had finished our walk, we all returned to the Horticap Mess Room for a hot drink and delicious cake, courtesy of Hopkins!

We would like to thank the staff at RHS Harlow Carr for facilitating this event, and for their warm welcome.



Student Focus - Pat



Pat spent many a happy time working alongside one of our volunteers, Margaret, who used to come to Horticap weekly. They developed a close working relationship, making beautiful cushions to sell in the shop, which were very much in demand with customers.



Along with her other considerable talents in arts and crafts, Pat has become a keen participant of our music sessions, with a natural aptitude for keeping time on the tambourine! She was proud to be involved with the group to provide musical entertainment at our Awards Ceremony.

Pat has been a student since August 1995 and is involved in many activities at Horticap. She is a familiar face in the shop, where she works several mornings a week to busily complete all the tasks asked of her. Her afternoons might be spent in the greenhouse where her experience of 'all things plants' comes in very handy. As with all our longer standing students, she has very useful knowledge and experience to pass on to our newer students!



Harrogate Spring Flower Show

2024 is a very significant year for Horticap, and a striking show garden was essential to showcase its development and progression from 1984 to 2024. Of course, we are well known for our show gardens, but this year it was even more important to tell our story, involving good friends of Horticap as well as our students, volunteers and staff. It really was a 'team'

effort from conception to development, and from setting up and removing the show garden. We are particularly grateful to David Griffin, who produced the plan we had in mind in this wonderful drawing, showing the distinction between four decades in one show garden!



We felt it was crucial that the garden reflected each decade, from the caravan in a field at Horticap's conception in 1984, through to the magnificent building and gardens we now have the privilege of working in. As always, our students played a significant part in

building the garden, and very much enjoyed both the occasion and being 'off-site'. Creative imagination, application and hard work was awarded with a Premier Gold Award. We were thrilled!



Gerard Binks kindly took the photos for the backdrop.



Phil was surprised, and honoured, to receive a coveted Lifetime Membership Award at the show, from The Lord-Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Jo Ropner, alongside good friend of Horticap Graham Porter. Phil said he was speechless... now that doesn't often happen!

The Horticap Student Awards

3rd April 2024 and what a day we had!

We recognise the considerable achievements of our students on a daily basis, and in April, we celebrated them properly at our Awards Ceremony. Due to Covid, it is a while since we have been able to have one, so this ceremony seemed extra special!

Here is a list of all our awards and recipients. Congratulations to all our students on their wonderful application to work, and their contribution to the success of Horticap.

Excellence in greenhouse work:
David S, Scott, Carl C, Wayne

Excellence in woodwork:
Michael L, Jack, Dan W, Karl,
Stephen G

Excellence in woodwork renovation:
Simon W, Andrew A, John

Excellence in food hygiene:
Carl E, Ross

Excellence in supporting others:
Isobel, Hannah E, Jamie, Hannah Bo,
Timothy A-K

Excellence in strimming:
Jack, Sam

Excellence in hanging baskets:
Stephen F, Alex, James

Excellence in off-site contract work:
Tony, Simon C, Dominic, Jonathan B,
Andrew L

Excellence in on-site maintenance:
Stephen Mc, Steve E, Jake, Stephen F

Excellence in money:
Michael L

Excellence in labelling:
Fraser, Paula

Excellence in potting:
Conor, Carl E, Wayne, Pippa,
Andrew J

Excellence in lawn maintenance:
Liam, James, Ibraam

Excellence in art:
Alex, Callum, Hannah Br, Edward, Will

Excellence with the ride on mower:
Stuart, Sam

Excellence in music:
Hannah B, Callum, Alicia, Pat

Excellence in customer service:
Victoria, Tim A-K, Alicia

Excellence in the Café:
Mark, Lewis, Josh

Excellence in shop work:
Jamie, Pat, Alistair, Charlotte

**The best returning student after a
five year break and we're all really
happy about it award!**
David B



We felt very privileged to have some special guests to help the day go with a swing, The Lord-Lieutenant of North Yorkshire Jo Ropner, Amanda Harper from BBC Look North, Harrogate MP Andrew Jones, the President of the National Allotment Society, Phil Gomersall and Knaresborough's Town Crier Mark Hunter. We offer our thanks to them all, and to our official photographer for the day, Gerard Binks.



The day was made even more special by our Patron, Alan Titchmarsh, attending! He presented four awards, including one in his own name, that have a special resonance with us, and which recognises those students who have made a particularly outstanding contribution to Horticap. Well done to you all!

The Alan Titchmarsh Award
the highest accolade we give
Stephen G & Timothy S



The Peter Hopkins Award:
For raising money or the
profile of Horticap
Mark



The Joe Maiden Award
For vegetable and herb
growing
Timothy S



The Roger Sharp Award
For years of service to
Horticap
David R

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HORTICAP PRESENTS A CELEBRATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE STUDENTS' AWARDS CEREMONY 2024

"We aim to help students extend their knowledge and skills, through structured training using professionally qualified staff and volunteers" and on 3rd April 2024, we were able to fully celebrate this mission statement by recognising the students' achievements and hard work!



Continuing our memories as part of our 40th Anniversary year, we move on to look back at 1994 to 2004.



With the students' skills, interests and abilities progressing, the site was gradually developing to meet their growing abilities with half of the 4-acre site now being in active use. Horticap now has two vehicles which were used to carry out gardening jobs around the town and delivering goods.

Off-site gardening services were also expanding with two teams regularly carrying out work in the local community ranging from garden maintenance to garden landscaping.

This period unfortunately saw a number of our outlets for produce closing and the once popular interest in dried flowers rapidly declining. Horticap needed to find other activities and fresh outlets for the students' produce. So, starting with friends, family and word of mouth, an area of the nursery and a poly tunnel was opened where the public could purchase products such as bedding plants, perennial plants, timber planters and a small range of freshly picked vegetables. Our Christmas trees were also now ready for a 'pick-your-own' from the field service.

As the students' reputation for producing quality plants grew, as did the range available. An improved shop/sales space was required along with some car parking. A timber shed was constructed and fitted out by the students, and the shop developed.



This period also saw the development of an instructional garden area, where students could gain further skills and which could also be used as a source for plant propagation material.

As we moved into the 2000s, the site had developed to accommodate three modest heated glasshouses and seven poly tunnels to provide growing space for our extended range of plants. This, alongside a new workshop where timber products could be constructed provided an excellent activity for winter or wet days. By the time we were celebrating our second decade of growth, our student numbers once again had expanded, with support now being provided for up to thirty students each week.

Further site developments were now in progress, including drainage to allow additional areas of the site to be developed. Not everything was plain sailing, with some spells of extreme weather also seeing two poly tunnels destroyed by high winds, and a further two partially collapsed by heavy snowfalls.





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Volunteer Profiles

Anthea volunteers on a Wednesday, and brings a special and lovely long history with some of our students.



“My first visit to Horticap took place over 30 years ago.

I had joined Harrogate Brigantes Inner Wheel Club, but being a part-time Speech and Language Therapist, I was unable to take part in many of the daytime activities of Inner Wheel. Therefore, when a request was made for volunteers to look after the shop on Wednesday afternoons at Horticap, a developing Garden Centre for adults with Learning Difficulties, I was free, so put my name down.

There was one large wooden shed, now the Students’ Cloakroom. There were beams with bunches of different coloured Helichrysum (everlasting flowers) hanging from them drying, shelves with dried flowers which were very popular at that time for flower arrangements, and cut flowers. This is what the shop was selling.

The students planted the seeds in a single greenhouse, grew them on in the beds outside, and cut them when they were ready to dry, and sold them over a limited period.

There was a caravan outside the shed, and we were told that was for administration. I do not remember anything else, but certainly “a work in progress”.

At that time, I was working one full day a week at Springwater Special School, helping children from the nursery to 15 yrs of age, to develop their Speech and Language, and social skills.

Later in my career, I became involved in the Adult Learning Disability Service, and received referrals for Speech and Language for clients who were working at Horticap, so I visited again. Now there was more than one greenhouse, and a number of plant tunnels, a Mess Room for the students to have coffee and lunch breaks, and a large sales tunnel with a plastic sheeting roof, which often blew off in high winds. There was also talk of more development.



A number of students at different ability levels worked with staff, who encouraged, not only their skills levels, but their confidence levels, and ability to talk to others. It was wonderful to meet students, who had helped at school, and see the difference in their language and social skills. They were all happy in their work, and got on together really well, and had a really good relationship with the staff and volunteers who now helped at Horticap.

Therefore, when I retired from work, being a keen gardener, and having known a number of Horticap students for many years, it was an easy choice for me to apply to become a volunteer.

I have enjoyed all aspects of the many jobs I have undertaken at Horticap, and now “slowing down” considerably, I still look forward to my weekly visits”.

Kath (2nd left) is one of our Thursday volunteers and lends a hand wherever she is needed. She supports Joan with the Nature Trail Bunny Trails, and is equally appreciated when working alongside our students in the glasshouse, and making a welcome cuppa in the mess room at break times.

As can be clearly seen in the photo, the students love being around her!

“19 years ago I was volunteering at the hospital taking the morning newspaper/snacks etc. trolley round the wards.



I decided I would prefer to work more outdoors with younger people rather than poorly ones! Someone mentioned that Horticap had volunteers so I applied and that’s when I found my “happy place”. I have enjoyed working on different projects all around the site over the years and especially helping long standing volunteer Joan with many of her displays, which are much enjoyed by young children on the Nature Trail.

Hopefully Horticap will continue to be a happy and rewarding place for all to work together”

And this is Joan, who has been instrumental in shaping the Nature Trail's appeal to generations of children, and many grown up children too!

"My first visit to Horticap" was with my friend Sue and our two sons, then just toddlers. Sue told me a little about Horticap's history. When my son Paul started school I volunteered a full day a week. My thoughts about Horticap have not changed and my son is now 34 years old!

My first job was helping instructor Caroline to move a HUGE heap of horse manure, and I returned the next week for more! One day Phil said "Joan do you think you could make a Santa's grotto in the Rowntree hut - maybe put Santa in bed" "OK" I said, "I'll have a go".

Ian and Phil gave their approval. A father and his 2 children arrived and were told of Santa's arrival. Phil, Paul and myself hid behind some bushes to witness their reaction, it was not what we had expected - the little girl took one look "Daddy it's him, it's really him, he's real" and ran off into the trees. The little boy was mesmerised peering in the window, so father ran after his daughter. Phil asked the father if his daughter was ok "Oh yes" he said, "she ran off because she didn't want to wake up Santa".

After Christmas, Phil asked if I could turn this bear into a rabbit and do something for Easter, and so the 'Horticap Bunnies' began their many adventures through the years. I must add that the rabbit stood about 3 to 4 feet high and was quite manky. So I then made about 20 rabbits for the various displays, bought charity shop rabbits, and some have been donated. So along with the great help of volunteer Kath, the students and instructors, the bunnies began their many activities - culminating in last year's Coronation.

One of the most enjoyable activities was the making of the 110-foot life size blue whale. Instructor Tom (young Tom) was ace at constructing the framework with the help of students sawing, hammering, banging, screwing and painting as the whale began to take shape. Then Kath and myself spent hours having fun sewing together the netting covering the whale's body, resulting in a magnificent creature which the students participated in creating. As one visitor said "Where else would you turn a corner and come face to face with a whale. That's what I love about Horticap - it's quirky, unique and quite different from other garden centres. That's what makes it such a special place.

Kath and I were working in the Nursery Rhyme Corner (now the Discovery Hut) when 2 elderly ladies approached; they looked to one side at the whale's 25-foot tail and then saw 2 equally elderly ladies, one with a hammer and one with an electric drill. They said "what IS this place?" so we told them about Horticap. Their reply "It's a really wonderful place to wander around - everyone is so friendly".



"A special moment for me" was one day after finishing painting the bunnies' hut, student Conor and myself were walking back to the mess room when I saw a baby Treecreeper on the ground. I motioned to Conor to keep quiet and creep closer to the bird. There we both were - the look of pleasure on Conor's face was something I will never forget.

Looking forward, the 'specialness' of Horticap should not change! It has been a great privilege volunteering at Horticap making so many wonderful friends with students, staff and other volunteers.

Working with the students over the years has been a great pleasure - watching them develop and gain confidence; their capabilities never cease to amaze me".

Joan finishes with "I love being with the students, they are very special; kind, caring and they look after each other. I hope it never changes, the students are what makes Horticap!"



Alistair joined us in 2023, and has quickly become part of the Horticap family. This is his story!

"It had always been in my mind to offer my time as a volunteer to a worthy cause. Having been in that caring role, being a keen gardener, woodworker and a trained chef, Horticap appealed to all my interests, and it was with pleasure that I accepted the offer to help out in Hopkins. I soon expanded that by taking on other responsibilities.

I remember the first time I was asked to go and talk to a local WI group, and with some nervousness I went along. The talk

went well, and working in Hopkins the following week, I encountered a party of ladies from the group, who had on my recommendation come for a day out and lunch at Horticap. Well, I thought, I must have done OK!

I love working at Horticap because every day I am there I work with our students, staff and volunteers, who are the most wonderful group of people, and every day I am made to feel my contribution has made a difference. It was a particular honour when in late 2023 I was asked to become a trustee of Horticap, and I now look forward to supporting them through their 40th anniversary and beyond in that role, as well as continuing to serve coffee and cakes, get my hands dirty in the gardens and build things in the workshops, while spreading the word about the wonderful place that is Horticap".



1995
Pat and Andrew



2001
Simon



1996
Jamie

We are proud to present our Students who started in the second decade, and who are still attending Horticap.



1999
Fraser



2002
Alistair and Stuart



2004
Victoria and Carl C



2003
Tony and Ross



Student Profile: Lewis

In contrast to the students on the previous page, Lewis is a relatively new student. He lives at home and his Mum kindly wrote a few words for us.

“Lewis moved to Harrogate from Watford in Hertfordshire in the summer of 2022. Horticap came well recommended by so many people – every time we asked about things for Lewis to do in Harrogate, someone would mention Horticap...and we’re so pleased they did!

Lewis loves his two days a week at Horticap, one in the kitchen and one in the garden. He’s been made to feel so welcome and we’ve noticed a massive difference in his confidence and independence skills at home (he still won’t do the washing up though!)”



It has also been a delight for us to see Lewis settle in so well and his personality to shine through! His work in Hopkins is valued by the team, and he has become very comfortable in serving customers at the table and confidence in his baking. Work on the nursery benefits from his knowledge and his “hands on” attitude. Lewis certainly makes any day spent with him a happy day! Oh, and he’s a great singer too!



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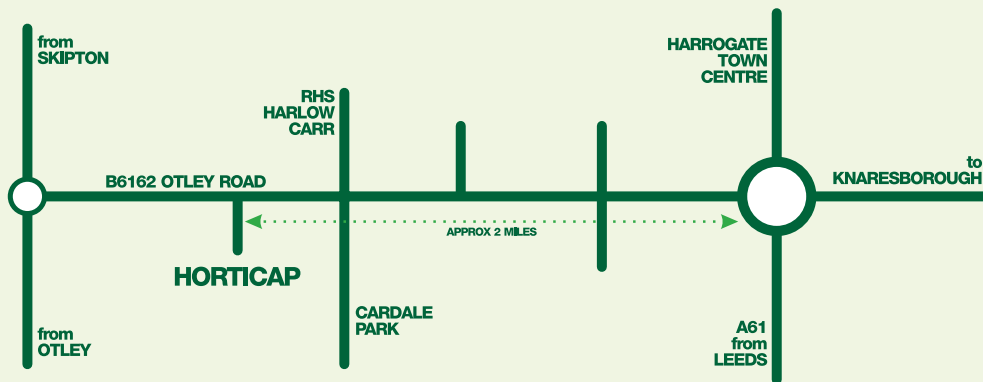
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Dates for your diary

**Great Yorkshire Show
Tuesday 9th
to Friday 12th July 2024**

**Weeton Show
Sunday 21st July**

**We hope to see you
there!**



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