



horticap 
Growing Together



Supporting and educating
at Bluecoat Wood Nurseries

www.horticap.org



Issue 4 2024

What a year 2024 has been!

It only seems two minutes since we were thinking ahead to our 40th year's celebrations, and now we are nearing the end of what has been a wonderfully special year. We have enjoyed a huge range of fundraising activities and events, and naturally, we have had a lot of fun along the way.

But of course, whilst celebrations were to be had, there has also been the day to day jobs to be done. Anyone who has visited Horticap on weekdays, when our Students attend, will know of, and appreciate the vast range of jobs they do. This past few weeks has seen groups helping to not just refurbish our existing polytunnels, but replace them completely.

Through support from The Banks Group, these facilities offer much better conditions for our quality plants to develop, and of course for our Students to work in. This ensures that our plants continue to be some of the best available, and which are all grown with love and care by wonderful people! Our off-site teams have remained busy too, keeping up with their contract work.



The eagle eyed amongst you will have seen that we have created more bench space for plants in the sales greenhouse. This has, again, given our Students the opportunity to learn and develop their woodworking skills under the guidance of Instructors and Volunteers. They have assembled, sanded and painted the benches, and put them in position. It has been great to see more plant varieties and more colour than ever before for our customers to choose from.



We are not neglecting the garden area either. Our kitchen garden is having a rather special make over, so keep an eye on social media for the regular videos and posts.

We have had a generous donation from a good friend of Horticap, which will be used for extending the fabulous stone walling in our garden, that was created several years ago. Also housing a pizza oven, we feel that this will be a wonderful addition to the hospitality we can offer customers, and which also gives our Students the opportunity to further increase their culinary, hospitality and customer service skills.

So you see, Horticap never stops developing, and next year will be no different, but first...we have Christmas to celebrate!



Our Students LOVE Christmas and there is always great excitement when the wreath components arrive, the Horticap shop starts getting Christmas gifts in and of course, when the trees are delivered. But behind all the thrills, a lot of hard work happens. Our wreath making starts in September as they are made from scratch, including wiring up every single decoration you see on them, and we sell hundreds! Our teams collect conifer for greening up, and holly for that final, finishing touch, and all under the guidance of our Instructors.



Our Christmas trees can be ordered and delivered, or chosen from our greenhouse and carried to your car too. Our Students really enjoy rearranging the greenhouse to accommodate the tree bays and unloading the wagons, and love to spend their day welcoming customers and selling trees. We are all very proud that Horticap wreaths and trees are in so many houses over Christmas.

But of course, the most wonderful thing about Horticap, and particularly at Christmas, is friendship, fun and looking forward. 2024 has been a special year, and 2025 will be too.



We will always continue to develop as a charity, and support our Students by following our ethos of growing together.

Everyone at Horticap would like to thank all our friends, customers and supporters and wish everyone a healthy and peaceful Christmas and New Year, we hope to see you in 2025!

The Horticap Team



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Message from our Chair, Peter Hornby

This quarter I wanted to introduce two new Trustees and also to give an update on our 40th anniversary fundraising initiatives.



Trustees

Our Board of Trustees are responsible for making sure Horticap is going in the right direction and that our processes and controls are compliant with Charity and Company Law. All of the Trustees are Volunteers and bring their varied experiences from business and the third sector to ensure continuing success for Horticap. Our policy is that Trustees can remain on the Board for a maximum of nine years; this makes sure that we are always looking to refresh the talents we have on the Board.

Following the retirement of Steve Scarre in October 2023 we have been actively looking to strengthen the Board and are delighted to announce that Jacqui Hall and Richard Marlow have joined Horticap as Trustees which brings the team up seven people.



Jacqui has had a successful career at Operations Director, Managing Director and President levels for businesses mainly in the independent energy sector. A key feature of the organisations that Jacqui has led has been the level of community engagement including working directly with Horticap Students to the benefit of her Staff and our Students alike.



Following his audit and corporate finance training with Deloitte, Richard pursued a career in financial management and corporate advisory work. This included three years as Director of Finance for St Michael's Hospice during which time he also acted as Head of Retail and developed particular expertise in charity accounting and governance.



Fundraising initiatives

In Issue 2, I reported on the Grand Raffle and Garden Party which generated just under £10,000 to our funds. Again I must make a special thank you to Caroline Campbell and her "Team of Ladies" who did so much to make the Garden Party such a special evening. Thanks also must go to our Students for supporting the evening and to the army of people who folded tickets, looked after prize donations and generally made sure the evening went without a hitch.

I thought it would help to explain our spending plans for all the funds that we are raising. These include:

- The refurbishment/replacement of two of the oldest buildings on the estate which are the original Student locker and boot rooms. We are currently at the first stages of working with the National Lottery to submit a bid given the size of the investment required
- Our original polytunnels (where Students grow the plants you see in the retail area) are also in need of replacement. Thanks to the Banks Group we have started work on one of the polytunnels and hope to complete the exercise by the year end
- We are slowly replacing our fleet of petrol driven vehicles and equipment and moving over to electric power in support of our environmental credentials. This will include a battery charging station that will enable us to charge batteries overnight for free using our on-site wind turbine
- Our hand tools are in continual use and we're always grateful when we can replace them from the donations that we receive.

And finally the next big event for our Students will be Christmas, we are making plans to make this year the best ever for them and we look forward to seeing you all when you visit to buy your Christmas trees and wreaths.

Peter

Celebrating our fundraising!

It can't have escaped anyone's notice that we have been using our 40th year to highlight the need to improve our Student facilities. This prompted our shop Manager Carol, and Instructor Tom to come up with creative ways to raise funds to help. Carol hosted a 6x6 Silent Art Auction, which gave the opportunity for anyone to offer a piece of art, to be displayed and auctioned. With over 100 entries from all over the country, and some from our more famous friends, the silent auction brought in a fabulous **£1798.50!**



Instructor Tom challenged himself to a grueling sponsored 40 km run around the Harrogate area. The sendoff from, and return to Horticap and with all the support the Students could possibly give, Tom contributed a magnificent **£1,800** to our fundraising efforts.



We also had the pleasure of welcoming friend of Horticap, Loulou Storey, who very generously gave her time to run a style workshop for 80 guests. Along with some lovely styling ideas, our guests enjoyed Prosecco and nibbles, and we raised a superb **£1,400!**



One thing leads to another... but then, that often happens at Horticap!

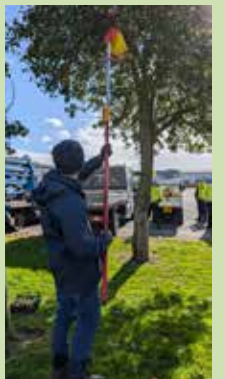
We were grateful for a sunny day when Phil and Dan took a group of students to Clifton Moor Industrial Estate to put up 40 bird boxes. The order was placed in celebration of our 40th Anniversary, and needless to say, student Jack was delighted to use his skills to make them.



Clifton Moor Industrial Estate was awarded a Silver Gilt in the 2024 Yorkshire in Bloom Awards. Judges were impressed with the efforts made to make this site wildlife friendly, with lots of initiatives implemented to attract more birds and pollinators. They were also pleased to see bird boxes in the trees... and this is where Horticap comes in! Sam Glassup, who runs the Industrial Estate is a good friend of ours, and decided that if more bird boxes were to go up, then Horticap could benefit from the order. This was such a kind gesture, and we are thrilled that more birds will be attracted to the site by our student made bird boxes.



After installing the boxes, our students picked the apples and pears from the estate trees and delivered them to Haxby Bakehouse in York, who thanked them by giving them some delicious cookies and treats, and this was after they had been treated to lunch at the Industrial Estate! Special thanks to both Sam Glassup and Nick Turnbull for their hospitality.



Days out really don't get any better!

Busy busy!

This time of year sees the greenhouse filling up with Autumn and Winter bedding plants.

We receive them as small plug plants, and pot them on both to sell, and to use in our own attractive plant arrangements.



The West Wing continues to provide a wonderfully creative space for our Students, with activity sessions producing more art, Christmas decorations to sell in the shop, sharing some magical music moments, and even having a soap making workshop!



Autumn is such a lovely and colourful time of year at Horticap, and we try to make the time in our busy day for appreciating all the nature surrounding us.

Can anyone resist picking up and admiring a conker? Scott can't!



Student Focus - Victoria



2024 is Victoria's 20th year at Horticap, and life here just would not be the same without her! Her happy smile and 'I'll do it' attitude is totally infectious and a day with Victoria is always a good day!



There is nothing that Victoria will not try, from being our resident card maker, to carrying Christmas trees, but no one could deny that her strength lies in her customer service skills. Horticap prides itself on the warm welcome it offers to our visitors, and she exemplifies this ethos perfectly. She also loves to tell us about her Mum and brother, their holidays and especially their adventures.



She particularly enjoyed the visit by Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Team, and of course, Storm the dog took her attention and as always, her smile shone brightly!





“We aim to help Students extend their knowledge and skills, through structured training using professionally qualified Staff and Volunteers”

Everyone connected with supporting Students at Horticap works hard to support the aim of the charity. We have a shared aspiration to enable and empower our Students, to ensure they feel valued in their work and a part of the Horticap community. This year has seen the continuation of this, and further opportunities for work experience in all areas. Our section managers, Phil, Carol and Chris comment on their take from 2024.



Phil - Operations Manager

“**Wow**, 40 years of educating and shaping lives through our aim of teaching horticulture, crafts and shop/café work. It’s been such a busy year and as always, our Students have been first and foremost in all the decisions we have made.

We started with our awards day, where we highlighted the achievements of all our Students. Our very own Alan Titchmarsh was there and even the Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, Jo Ropner came. What a wonderful event!

Then came the Spring Flower Show and winning a Premier Gold Award. The show gardens that we do each year, is just another way of showing people what our Students can do with just a bit of supervision. This also goes a long way in helping them with their social skills and their interaction with the public.

Organising Bingo nights and BBQs for them are a small way of saying thank you to our Students for their hard work.

Here’s to another 40 years of growing together!”



Carol - Shop Manager

“**The Students** have had a busy and exciting 40th year here in our shop. As our retail business grows, our Students have been involved in all aspects of our front facing retail environment, from meeting and greeting visitors and serving customers, to checking and pricing up stock for display. The Students especially enjoy the interaction with the public. Through this interaction, their communication skills are constantly improving alongside their confidence, which grows constantly.

In our quieter times, the Students have continued to contribute to one of the core principles of Horticap; sustainability and resourcefulness through the upcycling of donated occasion and Christmas cards, in preparation for re-sale, along with other Student made items.

All the Students enjoy their time in the shop and cannot wait for their time slots to work alongside the Staff, Volunteers and visitors. We endeavour to make their days fun as well as productive, allowing them to feel they have contributed and are an important part of the Horticap Shop team”.



Chris - Hopkins Manager

“**Hopkins gives** our Students a sense of worth and a sense of purpose. Our Students work with us in the café and enjoy the feeling of being part of the reputation of both Hopkins and Horticap.

The Students work hard and enjoy being involved in a different area of what Horticap has to offer. They enjoy speaking to and serving customers as well as working alongside, and being part of the Hopkins team.

Students love baking and trying the different food we offer and of course, wearing the white Hopkins T shirt is a real bonus!

We feel privileged in Hopkins to offer our Students this opportunity, and love working with them”.



Continuing our memories as part of our 40th Anniversary year, we move on to look at 2014 to 2024

The last decade has seen our Student numbers once again rise to near full capacity, with 55 Students now attending during the course of each week carrying out a wide and varied range of activities and training.

The decade saw the majority of our Students complete their first City and Guilds certificates, with many going on to complete subsequent further qualifications. These were proudly received at our Student Awards events. We also established our first tea room.



Our themed show gardens had become a big hit at the local shows, and we have continued to receive top awards and huge visitor appreciation.



Visitor numbers continued to increase and plans started to evolve to improve both our Student and visitor experience. The first of these being a new glasshouse to serve as both a display area and a work/training area for Students. This was followed by a new mess/break room to more comfortably accommodate our increased Student numbers.



Most recently, following a generous bequest from the family of an ex-Student we were able to replace our old shop with a new timber framed building to accommodate both the shop and a tea room, along with upgraded access road and parking areas.



In celebrating our 40-year anniversary we must pay tribute to those who, through their persistent hard work and dedication, have enabled Horticap to become what it is today.

We would like to thank:

Founding Trustees and Students who got the project off the ground, some of whom are sadly no longer here to see what a difference they made to so many people's lives, **Volunteers, Staff and Students** who have helped shape Horticap's ongoing success, and the many **Trusts and individuals** who have raised or donated funds to ensure our continued growth.

This fantastic photograph, courtesy of George Duncan Photography, shows just how far Horticap has come in its 40 years.

What a magnificent achievement!



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Covid

Unfortunately, the positivity of the decade became marred by the emergence of the Covid virus. With the pandemic moving into full surge, all building work ceased overnight, all Students had to remain at home and most Staff stayed away with only a small team attending the nursery to ensure plants were looked after.

Restrictions also meant that the nursery had to close to customers at a critical time with plants, compost and pots already purchased for the summer season.



Fortunately for Horticap, good governance had ensured that we had in place a disaster recovery plan. And having followed Charity Commission guidance, Horticap had ensured an emergency financial reserve had been maintained. This would ensure our security in the short term.

With the pandemic getting worse and the greenhouses full of plants it was obvious there would be no quick resolution, so with the help and support of Colour It In, we put together an online marketing and sales page for our website. We modified one of our vans to carry trays of plants, hired a third vehicle and got the majority of Staff back to work.

The website went live in Spring 2020 offering online ordering and payment for a range of pre-selected bedding and perennial plant boxes, and all delivered across the Harrogate district. The popularity of the

venture was an instant success with three delivery vehicles being kept busy throughout the week along with a team of 3 pickers and packers each day.

By early summer we had just about sold out of bedding plants, but continued to offer the service for other goods right through to Christmas for the trees and wreaths.

Fortunately, building work had been allowed to restart in early summer, and by the end of the year our new shop and tea room building was well underway. Customers had been allowed back on site with a raft of socially distancing measures in place.



But what of all our Students who had not been permitted to attend their usual activities and see their friends, and how did we keep them involved? We:

- Made regular contact with them by telephone;
- Encouraged them to send in pictures of what they had been doing which we could circulate on social media;
- Paid them socially distanced personal visits;
- Delivered activity packs such as plant growing kits and Christmas wreath kits and encouraged them to send in pictures of their completed work;
- Held our 2020 Christmas Party at Wetherby Racecourse, watching an outside showing of "Elf" on a big screen, sitting in our own cars!

18 months on we were able to start welcoming Students back to Horticap in limited daily numbers, but giving everyone the chance to return for at least one day each fortnight. This slowly increased until we had everyone back.

Whilst everyone had returned by the summer of 2021, many restrictions had remained in place, with our usual Christmas party having to be split into two sessions. Happily, Father Christmas was able to make two appearances!



We have all very much enjoyed our Volunteers' contributions to our newsletters this year, and celebrating their valuable contributions to our charity. As we hope has been illustrated throughout the year, their roles are varied and they all fit happily into the jigsaw puzzle that is Horticap, and we thank every single one!



Bruce - "I have been volunteering at Horticap since 2008 and have seen many changes since then, but the ethos has never altered. It is still a warm, friendly family with everyone rubbing along good-naturedly.

Humorous banter is a daily feature, the Students playing an active part. Seeing the Students interact socially as well as learning new skills is a great pleasure, and is a major reason for turning up each week. I enjoy supporting the Staff in the excellent work they do and learning a great deal myself in the process. Horticap provides a superb safe learning environment and **long may it continue**".

Pauline - "Office facilities were rather draughty and basic back in 1993! There was no technology and a few years before the internet arrived at Horticap. Dried flowers, very much in vogue in the '80s and '90s, were suspended from the ceiling. There were no shop buildings, with all sales being conducted from a leaky polythene tunnel.

Gradually, changes and improvements were made with a portacabin for the office, two additional greenhouses, a second vehicle and a shop building. Off-site landscape work increased, as did Student and Staff numbers.

The 21st century brought a purpose-built education facility including office space, opened by Alan Titchmarsh in November 2005. Of course during all this time, the Students were at the fore. Nothing was done without them being the no.1 priority. Great times, many happy memories!"



Kathy - "I became a Volunteer at Horticap because I've always loved teaching or being around young people, and watching them develop. Another Volunteer, Jane, is a friend of mine, and when I met her in the old café she encouraged me to join the team.

One memorable event was coming back after Covid and feeling that it was the same community as ever - Vicky and Carl wandering around, Paul and Phil ribbing the Students and Steve as kind as ever.

I always look forward to doing some baking and also to helping out with some craftwork with the Students."



We hope you have enjoyed reading about the special place that our Volunteers have here at Horticap, and we remain grateful for their generosity and kindness with their contributions. They help us in the greenhouses and workshops, the shows, the shop and Hopkins, and as Trustees. We conclude this year's focus of our Volunteers by introducing William, our super fundraiser.

William, seen here on the right supports Horticap with his boundless energy by getting up in the early hours to go car boot sales. He comes up regularly with his two lovely little dogs, Alfie and Teddy (seen here in their Christmas outfits, when they come up to help with selling Christmas trees) to sort out the various things that have been donated to Horticap.

"Items I have sold are what people have donated to Horticap. There have been lots of electric lawn mowers, leaf blowers and strimmers, which I clean and check over to make sure they work and are safe to use. I then take videos of them to show the people buying them that they are in decent working order and of course, how to use them.

I find all types of garden equipment and tools around the Horticap site which I clean up. People really love the old sturdy spades, rakes and other garden tools. Sometimes I find items like rusty old buckets and planters (even an old fender) that have been put on the scrap. I spend time cleaning and fixing them, often with the students' involvement when I'm there on a Tuesday. We even have had a lot of prints and toiletries donated, and following garage clearances, my stocks get replenished.



This year I have done car boot sales on Saturdays in Bedale and Thirsk, and a couple of local ones on a Sunday. I always have leaflets to hand out, and spread the word by using pull up display signs about Horticap. I enjoy meeting the people who attend, and people are always interested and impressed with what Horticap does, and keen to visit us! I also like to see money raised from upcycling things that would have gone for scrap. These car boot sales have raised over £3,000 this year alone.

I enjoy coming to Horticap, and am happy to do whatever is needed."

A few years ago, William raised the money to buy the defibrillator we have at Horticap. What a fabulous thing to do!



2015 - Callum, Daniel & Josh

This final edition of 2024 sees us celebrate the Students who joined Horticap in our fourth decade. What a wonderful bunch!



2016 - Hannah, Pippa & Scott



2017 - Charlotte, Jake & Sam



2018 - Carl

So there we are, the newsletters in this 40th year have presented all of our Students who currently attend Horticap.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming more in the years to come, but for now, we congratulate our sensational Students on their work, friendships and mostly their sense of fun!



2022 - Alicia, Dominic & Will



2023 - Andrew, Edward, Issy & Lewis



2024 - Danny, David, Jamie & Matthew

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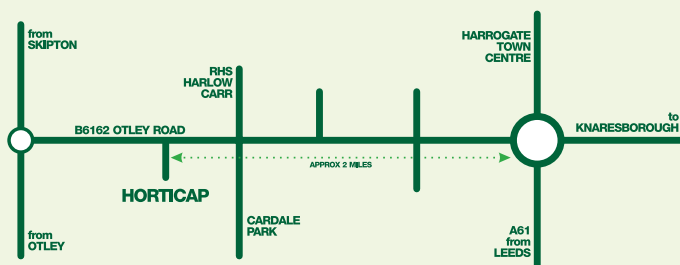
Dates for your diary

**Last day Horticap is open
before Christmas is Sunday
22 December, we re-open on
Thursday 2 January**

**(Please note: a limited menu in Hopkins
will be available on Saturday 21,
Sunday 22 December and Thursday 2
January)**

**Sam Booth, Artist Photographer,
will be exhibiting his work from
6th January-28th March 2025.**

**Friday 24 January 2025
Quiz Night – tickets are £25
and include a light Burn's night
supper, quiz, a hot toddy and
chance to win a prize.
Tickets are available from
Horticap's shop.**



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