

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The **Norton in Hales In Bloom Group** is a purely voluntary group with no professional assistance. As such, it represents the community, In Bloom and Parish Council, endeavouring to maintain the local environment to a high standard. No one has any horticultural qualifications, so it is a purely an amateur achievement. Even the photographs and production of the portfolio is done within the group. Without the general support of the villagers in gardening matters and pride in the village, as seen in the front gardens competition and the Parish Council enthusiasm to maintain a high environmental standard, success would not be possible.

The **Parish Council** recently undertook a parish survey as part of its preparation of a Parish Plan. A question on the involvement of the In Bloom concept was included and only 7 out of 283 people responding thought that ‘the **Britain in Bloom** entry (and the efforts leading up to it) was not good for the village of Norton in Hales’.

The **Parish Plan Objectives** identify ‘the In Bloom effort as a key resource in eradicating tipping and the dropping of litter’, ‘ensuring that the pleasant environment is maintained’ and in ‘improving the local area through additional tree planting’.

Despite the objectives that nearly everyone shares, it is sometimes difficult to recruit sufficient Bloom helpers on all occasions, but it has been possible to maintain an active group. From the survey, and from the marvellous number of outstanding gardens in the Council competition, it can be seen that there are many members of the community who are



contributing towards the objectives of the In Bloom competition. They may not take an active part in maintenance of the communal areas, or in the formal Bloom structure, but without them it would all come to nothing. On the other hand, without the focus that the Bloom campaign brings (for example there is a leaflet drop to all householders immediately prior to judging) it is questionable whether private gardens would be quite so

attractive.

The support given to In Bloom social functions is a good indicator of the ability horticulture to draw village people together.

The group welcomes help from any quarter and recognises the need to involve young people in particular. The **Pre-school 'Caterpillars' Group** is a regular contributor towards planting and clearing 'their' barrels at Griffin Close. Here seen clearing and planting at various times of the year.



Liaison is maintained with the village school and a meeting was held between the new headmaster and the Chairman and Secretary in the spring, to examine areas where each could help each other. As a result, for example, the Show Schedule was revised to accommodate the modern approach of including a computer presentation.

We do also have a horse drawn plough on display in the village.

The main method of communication to the general public is via **The Messenger**, a monthly newsletter delivered to all those who wish to receive it. This contains bloom news and topical gardening tips. Press coverage is also obtained in local newspapers.

The village has an innovative **website**, www.nortoninhales.org and information relating to the In Bloom Group is found in a dedicated section.

Finally, the discovery this year of **Samuel Owen**, the Swedish industrialist born at Norton forge and the associated research into the history of ironmaking in the village has brought together people from all walks of life and parts of the world. To mark the birth in the village and his subsequent achievements, a plaque commemorating Samuel Owen will be unveiled on Judging Day at the village hall. Arne Sundstrom, who has written a book about him, will be coming over especially from Sweden for the occasion to unveil it. The will be a small celebration in the evening when Mr Sundstrom will give a talk on his achievements. The In Bloom Group will also mount a small exhibition of the history of the Forge and of Owen. This will then go to **Market Drayton museum** for a short while. It is hoped that members of the Owen family will be travelling to be in attendance.

Future Plans

- To provide an interpretation board at Partons Pool.
- Planting more trees
- Improvements to Napely Drive corner bed
- Provide a Trophy Cabinet in the Village Hall
- Flower, Fruit and Vegetable Show to be held in the Village Hall on 12th September 2010

Note : As the photographs are sourced from various people, due to technical restrictions it is not possible to date stamp them. However, all photographs have been taken in the year 2009/2010.

The In Bloom Group would like to thank all our sponsors who have helped to contribute to this years Britain in Bloom submission:-

Norton in Hales Parish Council - Grants towards plants

Various members of the community - Donations

The Hinds Head - Facilities for meetings

Muller Community Scheme - Grants towards the Wildlife Board

Shropshire Community Council - Financial grant towards the Wildlife Board & the loan of display boards

Shropshire Council - Provision of additional road sweeping

Village Hall Committee - Reduced costs of hiring hall

Roger Peake - Provision of wood preservative

Bloomsbury Nursery - Help, advice & a reduction in plant costs



NORTON IN HALES
RHS Britain in Bloom
2010