



NORTH WEST

NORTH WEST IN BLOOM

Newsletter May 2020

Welcome

From all of us at North West in Bloom, we hope that you are staying safe and well through these strange times. In response to the advice from the government and the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), we had no choice but to cancel this year's competition. There are, however, many ways in which our groups can continue to contribute to their communities whilst maintaining social distancing. We would like to recognise and celebrate any novel approaches that have been used. Please let us know what you are doing. As many of you will be aware, Bill Blackledge, our Chair, sadly passed away on the 14th of April. So we would like to start our newsletter with our tribute to Bill.

Bernard Pendleton, Vice Chair North West in Bloom

Obituary— Bill Blackledge MBE 4th July 1942 - 14th April 2020

Bill was born on the 4th July 1942 and he lived in Newton-le-Willows with his family. After leaving school he completed his pre-college practical experience at Winwick Hospital near Warrington. He commenced his horticultural training at the John Innes Institute and then he successfully graduated from Silsoe College in Bedfordshire in 1966.

His first and only employment position was at Lancaster University, where he worked until his retirement in 1997 - over 30 years of dedicated service. He worked latterly as Superintendent, managing the estate and additionally working with eminent professors in world recognised research activities.

He met his wife, Margaret at a dance at Morecambe Pier! Their romance blossomed and they were married within the year. Peter and Stephen were born, and Lancaster became their home. Bill was a family man and also had many interests, not just his love of horticulture and how it can change peoples lives, but he also loved music, both classical and popular bands such as REM and many others.





Bill was a panellist on BBC Radio 4 Gardeners' Question Time and also a part of the BBC Radio Lancashire team for many years. He was their 'Gardening Guru' and he delivered hundreds of lectures and presentations throughout the North West. The BBC team considered him to be an integral part of their family and a lovely, lovely man.

Many years ago, Bill supported the "Keep Britain Tidy" campaign and when this initiative came to an end he was at the forefront of North West in Bloom, working in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) in London. He was chairman for many years and ensured the North West was represented at all RHS events. Tributes have been received from throughout the RHS, the 16 regions and nations acknowledging his tremendous positive influences on everyone he met.

Bill was "Gold" in-fact... Bill was "Outstanding"

Bill had a team of over 30 judges and administrative staff who ensured the North West In Bloom and Its Your Neighbourhood entries were judged each year. He loved the annual Awards Ceremonies where everyone received recognition for making the North West "Cleaner and Greener" – he made people feel loved and valued and did this with effortless style. He had a wonderful smile, a hearty laugh full of compassion and support.

Many of the groups and communities have so many lovely memories of Bill. They say he encouraged groups and individuals with warmth and generosity. He encouraged everyone – young and old

"He wore his expertise lightly and offered his skills kindly".

As many people know it was for his "Outstanding" contribution to the North West that Bill received his MBE at the Palace. He always said that he received it on behalf of everyone involved in North West in Bloom.

Bill was a tremendous individual, who really made a difference to everyone he met. He and Margaret had many friends locally, throughout the North West and the United Kingdom. Margaret and her family are very appreciative of all the cards and messages they have received and she has said there will be an event and an opportunity to celebrate Bill's life – when details are available; these will be shared.

Bill Blackledge RIP

Tributes to Bill Blackledge MBE

Many groups and individuals are planning tributes to Bill, as he inspired thousands of people to improve their neighbourhoods through the power of plants.

He had a tremendous positive influence on Bloom as a whole. Following suggestions from local groups, we would like to lead a tribute to Bill by asking groups to plant a tree in his memory (*maybe from Autumn 2020-Spring 2021 onwards – and only when it is safe to do so!*)

We are hoping this may be carried out throughout the UK, and that groups/individuals will record and share what they have planted with North West in Bloom. We could get 1,000 trees planted!

The RHS are fully supportive and will plant a tree in memory of Bill at the new RHS Bridgewater Garden – maybe this could launch our campaign. Hopefully, this initiative could be extended as a memorial to others from the 'In Bloom' family and all our communities who have lost their loved ones in this current pandemic.

Please forward comments, ideas on this idea of 'Planting a tree for Bill Blackledge MBE' to info@northwestinbloom.com

Further information will follow in our next newsletter.



Bernard Pendleton – Vice Chairman – North West in Bloom

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What you've been up to?

Here are just a few examples that we have heard of from our groups.

Catterall in Bloom have allocated to different members of the group, various areas of the village to look after independently and the ladies in the group have been yarn bombing! (as shared by Owain Wyn Evans on BBC North West Tonight) . This caused quite a stir in the village at Easter time!



Ansdell in Bloom made this display for their community in these difficult times.

One of our Judges, Alan Hulme, has been making short videos for the Gardening Club at N-Vision in Blackpool. Find out more about the videos through the link below or in the RHS Newsletter.

[Alan Hulme Appropriate Footwear](#)

Here are just a few examples from **Elswick in Bloom**. The children wanted to make people smile. All achieved whilst keeping to Social Distancing rules.



Terry Daly, Chair of **Howe Bridge Community Group**, posts a daily quiz on Facebook for his group and several other interested groups. The questions are on various themes, for example VE day, Music

We want to hear from you

Tell us what you have been doing. Either e-mail your story and photos or put them on our Facebook site **[Northwest in Bloom Support](#)**

A message from one of our Sponsors—Amberol



How can we help you?

These are difficult times for everyone. But it's important to remember that this will pass, and things will return to normal - although many of us will experience some form of loss, and 'normal' may look and feel a little different.

We were very sad at Amberol to temporarily pause production, but it is the right thing to do for staff and customers. However, we are still very much in business and available to customers who have a query or who want to discuss future planting plans or production requirements. Our management team are also hard at work taking this unexpected opportunity to do some planning for the future and look at ways that we can continue to improve our products and services. Any suggestions or input that you have would be gratefully received.



We are constantly reviewing the situation and aim to open our factory doors again as soon as it is safe to do so. Hopefully by the time you read this, we will have an

Free Support from Amberol

With some of you possibly having a little more time on your hands, now is a good time to visit our updated website which has descriptions of all our products from self-watering hanging baskets to Percy Penguin litter bins.

If you haven't browsed our [community hub](#), there are lots of interesting articles on there to inspire you.

We also still have a few free tips booklets left which are available on request by emailing sales@amberol.co.uk:

- How to excel at Britain in Bloom
- The Amberol guide to container gardening
- Top tips for securing sponsorship for planters and bins

Keep in touch with other In Bloom communities via our [Buzz in Bloom](#) Facebook page where members exchange ideas, post questions and offer advice. Just search 'Buzz in Bloom' on Facebook. And of course, Amberol's Twitter and Facebook pages have up to date information, facts and advice.

If you don't currently receive our email newsletter, do sign up on our website to keep up to date with Amberol events, news and competitions.



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Coming soon from Amberol

We are also putting the finishing touches to our 'Best Plant-Ups' guide which contains examples of successful displays from Amberol customers as far afield as Belgium to inspire you.



Some people have also asked about our annual photo competition, which is running this year, but in a different format. Details will be announced soon, so, please do send in any photos of Amberol planters that you see when on your daily exercise. Again, you can keep up to date via our newsletter, website and social media pages.



Why we need Britain in Bloom now more than ever

This year's competition may be cancelled, but the impact that Britain in Bloom has across the UK has never been more important. As I go for my daily walk from home, I pass some beautiful displays (some in Amberol's self-watering planters) that really help to lift the spirit. In fact, I believe that one of the upsides of this difficult time will be a new appreciation for the beauty of outdoors – whether it be fields in the countryside or floral displays in urban areas. Now, more than ever we need to make a visible difference, and I have no doubt that as soon as you are allowed to, our dedicated army of In Bloomers will be out in force making Britain beautiful.



In the meantime, if we can help you in any way, please do call us on 01773 830 930, visit our website or email sales@amberol.co.uk



Good luck to you all and stay safe

Patience Atkinson-Gregory
Managing Director at Amberol

Bloom and Neighbourhood Group Ideas

Here are some ideas to inspire individuals who may like to make items that can be displayed to let everyone know they are still very much part of a group and involved in Bloom.

Maybe the group members could all work on the same idea and have fun comparing the finished items. Neighbours may like to join in and people could share photos, with their group, of the things they have been working on.

A simple label, placed inside a see through plastic bag, with the group's name on and Bloom logo will help people to know why it is on display.

You may come up with a brilliant idea of your own.

Make a large **Scarecrow**. It can stand by a front door or in a garden or even peep out of a window. Mini scarecrows can stand in a pot or be attached to a drain pipe.

Plant up:

- Wellie boots and other shoes or boots
- Watering cans
- Old baskets
- Old storage tins and tea, biscuit, syrup, olive tins
- Paint food cans in bright colours and plant up
- Underwired bras and pants can be filled with plants as can swimming shorts and bikinis
- Other unusual containers

*Make sure you remember to make drainage holes

Ideas for children

- Make fruit and vegetable animals
- Make a garden on a tray
- Decorate a plastic plant pot with a face and put in a plant for the hair

Most of all HAVE FUN!

We would love to see photos of what you have made.

Maxine Lord: Bloom Judge



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Light relief

Do you know in which century the first watering can appears?

A clue is that it was made from clay and had holes in the bottom. The spout didn't appear until many centuries later in the 17th century!



Where was the first hoe designed?

The clue is that it was in 4000BC, so has been around for quite some time! It had a short wooden handle; the head was made from flint. It was adapted in the 19th century to have a long handle. At around about the same time, there appeared three main types of hoe. A Draw Hoe, a Dutch or Thrust Hoe and a Spanish Hoe.

Bonfires aren't just for Bonfire Night?

Can you name 2 reasons that bonfires are beneficial in the garden? A clue is that one of them relates to Pest and Diseases.



Did you know that plants can tell you if you have a deficiency in your soil? What does Chamomile indicate that your soil might be deficient in?

Of course, it also has lots of herbal benefits too, from tinctures to a nice drink, to treating hay-fever and many other ailments and it can even be found in cosmetics!

Potatoes were traditionally used as a way to clear the ground of weeds but, what other cultural control is used for in horticulture?

The clue might be clay soil.



The Answers will be shown in the next Newsletter



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RHS Bloom / It's Your Neighbourhood Awards 2020

The RHS made the difficult decision to suspend Britain in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood for 2020, which is in keeping with its other decisions. Following Government advice during this pandemic, the health and wellbeing of assessors, volunteers and communities had to be prioritised. We do hope that every group will want to participate again in 2021.

Despite the restrictions and still following social distancing rules, many Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood groups have been doing amazing things to help their communities manage through the pandemic. Although the main BIB / IYN campaigns have been cancelled for 2020, the RHS and North West in Bloom still want to recognise and celebrate your achievements during lockdown.

In the near future, the RHS will send out a short questionnaire to all our groups who participated last year or registered for the first time this year.

The questionnaire will aim to understand how creative you have been in carrying out any socially distanced activities. Groups will be recognised with certificates from the RHS towards the end of the year. More information will be provided in the following Newsletter.

Kay Clark / RHS Community Development Manager



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Stay in Touch

Please send in photos, short stories, updates of projects from your own garden, business premises, public spaces – anything to share with others and keep in touch. See the details below on how to contact us.

RHS Newsletter

The RHS will be sending out a newsletter on a regular basis to all our registered groups. If you don't receive this newsletter, please do enlist with them through this link. <https://confirmsubscription.com/h/d/3B2A40EB10594988>

NWBIB Contact details

Unfortunately we are not able to be in the office at the moment. We do, however, always check the e-mail shown below.

E-mail: info@northwestinbloom.com

Website: www.northwestinbloom.com

Facebook Group North West in Bloom Support



We have taken the recent situation and changes in our web provider to reassess our Facebook presence. We have now created a new Facebook Group called **North West in Bloom Support**. This is a private group where we can all share ideas and support. Please follow the link below and request membership.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/685779488630595/>



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