

# Thirteen blooming years in Horsham



by **John Steele**  
chairman of  
the Horsham  
Society

HORSHAM in Bloom recently celebrated 13 years of service to the town at its annual awards ceremony.

Once again prizes were awarded to many individuals and organisations who through their special efforts have made our town a brighter, more colourful place to live and visit.

It also marked the end of an era with founding members Christine Costin and Jill Holmes stepping down as

chairman and events co-ordinator. We owe them and the many others who have worked with them over the years a debt of thanks.

When an organisation is as successful as Horsham in Bloom is today it is easy to forget the difficulties of the early years and the persistence and hard work required to get it started.

To many people Horsham in Bloom conjures up thoughts of summer hanging baskets, winter bulbs in the roadside verges, and other floral displays in key parts of the town.

But, as important and welcome as these are, they are only part of its work.

Horsham in Bloom has been a catalyst for many restoration projects and has helped to set

up groups of volunteers who protect and look after local green spaces, woods, ponds and riverside.

It encourages environmental awareness and has been at the forefront of contemporary horticulture in responding to climate change by encouraging planting which requires less water and promoting the introduction of wild flowers in our parks and gardens.

Its millennium project – the children's maze in Horsham Park – is a lasting reminder of a superb community effort which will be enjoyed by youngsters for a long time to come.

Horsham in Bloom is probably the town's most successful and consistent example of community engagement bringing together

residents, gardeners, local organisations and businesses to show how proud we are of our town.

Key to its success is the help and support from Evan Giles and his colleagues in the Horsham parks department, and from a number of commercial sponsors including the principal sponsor Novartis.

Over the years Horsham in Bloom has won an impressive array of regional and national awards culminating in the prestigious Britain in Bloom Gold Award in 2007.

This is a lifetime award and one which many towns across the country would give almost anything to achieve.

It is a great shame that this success is not better recognised and exploited by the council and the business

community. We often talk about the need to encourage shoppers and tourists by celebrating the things that make Horsham a special place to visit, yet how often do we trumpet our gold award?

Let's celebrate our achievements and get behind Horsham in Bloom as it plans another year of blooming success.

The Horsham Society is concerned about the town's past, present and future and seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces.

For more information and details on how to join visit our website

[www.horshamsociety.org](http://www.horshamsociety.org) or telephone 01403 272814.