



Richmond Borough in Bloom

Dear Friend

For 30 years, from its foundation in 1990, I was privileged to take the chair of Richmond Borough in Bloom until resigning with effect from the end of last December, (other commitments, long ignored, having to take priority).

Throughout the years I have had the opportunity of meeting many gardening enthusiasts and being part of numerous special Bloom events which made these three decades truly memorable. It is an enjoyment to look back on how the programme developed.

Although our competitions began quite modestly, participation in them grew steadily, involving literally hundreds of our borough's residents and shopkeepers, many of you continuing to enter every year. The wonderful care you take of your gardens, frontages and community areas, and the great variety of creative talent so many show, has enhanced and enriched our very special environment. It has been a huge pleasure to find ways of acknowledging these efforts through our Merit Award certificates and special trophies.

The development of floral displays on our public street scene is something else; something for which we must thank literally dozens of borough businesses. Although now organised by the Parks department of the Council, for its beginnings and many years to follow, funding this achievement was totally dependent upon local traders, too numerous to list in this memo. It would be remiss, though, not to record our immense debt to several big names responsible for decades of funding sponsorship of our Bloom campaign as a whole, namely: Jackson, Stops & Staff (our first campaign sponsor); Squire's Garden Centres (Colin Squire's generosity an integral part of many of our activities); Serco; eBay (which facilitated much of our work with schools), Veolia Environmental Services and Continental Landscapes. Most importantly, the special working relationship with Richmond Council across the years has been a vital element.

From its earliest inception, Richmond Borough in Bloom was guided and given practical help by officers of the Parks Department and Education (now Achievement for Children) and in recent years has contributed vital funding help as well. On top of that, every Mayor has always supported our programme, taking part in events, and being represented on our committee. It has been a happy partnership, whatever party was in power.

Before closing this last memo you will receive from me I would like to record my personal appreciation of the fantastic support always given by those on our committee, many of them steadfastly standing by for years and generously using their individual talents and time for Bloom.

It has made our meetings and events enjoyable and worthwhile. They need to be recognised: Vice Chairs Sheena Harold and Bruce Lyons; Martin Steel our Honorary Treasurer from the start; and long-serving members Helen Abate, Alan Bowers, Alice Fordham, Rosemary Hill, Ann Mathews, Mark Merrington, Philip Morgan, Perminder Tamana and Nicki Urqhart. Thanks are due also to designer Susan Hare for her voluntary work on our website.

You may be sad, as I am, that the decision has been taken to close down Richmond Borough Bloom. So I'm afraid you cannot look forward to receiving another Merit Award certificate this autumn. The fact remains, though, that you nurture your garden and frontage just because you love gardening and enjoy the satisfaction and pleasure a colourful natural display can give. It is reward enough in itself.

Thank you.

Best wishes for a lovely gardening year.

Pat

Patricia Schooling

Former Chair, Richmond Borough in Bloom