

Connections, partnerships

Not quite allotments but still horticulture

I have had a connection with a local Horticultural Charity called Horticap at Bluecoat Wood Nursery, Harrogate, which caters for people with learning difficulties. Their larger than life! (see later) Assistant Manager, Phil Airey and I have become quite good friends over the years, both manning stands at the large and prestigious Flower and Agricultural Shows at Harrogate and have become commonly known as Big Phil and Little Phil.

He invited me to attend their B-B-Q and Awards Evening and to present some of the awards in my new role of President of the NAS. I felt very thrilled and honoured to be asked and immediately accepted.

I know many of the students from their involvement in the shows and from calling in to the nursery if ever I am passing. It is a wonderful positive place to visit.

The Lady Mayor of Harrogate was in attendance to present the in house certificates which are awarded for all types of work carried out. Potting plants, making hanging baskets and wreaths, work in the café and shop and many more on site jobs. There are also certificates presented for the many tasks students do in their contract works carried out off site.

I felt very honoured to be presenting NVQ certificates in horticulture to some of the students, who had gained them through the local Shipley College. This was the first year they had acquired external qualifications.

Finally I was to present the Alan Titmarsh (the charities patron) 'Award of Distinction' to David Rawcliffe for his long and outstanding service looking after the gardens at Bluecoat Wood Nursery.

What a wonderful evening, what a wonderful atmosphere and what a surprise for Phil Airey; his students had only got together and presented him with a certificate 'The Larger than Life Award'. It just demonstrated what a wonderful relationship there is between staff and students.

The evening came to a close with a group photo set up by the photographer for the Harrogate Press.

Phil Gomersall, President



Phil Gomersall presenting Alan Titmarsh 'Horticultural Award of Distinction' to David Rawcliffe



Lady Mayor of Harrogate, David Rawcliffe, Phil Gomersall



Phil Airey with his 'Larger than Life' certificate

