

Report UHCA 2013 -14.

When writing this report, we soon realised that it is impossible to compile it in the usual format - in section, as the whole community was involved and supported the major projects which were completed and enjoyed in Upper Hopton this year. This is a tribute to the wonderful community in which we share and to the huge amount of work undertaken by many people who give their time and money to benefit us all.

Croft House has been well used this year by Playgroup, two Art groups, Yoga, U3A guitar classes, and new users Kirkheaton WI and the Wednesday afternoon open house (come along for coffee and cakes and a chat). It is also increasingly used by private bookings for both children's and adult parties.

Thanks to the Club for hosting such an excellent evening for Hopton in Bloom's Celebrating Gold and Best in Category and Meet the Team on Friday October 25th at 7.30 p.m following our success in the Yorkshire in Bloom campaign. It was wonderful to see some new people there and everyone enjoyed the evening

In January we were so proud and a little apprehensive when Upper Hopton was confirmed as a representative for Yorkshire in the **2014 RHS Britain in Bloom UK Finalist** in the Village category. We already had lots of great ideas to improve our village and the RHS campaign ensured we were all focused and carried most of them through to completion. The others are still ongoing and in various stages of development.

As with all things, communication is the key to ensuring everyone is kept in the loop and our new village website www.upperhoptonvillage.co.uk, which includes sections for all the organisations in the village, has played a most important role. The web site now gives a single point of reference for the UHCA, Hopton Club, St John's Church and the Cricket Club. Additional pages for Hopton Art group, HIB Nature Watch, Garden Trail, Updated News and events page, together with WW1 page, are readily created by webmaster John Farren. We know that it has received hits internationally when we received an enquiry from China about the K6 telephone box! Nearer to home visitors to Croft House or individuals looking to hire the facility have found the web site useful.

Following last year's tragic accident, the Road Safety Team has liaised with our Mayor Viv Lees Hamilton to secure funding of £7500 for the Road Safety Scheme in Hopton and we were reassured that a Speed Indicating Device is still an option on a peripatetic basis. The traffic calming measures, humps, pillows and an advisory 20mph speed limit on Hopton Lane between the Travellers Rest and the junction with Hill Park, were installed in July and do seem to be doing their job. Monitoring is continuing with speed loops in place, counting traffic numbers and speeds, on Hopton Lane below the Waste.

In January 2014 Gill Briggs sent photos to UHCA of the six serious accidents on both sides of the B6118 near Holly House Farm since the new road surface was laid in September 2013 and these were subsequently published in both the Reporter and the Examiner. Highways department at Kirklees followed this up. Although Viv ascertained that this stretch of the B6118 is in Kirkburton ward, she liaised with the ward representative, Dereck Hardcastle to secure improvements.

Kirklees and Mirfield Council have still to set a date to walk the Mirfield Public Bridleway No 84 where £27,000 from the Area Committee funding is allocated for repairs. UHCA and Vivien Lees Hamilton will take part in this walk.

UHCA have registered an interest in the recreation ground, the cricket field (both bequeathed to the village by Charles Sutcliffe) the old chip shop, and the land next to the School in the first instance with Mirfield Town Council who will then forward the interest to Kirklees. This will ensure we are notified if there are to be any changes in the status of this land. The "Letter of Interest" sent by UHCA to Mirfield Town Council has been before the Town Council meeting and it is to be included with other interests throughout Mirfield, including Westfields, and then submitted to Kirklees.

The Christmas Party on Dec 13th was a great success with about 60 people attending including our invited guests mayor Viv Lees-Hamilton and councilor Kath Taylor. Thanks to Ramsden's butchers for cooking the turkey and pork; And to Rob Mason who entertained us in great style.

The Carols round the tree was held in Croft House due pouring rain and howling wind and was a huge success with over 100 people braving the elements. Thanks to Clifton and Lightcliffe band who accompanied our carols so wonderfully; to our Vicar Revd. Hugh Baker who led the carols, to Norman Brown alias Father Christmas and to all who helped with the mince pies and mulled wine.

Thanks to Alan and Cath Smith who donated the Christmas tree from their garden and to Ash, John, Richard and Steve and Jacob Brown for cutting down, transporting and erecting it and putting on the Christmas lights.

Members supported the Reindeer Racing on Saturday 28th December at the club which raised £760 for the RNLI and all who attended had a really good time and it was so popular extra chairs had to be brought in.

We all enjoyed the Quiz and Music night at Croft House on Saturday 22nd February, and we made £768 profit on the event. This amount has been split 50/50 with UHCA / HIB. The Jumble Sale on Saturday March 15th raised £ 440

CLLr Viv Lees- Hamilton, Mayor of Mirfield held her Civic Service at St John's on April 6th at 3 pm when four Ambassadors for Mirfield were awarded their badges and this was followed by a Reception in Croft House, when members of UHCA assisted with the catering.

At the Craft Fair on April 26th we raised £725 and thanks are due to everyone who worked so hard to make this such a successful event especially Alison and Kath.

UHCA organised a Walk for Sam 'Hopton Hilly Challenge' and raised £522 + gift aid. Sam and his parents turned up on a rather wet day and Sam finished the 2.5mile walk and his Aunt and Gran did too. The Club held a Horse Race evening for Sam Bottomley, which was a great success and enjoyed by all who attended and raised £670.

In preparation for our Britain in Bloom judging, Brendan Mowforth, Chairman of Yorkshire in Bloom, toured the village and met our team on our usual Wednesday morning. He was very impressed by the strong community spirit and our industrious team. He gave some useful pointers to improve our entry. He suggested we request Kirklees to re-bark the children's playground and kill the longstanding weeds around the village and address the crumbling tarmac on the footpaths.

Thanks to Viv and Mirfield Council for awarding us £500 in recognition of the achievements of Hopton in Bloom, we were able to purchase six new self-watering barrels to replace some of the old wooden ones which were deteriorating.

In the area around Croft House four new trees (2 White Beam, *Sorbus aria* and 2 Ornamental Pear, *Pyrus calleryana Redspire*) were planted in the autumn to replace the diseased trees felled in the spring. New circular beds were dug out in the banking in front of Croft House and were planted up with primulas and tulips for Spring and a poppy design using red gazanias and alyssum in the middle circle in recognition of WWI and the outer two circles planted with marigolds and lobelias to represent wheels in recognition of the Tour de France.

We were pleased to welcome pupils from Ravenshall Special School who came to sow poppy and wildflower seeds in the border of the churchyard on Wednesday April 30th with the poppy seeds being donated by Wakefield Diocese and by Roger. Jessica Wilkinson, one of their GCSE pupils designed a fantastic poster for the Britain in Bloom judging day.

The Mirfield Team Parish held a children's workshop, on Sunday 18th May in Croft House, when some wonderful Poppy painting were produced for the WW1 exhibition, thanks to help from Gail.

New football nets have been put up in the Rec, thanks to 2 donations from UHCA members and a lovely handwritten letter of thanks has been received from the young footballers and parents who use them

The Hopton in Bloom Calendars for 2015 are now ready. James received 100 entries with 12 entries from under 16's. Tricia again organised the sponsorship and all but 2 sponsors were willing to sponsor and she has 2 new ones so is back up to 23. On Friday June 6th at 7.30 members met to choose the photos for the calendar and the winner of the Under 16's was Holly White.

Alison reported that Upper Hopton had another fabulous day for the Garden Trail on July 11th. The weather was beautiful again; we don't know how we do it year after year. We had a good turnout, almost as many as last year. Over 470 people visited us and again they came from all over, the first through the door for coffee and a cake being from Barnsley.

As usual the gardens looked brilliant and reflected all the hard work everyone had put into them. The comments we received at Croft House from visitors were very complimentary. They loved the private gardens, thought the village was wonderful and many were envious of our community spirit. We were all very proud.

On the day of the garden trail St John's Church held the first limited showing of the WW1 exhibition together with the children's poppy paintings from the workshop. The Club had a motor bike exhibition as well as showing off their fabulous mural which has been created on the outside wall by local artists depicting local scenes.

Hopton in Bloom would like to thank D Aveyard Opticians, Lower Hopton News, The Club and the Travellers Rest for selling programs for us; Maughans Bakery for their continued support and the many people who baked for us and all our helpers. Our biggest thanks are for the gardeners without their support we couldn't have a Garden Trail. Thank you.

In total we raised £3100, our best Garden Trail yet. All the money raised will be spent in the village.

Alison said she was open to new ideas and would love to see a horse and cart providing lifts around the village. Both Chris and Roger thanked Alison for the tremendous amount of work that she puts in to ensure the day is enjoyed by all

Next year's Garden Trail will be held on Saturday 11th July 2015

Roger reported that the **WW1 Exhibition** was held over the weekend 2nd and 3rd August and was very well attended and well received. The families associated with the soldiers were extremely appreciative. Two collections were carried out over the weekend and £158.39 was collected in donations for the Help the Heroes fund and £120.40 was donated to UHCA expenses. £95 was raised for the sale of paintings very kindly donated by Gail Auty, and £109.58 from the sale of cakes and teas. 44 dedication books for the individual soldiers were sold raising £240. After expenses the net income was £180.26. It should be emphasized however that the intention was to give recognition to the young soldiers and not to create a money making event. There are plans to hold the exhibition again during the four years of commemoration of WW1. Thanks to everyone who helped with the WW1 project.

Chris reported on the judging day for **Britain in Bloom August 4th 2014** that thanks to a combined effort from the whole community, we certainly showed the judges, Sue Wood and Kim Parish, the village at its best on a beautifully sunny day. We not only wanted to make the village look nice with lots of flowers and demonstrate that it is a great place to live but also a haven for wildlife, flora and fauna. And importantly, residents' front gardens which also contribute to the marks gained. The HiB team are not all gardeners; we benefit from people who bring a variety of skills, horticulturalists, engineers, wall builders, cake bakers, web master, photographers, naturalists, calendar compilers and others who want to get involved and learn as much as they can about gardening and the local environment. This year as well as our usual displays, we completed some special projects, which the judges really enjoyed seeing and they took lots of photographs:-

- the three new circular beds at Croft House, representing 2 wheels and a poppy,
- the fantastic mural at the Club, depicting life and events in the village thanks to Gail, Richard Hill and Alice, and the new quirky flower beds around the car park.
- the new village marker, with grateful thanks to Richard Haigh for the tenter post and oak beams and to James Lumb for designing the sign, and to John McMullan for permission to put it on his land.
- the wonderful World War I, exhibition in Croft House, thanks to genealogist Rudie Thramer for all her assistance and research into the family histories, and Ben Plimley who helped to compile the information as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award. We also planted out red geraniums on nine graves where the soldiers are commemorated in the churchyard at St John's Church, which pay tribute to some of the men from Upper Hopton killed in the Great War.
- the brilliantly installed yellow bicycle flying through the telephone box which we tried to keep as a surprise for the judges but they caught sight of it on their way to Croft House from the station.

We are also grateful to Alex and Chris at the Traveller's Rest who invited Kim and Sue to see their floral displays even though they have only been in residence five months.

Of special interest was our composting area and the judges remarked that they have never seen such posh and well organised compost bins.

The judges will now have written their reports and will wait to have them ratified by the RHS before announcing the results and the national category winners at a ceremony in Bristol on October 16.

Their parting words as we said goodbye at the station were "You cannot buy such wonderful enthusiasm" so well done everyone and a huge thank you.

The Hopton in Bloom AGM takes place in the Club on Tuesday November 18th at 7.30 pm and all are invited to attend.

On Saturday 13th September, Mrs Barbara Walker, whose family connections with the village date back almost 200 years and Mr Dean Hoyle, Chairman of Huddersfield Town Football Club, officially opened the inaugural **Hopton Festival of the Art**, which was the brainchild of Gail Auty, herself a talented artist and a member of the Hopton Art Group, and tutor Alan Goodall. Stuart Barraclough was the featured artist and thanks are due to Richard Gower for producing the brandings. The event attracted 274 entries of paintings in different mediums, photography, pottery, sculpture and luxury textiles, was held at three venues Croft House, Hopton Club and St John's Church, with children's art in the Church and proved extremely popular and raised a fantastic £2.040 which will benefit the planned extension to Croft House.

We have a community hall which is a terrific asset to our village but we believe it can be improved for our use and be made more attractive for those wanting to hire the facility. It was therefore identified by the UHCA that we needed additional storage space to house chairs, tables and maintenance equipment. Plans have been submitted to Kirklees and passed for the proposed new storage space, which will go right to the far end of the building and across the full width of the kitchen. Costings have been prepared.

It is proposed that a large portion of the building work will be carried out by UHCA and friends with excavations and roofing being undertaken by contractors. Thanks to the Art Group for their invaluable donation and the Croft House Management Committee for releasing some funds. We will need to carry on our fund raising effort however through 2014 and 2015 so that we can complete the project in the shortest time possible.

John has now removed the Flying bicycle from the phone box and is busy stripping it down and renovating it completely. Another ongoing project is the proposed enhancement of the entrance to the Recreation Ground with wooden gates to compliment the churchyard gates. Two surplus stone gate posts from the wall behind Croft House have been installed at the entrance of the

Recreation Ground. Hopton in Bloom have agreed to pay for the gates and plans are in hand to lay sets under the gateway. John is also renovating a hand pump and barrel donated by Richard Haigh and ideas as to where it might be sited are welcome.

In our search for a Community Orchard an area adjacent to the North East perimeter of the cricket field has been identified and will be ideal. The Cricket Club was approached and Tracey reported that the cricket club committee supports the community orchard wholeheartedly and there were no objections at all. It is hoped to involve children in this project. Advice is to be sought on soil sampling and on the selection of the best species fruit trees/root-stock for the environment.

Gareth suggested that when we resurface the car park that we should design it to be used as dual purpose i.e. a tennis or basketball court and he has looked into it and would be prepared to contribute and he may be able to source grants for funding

Harvest Festival was celebrated on September 28th with a service at St John's church in the morning and then a Harvest Hail and Auction at the Club. This raised £440 for KIRKWOOD HOSPICE, THE FORGET ME NOT TRUST, THE CANDLELIGHTERS, GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND, CHILDRENS CANCER FUND UK, C.I.U. BENEVOLENT FUND, THE CLUB BENEVOLENT FUND and ST JOHNS UPPER HOPTON

The Chair of UHCA, Roger Leedham, was welcomed to the Croft House Management Committee in January and he was asked if he was prepared to serve on the committee and he was duly co-opted. We continue to work together to ensure Croft House is properly maintained and the lettings are well supervised thanks to Katie, our booking officer. There seems to be a desire by some clients for WiFi at Croft House and this will be installed in the near future.

Thanks are due to so many people in the village, most already mentioned and including Brian Thornhill who arranges extensions to our insurance policy for special events and Simon Dedman who supplies us with thousands of tulip bulbs each year. Also to Knowl Park Nurseries and Horticulture who supply us with wonderful healthy plants at discount prices.

Whatever the results of the Britain in Bloom campaign, we know that we have done our absolute best and have been wholeheartedly supported by you all.

For the year 2014-2015 we have already developed some plans and have some more in the melting pot but would welcome everyone's ideas of how we can make the village a better place to live for all age groups of our community.

Roger Leedham Chairman UHCA
Chris Breare Honorary Secretary UHCA
Oct 2014