

101st HURST HORTICULTURAL AND COTTAGE GARDEN SOCIETY SHOW

Held at the Hurst Village Halls on Saturday August 16th 2014.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SHOW

The 101st Hurst Horticultural and Cottage Garden Society show was held on Saturday August 16th in Hurst.

This much loved show once again created much interest and attracted record levels of entries, up 5% on last years and the weather was kinder than last year`s damp day which contributed to the number of visitors to the show also being up.

The Society`s new Chairman Kathy Tuggey said: "It was marvellous to see so many people coming along and enjoying an afternoon at our show which we try to keep friendly and family oriented. Some Horticultural shows have had to close due to lack of support, but we are fortunate in still attracting high levels of entries and visitor numbers."

She made a particular welcome to some special visitors to this year`s show. A number of Chelsea Pensioners spent the afternoon at the show, mingling with the crowd, exchanging stories and anecdotes, posing for photographs and awarding trophies to the winning exhibitors.

In general, entries for fruit, vegetables, baking, preserves, and art were up on last year`s numbers whilst children`s entries and handcraft were down.

Whilst this year`s prolonged warm, sunny weather saw some flower varieties, particularly roses peak too early for the show, in the fruit and vegetable categories ripe tomatoes were plentiful as were onions, runner and French beans, beetroot, courgettes and marrows.

One particular entry caught the eye of everyone, it was a Zucchetta Rampicante, nicknamed the Garden Gorilla of Italy. Looking like a massive circular banana, it is a member of the squash family and measured in excess of three feet in circumference. This was entered by Graham Darsley from Wokingham who won the `Any other vegetable` category.

Another striking entry was a beautiful dahlia which measured over a foot across the head which won the `Specimen bloom` category and was grown by Terry Davies.

The men`s apple flan competition (Confrerie de Tarte aux Pommes des Hommes) was once again hotly contested and attracted the most entries ever and was won by Mac Stephenson.

Bread baking and cake making was so popular this year that additional display space was needed. Show secretary Frank Whittaker attributed this to the `Mary Berry` effect.

Entrants and visitors to this year`s show were not confined to Hurst and came from Wokingham, Reading, Earley, Woodley, Arborfield, Crowthorne, Maidenhead and Twyford.

The traditional end to the show is the grand auction of vegetables, fruit and flowers donated by the growers themselves. Here terrific bargains were snapped up in furious bidding and a typical bid of £5 to £7 would win a bulging bag of mixed vegetable varieties together with a large bunch of cut flowers with a combined retail value of over £30 in local supermarkets.