

100th HURST HORTICULTURAL AND COTTAGE GARDEN SOCIETY SHOW

Held at the Hurst Village Halls on Saturday August 17th 2013.

Press Article by Frank Whittaker

The 100th Hurst Horticultural and Cottage Garden Society show was held on Saturday August 17th in Hurst.

This much loved show once again created much interest and attracted record levels of entries, up 8% on last years and whilst the weather was less kind than last year's sizzler, the number of visitors to the show also increased which pleased the show's organisers.

Chairman Major Terry Bunyard said: "It's the perfect English country day, capturing something about village life that still exists today."

"We try to keep it friendly, family orientated and encourage children to enter and become involved. Indeed many of the parents of children who have entered this year were first encouraged to enter the show by their parents when they were children."

"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."

In general, entries for fruit, vegetables and flowers were down this year whilst numbers for cooking, preserves, photography, art and handcraft were up.

Ripe tomatoes were somewhat of a rarity at this year's show as were some fruit and flower varieties which seems to be due to the late cold and wet spring. However, nature sometimes compensates and on show were a profusion of onions, runner and French beans, beetroot, courgettes and marrows.

The men's apple flan competition (Confrerie de Tarte aux Pommes des Hommes) was once again hotly contested and attracted the most entries for many years.

Bread baking and cake making was so popular this year that additional display space was needed, as was extra space for photography and children's paintings.

Entrants and visitors to this year's show were not confined to Hurst and came from 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.

There is one memorable story from this year's show and it involves one of the show competitors who had picked his prize winning runner beans (or so he thought) and put them on the garden table.

He went back to his garden to pick some other vegetables for the show and when he got back to the table his dog had jumped onto the table and had eaten all the beans.