

7. HINDON FLOWER SHOW - Frank Freeman Chairman

Last year's Hindon's Horticultural and Industrial Show (to use its full name) was remarkable, not so much because of the weather, which was awful, but because so many people came regardless. Well done Hindon! Normally we run out of ice cream, last year it was hamburgers. As always, it was a lovely happy occasion attended by people from all corners of the village for what I like to think is Hindon's premier annual event. As I remarked at the prizegiving: 'You can't have a Flower Show without flowers and you can't have flowers without rain. It was just a pity to have it all at once'.

The number of entries were slightly up compared with last year's and of a commendably high standard, despite a somewhat unusual growing season. In particular, the number of entries in the Children's Sections was even more than last year, for which Sharon Johnson and other members of the school staff must take a good share of the credit. In particular, I'm sure the King would have been amused by the attempts at his portrait.

There were the usual supporting attractions: Skittles to build up a thirst and appetite, serviced by the beer and BBQ tents, supplemented by refreshing ice creams and teas in the village hall. Once again the well supported raffle competition boasted an impressive number of prizes, thanks to the time consuming efforts of Tean Mitchell to coax them out of a number of generous donors.

The quality of the scarecrows continues to improve. The success of this competition is entirely due to the efforts of John and Sally Hughes and the imagination and skills of the scarecrow makers. I was delighted that their exhibit, The Coronation Tea Party, complete with P Bear Esq and marmalade sandwiches produced from the royal handbag won as a result of a public vote. No fixes here!

The committee are to be congratulated for all their hard work before, during and after for making it the success it was. It was a genuine collective effort which started months beforehand and took form as soon as the marquees went up so efficiently on the Thursday night before and just carried on through until the playground was vacated with impressive speed and efficiency over the weekend. Well done the Hindon marquees team, many of whom also helped dismantle the other stands.

As Chairman, I have especially to pay a public tribute to show Secretary Geraldine Fairfax-Cholmeley, supported by Min Teare, Stand-in Treasurer Mike Lewis, while Janet Donbavand was away celebrating a personal milestone, and John Hughes (scarecrows). Without those four the show would simply not have happened in the way it did. My thanks also to all those who ran the stands.

I was especially delighted that Tony King was able to present the cups and prizes. He's been winning them for longer than anyone can remember so it was fitting that this year he was handing them out to others for a change.

Finally, congratulations to the prize winners, published at the time so I don't propose to list them all here. I wish to draw your attention to a new cup, the Redwood Cup, generously donated by Peter and Gilly Redwood, for the winner of the new children's category, the 12-15 years age group, won by Shaun Alfred Cooper. In addition, the Doreen Potts Cup was awarded this year for the first time to the runner-up in the Non-Industrial Division. It was presented by John and Sally Hughes in memory of Doreen and, as previously reported, Sue Warren was the first winner.

In summary, I consider the Show was a success, despite the weather. Nevertheless, we are always on the lookout for ways to improve things. Any reasonably polite suggestion would always be welcome. It's not too late but as soon as possible please, given planning is well under way for this year's show which is due to take place on Saturday 20th July starting at 2-30pm with prizegiving at 4.30. Details of the classes will be confirmed in the May edition of the Hindon Post and registration of entries will be in the Village Hall between 7-30 and 9pm, so if you haven't already done so, start planting now. Also, there will be refreshments on site, including burgers and hot dogs, so don't bother to have lunch before you come.

My final plea is aimed at those of you younger and fitter than I. The task of setting up always falls to the usual suspects, none of whom are getting any younger. We need fresh blood to help with the inevitable lifting and carrying, so please spread the word.