



**FRENSHAM &
DOCKENFIELD
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER**

No 170 November 2023

INTRODUCTION...

by Sharon Bleach



As we come to the end of the year I have been able to reflect on what has been both a busy and very enjoyable year. The AGM was held last month and this month we finish the Society year with the **Members Supper on Friday 24th November at the Marindin Hall**. See below for how to get your tickets....

The first event of 2024 will be the social evening on Thursday 25th January at 19:30 in the Marindin Hall where you will be able to catch up with other members and collect your new membership cards and members handbook for 2024. Lots of good things to look forward to!

Members Supper - Friday 24th November, The Marindin Hall 7:30 for 8:00pm

We will be having a Curry Evening for our members supper this year. Curries and accompaniments will be supplied by A Sprinkle of Saffron. Your ticket will include a welcome glass of wine and desserts to follow the curries. Anyone who is unable to eat curry please let us know as you book your ticket and we will ensure there is an alternative meal for you. Any gluten free or other dietary requirements should be noted on your booking.

We will have bottles of wine available to buy for your table. Soft drinks along with tea or coffee will be available. **Tickets are £25 per person and payment should be made by BACS** direct to the FDHS bank account using the details which are shown on the inside front cover of your membership handbook for this year. We do have a limited number of spaces available and need to confirm numbers to the caterers in good time so **please book and pay by Thursday 16th November**.

To book your tickets please email events@fdhs.org.uk with the number of tickets you want and any specific dietary requirements. We very much look forward to seeing you on that evening when we will as usual have a great raffle and will present the Banksian Medal and the Anniversary Cup.

FDHS AUTUMN SHOW

What a great turn out for the Autumn Show – one of our judges said it was THE best show display she had seen all year. A great compliment to all those who entered and helped with the show. We had 312 entries from 40 entrants.

Some other feedback from judges was about making sure we had enough space to display the floral arrangements, rather more spaced apart as we have so many great entries these days - and so we are looking at how to achieve that for the 2024 shows. The Home Industries judge Kate Shipton also said that it was very hard to judge a number of classes as the standard of entries was so high.



The Society had the pleasure of awarding the Helen Lloyd Cup for the first time, this was donated to the Society in her memory by her family. Kathy Winter not only presented the Helen Lloyd Cup but also all the other trophies to the winners.

Liz Glover was awarded The Hunt Cup for most original flower arrangement for her interpretation of Everything Green. Jilly Steventon retained the Lee-Jones Cup for highest points in Rose classes 5-8 and was also awarded the people choice award, voted for by the show's visitors. The Hunter Cup for most points in classes 5-30, was awarded to Ruth Murphy and Sharon Bleach rounded up the flower section by winning the Bill Othen Vase for dahlias.

In the Fruit and Vegetable section the A.J Stevens Cup for the highest number of points (30 points) across, vegetable classes 31-45, was awarded to Neil Mumford for the second year in succession. He was also awarded the Atherton Cup for class 45 'Judged the best exhibit of a collection of vegetables. This collection also won him the Morris Cup for exhibit of highest merit in the whole show.

The Col. Earle Cup for most points in the fruit section, classes 48-55, was awarded to Dan Bosence.



In a hotly contested Home Industries section, the Wilson Bowl for most points was awarded to the aptly named Bridgette Wilson who just pipped Penny Hearn. This was Bridgette's second win, 10 years after her first in 2013.

In the junior section, The Dockenfield Cup awarded for most points was awarded to Imogen Huband. The Pat Mattin Cup was awarded to Lily Easton for her floral arrangement.

Not to be out done by his wife, Harry Glover was awarded The Machin-Cooke Cup for most points in the photography classes. Lastly, Caroline Plant was awarded the Huitfeldt Cup for accumulating most points in the show.

Visit to Gilbert's Dahlias *by Sharon Bleach*

A small group of members went down to visit the dahlia fields at Gilberts Dahlias. It was spectacular to see so many different varieties and colours of dahlia in bloom in close proximity. There was also a lovely café and we had a fascinating talk by Nick Gilbert out in amongst the dahlias, on the various things they have to think about as dahlia breeders and sellers.



I certainly had not seen as many different varieties of dahlias all together before or understood how they new varieties were developed. Thoroughly recommended as a place to visit at the right time of the year when the dahlias are in bloom. Now to decide on which ones to add to my collection for 2024!

Their website if you are keen to see more or order tubers is: www.gilbertsdahlias.co.uk



Sharon and I have visited both Chelsea Flower Show and Hampton Court in previous years, but wanted to experience other shows and we took the opportunity of visiting the Malvern Autumn show on Friday 22nd September based at the Three Counties Showground. To make a stay of it, we drove down the day before and stayed in the Cotford Hotel in Malvern (highly recommended), driving back on Saturday morning. The show is held over 3 days.

The Autumn Show is not just focused on gardening but also on countryside pursuits, so you'll find duck herding, gundog demonstrations, dog agility competitions and a vintage tractor display.



The National Vegetable Society, hold their annual Giant Vegetables Championship at this show and this year eight Guinness World Records were broken including, the heaviest cucumber at 13.388kg, the longest broad bean at 43.1cm, which was also the heaviest at 192g and the heaviest runner bean at 196g, not sure what they would taste like!

There are a number of pavilions, including the Harvest Pavilion, which included over 175 different vegetable classes competing in the National Vegetable Society Midlands Branch Championships and there are also separate competitions run by the Malvern Show for individuals to enter vegetables, flower arrangements and flowers, Dahlias in particular have 28 classes.

There was also a 'World of Animals' area which included a large variety of animals of all shapes and sizes waiting to greet visitors, including different breeds of dogs, horses and pigs as well as agility displays and jousting, along with Shire Horse Displays.

We found that this show had a far more relaxed atmosphere compared to the rather busy Chelsea and Hampton Court shows. You could get to the food outlets very easily with little queuing and find a table and chair to sit down and we were always able to get a seat in the pavilions for the talks.

It is well worth visiting, but in our opinion would be too much to drive there and back in a day. We had more than enough to see and do, and in fact we did not get to see everything so it may require a two day visit or perhaps we just need to be more organised for a visit perhaps next year!

A great allotment start – congratulations Annette Clayson!

One of our members Annette Clayson took on a new allotment this year and recently won an award for the best newcomer to the Wrecclesham Allotment – a couple of pictures to show what she has managed to do with her space to achieve this award. Great job Annette!



Recent FDHS events: Quiz Night



Our October Social was a quiz night prepared by quiz master Neil Mumford – the quiz supposed to be easy but a number of the questions proved to be quite a challenge! The winning team (Suzanne McLean, Judith Wiles, Penny Hearn and Sharon Turner-Mumford and quiz master Neil Mumford can be seen here. Thank you, Neil, for organising this fun event.

RHS lecture opportunity at RHS Wisley open to all FDHS members

We have had the following information as one of the opportunities coming from our RHS affiliation. FDHS members can attend this event by registering their interest directly as indicated below.

Please find below details of the annual John MacLeod lecture to be given by Professor James Hitchmough. James is never shy in expressing his opinions and this should be a highly interesting hour and a quarter looking at this important topic as weather patterns change and our own climate here in the UK modifies the way we think about our plants and gardens.

Please RSVP scienceadmin@rhs.org.uk to confirm your attendance

John MacLeod Annual Lecture - Plant Fitness, Sustainable Planting and the Conceptualisation of Understanding Horticultural Plants

The 2023 John MacLeod Lecture - 16th November 2023

Professor James Hitchmough

Time/Venue - 14.30 – 15.45 hrs in The Garden Room RHS Wisley Hilltop The Home of Gardening Science

RSVP: scienceadmin@rhs.org.uk



Are we on the brink of transformation or disaster? Join us for an insight and glimpse a world where ecological understanding and innovative horticultural practices converge to create a sustainable future.

Prof. James Hitchmough will paint a compelling picture of how our evolving climate demands a deeper focus on plant fitness, despite a lack of tools and perspectives to address the challenge.

Discover a glimmer of hope as he unveils a framework linking fitness, niche, and geographic range, offering a pathway to a reimagined horticultural landscape that stands resilient in the face of biodiversity loss and climate change.

James Hitchmough is Professor Emeritus in Horticultural Ecology at the University of Sheffield, with a unique worldview shaped through 40 years spent integrating landscape architectural practice with academic research.

He retired from the University in September 2022, but continues to co-supervise his final tranche of 5 PhD students as they complete their studies. Two of these students are working on understanding and quantifying plant fitness for the changing climate.

James continues to develop new types of designed plantings (as he always has) in landscape architectural practice often in collaboration with Tom Stuart Smith but currently also with Piet Oudolf.

Most of his consultancy and design work is however in China and Australia where he works primarily with their native flora. The perspectives that come from his integration of academic research and practice shapes a world view, that makes him an in-demand conference speaker around the world.

Currently James spends most of his time completing the garden and meadow creation project around his home in South Somerset. This should be completed by September 2024, at which point he plans to focus on writing a much more critical planting design literature for a time of rapidly changing climate.

My quest goes on to continue to uncover more history about the society and I recently came across a new article added to the British Newspaper archive by the Surrey Advertiser and County Times on 28th July 1951. The following is the text from that article.

Police with Green Fingers

Several successes were achieved by Police officers at the summer show held on Saturday 21st July 1951. Sgt H P Higgins took the premier award in the open and cottagers' classes 'sweet peas. PCA W Bruce (Farnham) was second in the Sweet Peas class and second for his vegetable peas and P.C. F Stevens (Frensham), had three thirds for vegetables. While his wife claimed secured a number of awards.

Special awards were:

- The Diploma from Amateur Gardening was awarded to Miss D Aslett for best floral exhibit.
- The Amateur Gardening Bronze medal for collection of fruit to Mrs. Dalton.
- Stallholder certificate for best eggs to Mrs Flower of Churt.
- Col Earle challenge Cup for highest points in cottagers' division to George Thayer.
- Smallholder Bronze medal for best exhibit in cottagers' class and the Atherton Cup for best collection of vegetables to Mr W Lucas.
- Amateur Gardening Diploma for best floral exhibit in open classes, to Mrs Theo Stevens.
- The Morris Challenger Cup for highest points in home industries, Miss Jean Smith, she also won a special prize for preserves
- Mrs Huitfeldt Cup for highest points in show and her cup for the best exhibit in open classes to Alfie Stevens.
- The Banksian medal for most prize money awarded to one exhibitor– Mr W N Gurdon.

All the prizes were presented by Countess Frances Lloyd George.

If you have any pieces of history or memories about the society, please contact me on 07894 471000

COMING UP NEXT YEAR...

Thursday 25th January 2024 19:30 – Social evening, Marindin Hall and the opportunity to pick up your new membership cards and Members Handbook.

Also just to let you know that this will be my last Newsletter (for a while at least!) as I am handing over the responsibility for next years newsletters to Neil Mumford. We will continue to publish newsletters on a quarterly basis next year and I am sure Neil will bring some great new ideas to the newsletters. Thank you for taking this forward Neil.

Best wishes and happy gardening,

Sharon



All unattributed articles are by the Editor Sharon Bleach.