

## **Birmingham Allotment Show - Venue Midlands Arts Centre, Cannon Hill Park 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

Back in February the show committee took a very risky decision to move from a marquee in the park into the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), I knew with the show committee I had, we could put on a show. Would exhibitors come to a new venue with a reputation for Fine Art events and they certainly gave me a few sleepless nights but that's what exhibitors do, so I am told.

The Show Arena is to be in ground floor theatre with the stage and seating removed giving adequate space when we booked the MAC we were told we would have two members of staff assigned to us whose sole function was to look after us, they also had backup team now these guys were geniuses at staging, I cannot praise the MAC staff enough they were brilliant, and right through the four days they were fantastic there was no such thing as a problem only a solution.

12 noon Friday exhibitors flooded in with usual problems unloading space, were do we prep, lost & wrong tickets, no space on table etc these things any show organiser will recognise between the show committee and the MAC staff all was smoothly sorted out. The last exhibitor finished placing his exhibit about 8.30pm we went home and left the MAC staff to close up.

Saturday morning Alex the MAC's technical wizard had started early setting up the lighting for the displays when we arrived at 7.00 walking into the show arena wow it was spectacular with the blacked-out theatre and lighting on displays and long tables of vegetables and flowers the colours of the exhibits ready did have the wow factor the only description spectacular.

Judges arrived on time, they reported the rain was still hammering down and it was here for the day. Judging started on time we calculated on opening to the public at 11.00am Mick Poultney finished YouTube video and we opened bang on time. Mick made couple of controversial decisions one justified and one to debate for years. Both judges commended the standard this year, even if some competitor's maths needs a little work.

The program for this years Show was competition and promotion and create an environment to encourage children's interest. At the pre-show meeting Jack and the bean stalk, quiz was suggested. So Jack would greet the kids in the main foyer give them a task of finding 10 items in the Show arena when they had completed the task return the answers back to the magic bean lady in the arena terrace they could chose a magic bean plant it and take it home at grow into a bean stalk. This proved to be a great success because it engaged the children while parents looked around the show. What was supposed to be the B.D.A.C. help desk soon morphed itself into a Jack's touchy Feeley for kids under the stewardship Mick Merrill the kids love handling all sorts of vegetables before going on Jacks quest, not planned but a great success. The N.S.A.L.G help desk kept Dianne and Tom busy.

Tombola and Raffle were in the competition arena the tombola sold out on all three days The Raffle was a daily prize of a years rent for next year and was only open to current allotment tenants The winners were Michael Jackson - The Leys Allotment, Stuart Freeth – Thornbridge Av and Dave Hubball – Thornbridge Av.

Presentation on Sunday was conducted by Chris Smith and the guests of honour were Darren Rudge Radio WM, Alderman Brenda Clarke BDAC President, Dianne Applegate N.S.A.L.G, Life Vice President BDAC Josie Coey and Joe Brown, Nikki Bradley BCC.

Best in vegetables went to Terry Pullen Class 14, 5 Onions under 250g

Best in Flowers and Best in Show went 16yr old Alex Percival Class 40 with specimen Gladioli.

The John Singleton Trophy “Champion Allotment Gardener” went to Terry Pullen (27 first, 8 Second, 3 third & totalling 114 points) Terry is acknowledge as a superb gardener, plot holder at Springfield Road and a supporter of the Birmingham show for many years.

Over the four days setup & show all the produce stood very well Monday a little rearranging of vases to hide a sad dahlia or two, Ward End Gardeners had to replace a vase of Dahlias because someone forgot to put water in the vase.

Close of show went very smoothly. The flowers were donated to the MAC to use as they wished, unclaimed veg was donated to a Charity who feed the Birmingham’s Homeless.

Because of the fantastic service we had received from the MAC staff we allowed them to select any veg they wanted.

We are rebuilding a Show for the future, we meet a lot of old and new friends and we learned a lot about stage craft which we can use in future.

We did not make any money, but thanks to the show committee who worked there socks off, we had one hell of a Show.

Derek Cullen

B.D.A.C. Show Secretary

Show team photo

Left to right is

Barbara, Chris, myself, Peter, Dave, John, Mick, Stuart, Mark, Ann and Hester.

Front left unnamed stand-in, front centre JACK