

EAST BRIDGFORD VILLAGE SHOW 2015

ORGANISED BY THE EAST BRIDGFORD HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Any village show on a sunny day can bring a community together, but add in the complexity of an unfortunate and shocking incident like a fire during preparation and things can go one of two ways; either a year's planning goes up in smoke and there's no enjoyment for anyone, or *everyone* pulls together to turn a potential disaster into a wonderful and memorable occasion.

Thankfully in our case, it was the latter. Once we had the all-clear to continue with the show, the field plan was rearranged and all hands were on deck to move the bar and seating area, the bbq, the hog roast, plus four marquees and their contents to safer areas. With a large part of the showground in front of the pavilion now unusable, it was a mammoth task to reposition everything to new and workable locations, but it was all done with great community spirit and enthusiasm and the show got underway with only an hour's delay.

So, at midday, the Seaforth Highlanders started the show by leading the fancy dress parade onto the showground. It couldn't take its usual route up Main Street due to traffic congestion and instead, the parade circled the showground and then entered the main arena, where Mr Maddison once again had the difficult task of picking winners from a fantastic array of outfits fitting in with the show's theme of 'In the Garden'.

Despite the chaos on the roads around Butts Field, all 46 stallholders arrived and were able to set up in time for the start of the show – a great effort considering the delays in being able to drive on and off the showground. Our thanks go to all who helped with traffic control along College Street and Main Road and to everyone for their patience and understanding.

No show can continue without food, and with the burgers, buns and charcoal gone up in flames it was a race against time to replace everything. Gonalston Farm Shop came to the rescue by providing in excess of 500 burgers in record time, and our food management team performed what was effectively a massive supermarket-sweep, going to unsuspecting shops and clearing them out of bread rolls! With help from St Peter's school in the form of extra bbqs and charcoal, plus some necessary utensils, the food area was back up and running, and as busy as ever.

The main marquee had been setting up and receiving entries even before the fire. There is a huge amount of work done behind the scenes in this area, and it was a delight to see that, once the judging was complete and the marquee was opened to the public once again, the tables were decorated beautifully with the usual high

standard and number of entries to the homecraft and horticultural categories. Well done to all our winners this year, and to everyone who entered.

The decision to have two arenas this year was, by all accounts, a huge success. It meant that we were able to offer a large space for our main acts – the H&M Dog Display team and the Dako Flying Angels – and a smaller area which better suited our two children's dance acts and the circus workshop. The fact that the latter ended up being right next door to the seating (and bar) area seemed to please plenty of the parents who came to watch.

We were unable to accommodate the Rodeo 'Sheep' as originally planned, as well as the Classic Cars which had to be abandoned due to lack of space on the field. Due to time restrictions we also missed the egg-throwing competition and hence the opportunity to watch the catching talents of the younger visitors and to enjoy the entertaining commentary from David Maddison.

A few changes to the scheduled itinerary were not through our own making. The flypast, for instance, was a Hurricane and not a Dakota as originally advertised. But we're certainly not complaining; it's a highlight of the day and a privilege that they recognise our show at all.

The next surprise was the unannounced arrival of the winners of last year's Tug of War competition, who turned up expecting to defend their title. With four teams already in the line-up, suddenly having five made it a bit of a logistical nightmare, but the problem was resolved by putting an 'EB All Stars 8' together to take on the fifth team. The All Stars went on to victory in that contest and in the main event the St Peter's Dads team regained the title and took the trophy.

Around the showground plenty of entertainment went ahead unaffected; the inflatables, the junior go-carts, the donkey rides, farm corner, the walkabout circus act and the Punch & Judy stand to name but a few. The music and Morris Dancers worked together fantastically to co-ordinate their performances, while the WI hut were busy all day, providing tea and refreshments.

It is with great thanks and relief that the fire service and the Parish Council allowed the show to continue and despite everything we recorded a massive 4,112 visitors to the show – the biggest turnout to date. Some might say that it was the lure of the smoke, but we like to think it was because of great camaraderie, beautiful weather and our reputation for putting on a great event for everyone to enjoy.

The successful outcome has also enabled us to make generous donations to local causes, as well as to the Parish Council and Sports Clubs.

All the planning in the world could not have prepared the us for the shock of the fire, but the fact we could pull off an amazing day despite the terrible circumstances can be put down to two things; truly dedicated committee members who managed their own areas of responsibility brilliantly under pressure, and living in a wonderful village

where people care and are willing to work together to make the very best of every situation.