

Chairman's Report for 2016

Ray Keppler

1) Introduction

It's been another good year for *THACS*, with a full and varied programme of nine events. All of these events were well-supported and we did not have to cancel any, so thank you for your participation and support.

2) AGM

The first event of 2016 was the fifteenth *THACS* AGM, which took place at Tewin Memorial Hall on 11th January and was well attended. It was followed by a talk entitled *From the Buchart Gardens in Vancouver to the Orchards of Washington State* by Mike and Anna Clark. This was a light-hearted and entertaining account of their trip, showing the diversity of flowers and fruit as well as other aspects of the spectacular landscape.

3) Shows

The two *THACS* shows in Spring and Autumn provided good opportunities for people to display examples of their skills across a diverse range of subjects, and that is exactly what they did!

The Spring Show on 9th April had 93 exhibitors who entered 297 exhibits, whilst the Autumn Show on 17th September had 139 exhibitors who entered 319 exhibits.

Each show had exhibits from different aspects of Flower Arranging, Horticulture, Arts and Crafts, Photography and Culinary. The overall display was enhanced by delightful displays of childrens art. Together, they made impressive and colourful displays that filled the Main Hall, Parish Room and the Corridor. Sometimes it is a challenge to find sufficient space to display everything, but that challenge is a nice problem to have!

Without the support of our very knowledgeable judges these shows could not run so my thanks to them.

And not forgetting we were able to donate £xxx from the sale of show produce to our nominated local charity, St John Hospitalers-----.

4) Open Gardens

Jim Hall and Alice Greenwood organised an Open Gardens event for Sunday 22nd May.

Nine local gardens opened to visitors and there was a very wide variety of garden sizes, designs and styles including Tewin Allotment Association, who kindly opened the allotments.

The weather on the day was warm and sunny and the number of visitors to our village was tremendous: - more than three hundred people toured the various gardens around Tewin.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation goes to all of the Open Garden owners, whose inspirational gardens were a pleasure to see.

In particular Ann Lee who provided an extensive range of cakes, biscuits and drinks to refresh all our garden visitors and raise £700 in support of Isobel Hospice, a very worth local charity, and

Maureen Yates plant sales which raised over £200 in support of our village store, well done to both of them.

5) Visits

I organised a coach trip for 13th July to Savill Garden (which lies within Windsor Great Park).

Thirty-four people came on the visit and twenty-two of us went on the optional guided tour, which was enjoyable and informative.

Since Savill Garden consists of 35 acres of interconnected gardens, our visit was too brief for us to fully explore all of them. However, the parts of the garden we did get to see were very impressive, with many of the flower beds having large drifts of healthy and beautiful plants (all clearly labelled).

The garden certainly lived up to its reputation as “a tranquil place to discover rare plants from around the world, arranged in stunning seasonal displays”. Even the dark clouds and few light showers we experienced did not spoil our enjoyment of a great day out.

6) Workshops

There were three workshops in 2016, all ably organised by Joanne Allen.

The Creative Writing workshop on 21st March was attended by seven people who enjoyed a day of writing under the tutelage of the very capable Frances Wilson.

There was another Creative writing workshop on 21st October which was again tutored by Frances Wilson. This was attended by nine people, including several newcomers.

The Art workshop on 16th December was run by Jude O’Sullivan and attended by nine people. The subject matter was *Light and Shade* and the venue was the beautiful and well-lit church hall at St. Mary’s, Welwyn.

Thanks are also due to Joanne who through organising these events managed to boost membership of our society.

7) Arts & Crafts Fair

The annual Art & Craft Fair was organised by Hilary Tipping. It was held in Tewin Memorial Hall on 29th October, with stalls selling a variety of locally hand-made Arts and Crafts including soft furnishings, wood turning, preserves, painting and jewellery. This time there was a pottery-making demonstration to watch, with some visitors having a go themselves. The home bake cake stall, in support of Help the Hero’s had many visitors and managed to raise £300 for the charity.

8) Helpers

The committee works well together and I am very grateful for the ongoing dedication and support from the rest of the committee, who have done a great job together.

We are also thankful for the staunch support and involvement of several *THACS* members who, although they are not on the committee, have given their time and effort to the benefit of us all.

In particular: -

- 1) Joanne Allen for organising the two Creative Writing workshops and the Art workshop,
- 2) Hilary Tipping for organising the Art & Craft Fair.
- 3) Pat & Alf Fulford, who have continued to handle the advertising and the *THACS* page on the village web site.
- 4) Linda Crawford and her team for all of the catering at the two shows

We've also benefited from the considerable support from numerous village organisations: -

- 1) The staff, helpers and children at Tewin Cowper School, Tewin Under-Fives Pre-school, Tewin Tots Pre-school and the Tewin Toddler group, have all supported our shows.
- 2) Tewin Stores have been a collection point for the show schedules.

Our thanks also go to all of the other numerous willing members and supporters of the society, who reliably help with many diverse tasks. Thank you all!