

West & Midlands Group Annual Show Report
3rd June 2018
Highnam Village Hall

The weather during the run up to our 5th Show at Highnam was a hot and humid affair, with accompanying torrential thunderstorms designed to test the resolve of Iris growers targeting the show benches. With the previous spring not seeming to emerge from a long, cold, wet winter; May turned warm and dry with the gardens needing rain, but not the quantity and velocity that we received. As the American poet May Sarton put it "A garden is always a series of losses set against a few triumphs, like life itself" applying all too well on this occasion.



However, the Show day was warm and bright, did we put the air conditioning on in the car to keep us refreshed or allow a little heat to get that bloom out in time. There were a number of bearded Iris that survived the conditions to make the Show, more entries than of recent years in the bearded section and competition from different entrants. The Siberians liked the conditions with entries well into double figures and of a high standard with both modern and more traditional breeding. The winter took its toll on the species and more tender potted *Iridaceae* not making it to the Show. Again, well into double figures for the photographic competition to the point where there were only two able to judge.

The other classes were judged by fellow entrants as follows.

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- Class 1 1st & the **Gloucester Cup** to Brenda Nickels, with an unnamed bronze bearded iris.
 2nd Jim Mason, displaying an unnamed mauve bearded Iris.
- Class 2 1st Fred Raines with a range of blue bearded including 'Bold Print', 'Wild Wings', 'Cyclax',
 'Silverado', 'Wine time' & 'Iceland'.
- 2nd Fern Harden showing 'Eclipse de Mai', 'Aurélie', 'Magnetism', 'Jacques Coeur', & a
 seedling.
- Class 3 1st Jeremy Handy with a range of lemon to off white unnamed bearded iris.

- Class 4 Joint 1st Tony Watson with a first flowering of ‘Captain Quell’ and Brenda Nickels with an unnamed yellow to bronze spike.
3rd Jeremy Handy with a well-spaced lemon coloured unnamed spike.
- Class 5 1st Gill Eyre with an unnamed mustard purple spike.
2nd Malcom Allison with unnamed spike.
3rd Tony Watson showing ‘Golden Muffin’.
- Class 7 Joint 1st and **Rainbow Trophy** to Fern Harden with ‘Silverado’, ‘Bold Print’, ‘Battlestar’, ‘Snowy Owl’, ‘Amethyst Dancer’, ‘Lullaby of Spring’ and Fred Raines, showing ‘La Meije’ Torero, ‘Classic Look’ and three seedlings.
3rd Jeremy Handy with unnamed spikes.
- Class 8 1st Fred Raines with ‘Mer du Sud’, ‘Silverado’ and a seedling.
2nd Jeremy Handy with unnamed blooms ranging from blues to white.
3rd Jeremy Handy showing lemon & mustard unnamed blooms.
- Class 9 1st Fred Raines and **Shropshire Cup & the Malvern Bowl** for a vase of pale blue Siberian seedlings.
2nd Jill Whitehead showing ‘Shrawley, ‘Huntress’.
3rd Fred Raines with a vase of ‘Peter Hewitt’.
- Class 11 1st Jill Whitehead with a *I. pseudacorus*.
2nd Jeremy Handy displaying a vase of Dutch Iris.
3rd Fern Harden with a pale blue unnamed *I. ensata*.
- Class 12 1st Tony Watson showing *I. flavescens*.
2nd Fern Harden with a velvet purple seeding K.R. 3739.
3rd Fern Harden with *I. graminea*.
- Class 13 1st Brenda Nickels with *Sisyrinchium striatum*.
2nd Malcom Allison with unnamed *Gladiolus nanus*.
- Class 14 1st Brenda Nickels with *I. pseudacorus bastardii* wining the **Shrubland Trophy**.
2nd Jim Mason with the bearded ‘Al-ru-wc’
3rd Brenda Nickels with *I. chrysographes*
- Class 15 1st Brenda Nickels with an innovative display of Belgian book binding with the image of an iris and an arrangement of Freesias.
Joint 2nd Fern Harden with an arrangement depicting ‘Iris, goddess of the rainbow’ and Fred Raines with a display of seed to seedlings to flowering bearded iris.
- Class 16 1st Fern Harden an impressively clean arrangement, minimalist but very effective, using a glass base and Dutch Iris.
- Class 17 1st Rex Harden with an image of *I. reticulata* bred by Alan McMurtrie.
2nd Brenda Nickels with a close up of a bearded iris
3rd Alun Whitehead with a profile picture of an *I. iberica*.
- Class 18 1st Jeremy Handy with a bed of bearded iris in flower.
2nd Fred Raines with an image of a fan of bearded iris.



3rd Fred Raines and a picture of Siberians.

Class 19 1st Fred Raines showing a lemon seedling.
 2nd Tony Watson with a pale mauve seedling.

Class 20 1st Fred Raines with a large mauve Siberian.
 2nd Ian Powell showing a seedling x 'Salamander crossing'.
 3rd Tony Watson displaying another purple Siberian with golden markings.

The most points in Show & the **Somerset Cup** went to Fred Raines, but this year there was much stiffer competition, with Jeremy and Fern scoring well and Brenda making a very respectable showing. The margin was much closer than it has been recently. The standard of the Show despite the trials and tribulations of weather, pest, disease and transport mishaps is a credit to our members growing skills. The balance between bearded, Siberian and non-bearded appears dependant on weather but we are able to give a good account of ourselves. Two long standing members were unable to attend this year and their presence was missed, however a "member of the family" was in attendance with 'Peter Hewitt' placed in class 9.

The Show ran smoothly due to the efficient team skills with setting up and breaking down very much a team effort and after being Show Secretary for nine years perhaps I am getting the hang of it! The other key elements that make it far more than just a Show are the plant stall which is a source of information from Judy Pollitt not just a fundraiser, the seed sales and information from Anne, artwork from Fern and the hub of the operation Gill and Belinda, ably assisted by John with the washing up, keeping us refreshed and of course the delicious cakes baked by members.

Until next year - Sunday May 26th 2019
Ian Powell
Show Secretary

