



SUNFLOWER NEWS

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HORSHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

www.horshamhorticulturalsociety.co.uk



EVENING VISITS 2026

Lynda Eaton has organised three evening get togethers this year, The first visit is to Parsonage Farm, which unfortunately we had to cancel last year due to the wet ground conditions. The first two visits are on Tuesday evenings, to start at 6.00 pm Sunflower signs will be displayed where appropriate.

Tuesday 19th May 2026

Parsonage Farm, Kirdford, RH14 0NH

A major seven acre garden in a beautiful setting developed over 30 years, with a fruit theme and many unusual plants. Formally laid out on a grand scale with long vistas, a large lake, walled garden, topiary walk, tulip tree avenue, rose borders and a vegetable garden with trained fruit. It also boasts a turfed amphitheatre, yew cloisters and a jungle walk.

Directions: Head towards Billingshurst. At the roundabout before entering the village, turn right onto the bypass (A272), and right at the first roundabout, to Wisborough Green. At the Village Green, turn right onto Durbans Road (A272), and after 170 yds turn left onto Kirdford Road. After 2.4 miles turn right onto Village Road. The garden is 0.9 miles on the left (restricted usage road).

£15 including refreshments, to the NGS & The Jane Lemon Foundation

Tuesday 23rd June 2026

Daylands Farm, Honeybridge Lane, Ashurst, BN44 3AW

Daylands Farm is part of the the Wiston Estate and Derek Crush has been a tenant farmer here for 40 years. There is a beautiful timber frame 16th century farmhouse and the farm also boasts two large lakes for coarse and carp fishing. They also grow flowers and vegetables which supply various farmers markets. There is also a private ancient woodland. Derek will be giving us a guided tour of the woodland - he has a wealth of knowledge and will tell us about the history and folklore of this land, flora and fauna.

Directions: Leave Horsham on the A24 going south. Turn left at the Old Barn Garden Centre. Daylands Farm is approx. 1 mile along the road on the right.

£12 to include tea/coffee and biscuits after the walk.

PLEASE NOTE: This visit is limited to 30 people, so please let Lynda Eaton know as soon as possible if you wish to attend. Equally importantly, please let her know nearer the time if you can't make it, in case we have a waiting list.

Email: lynda.eaton@hotmail.co.uk or text her on 07876 530355

Tuesday 7th July 2026

David Hide—Snowdrops. Brighton Road Baptist Church. 6.30pm (for 6.45pm start)

Following David's talk at the AGM, we have taken him up on his offer to tell us all about snowdrops. We will learn how we can be successful in planting, where to plant (and where not to plant), and propagating them to increase our stocks.

Entry £5 including refreshments, to David's chosen charity.

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The photographic competition will be judged at the Spring Show on Sunday 29th March. If you're out and about with your camera please consider entering one of the categories this year. The subjects are as follows:

- Something beginning with 'R'
- After the Rain
- A view through a window
- Green

Entries should be submitted to Carolyn Smith, Little Oaks, Kentwyns Drive, Horsham, RH13 6EU by **Sunday, 15th March 2026**. Further details can be found in the show schedule and on our website.

2025 INTER-SOCIETY QUIZ REPORT

Last year's Inter-Society Quiz took place on 13th March at Mannings Heath, where we were also joined by teams from Bolney and Henfield. It was a close-fought competition, and Horsham just pipped Mannings Heath to the post and won the cup again. Well done team!

It was a very enjoyable evening, with an excellent quiz and a lovely spread of food to keep everyone sustained.

2026 will be Horsham's turn to host the quiz, and this will take place on Tuesday, 10th March, which will be our last winter meeting of the season. We hope to go out on a high again!

The winning team, L-R: Carol Hayton, Nigel Budd, David Hide, Liz Baguley, Linda Clinton, Barrie Clinton



AGM REPORT

At the AGM on 13th January the Committee members listed below were elected. The position of President will now be an annual role, nominated each year by the Committee from our membership.

President for 2026 - David Hide
 Chairman— Vacant
 Vice-Chairman—Carolyn Smith
 Treasurer— Sue Hammond
 Show Secretary— shared position
 Secretary—Lynda Cheeseman
 Outings Secretary—Lynda Eaton

Our thanks go to Sally Birchmore, who has now stepped down from the Committee as Treasurer, for her support and hard work over the past few years.

During 2025 we welcomed Wendy Venn onto the Committee. Wendy is looking after the Society's website and publicity, amongst other tasks!

We would welcome further members onto the Committee, so please have a chat with one of the Committee to see if this is something that would interest you.

OBITUARIES

We sadly lost two of our Society members last year, Derek Santer and Margaret Facey.

Derek was our longest serving member and previous Chairman, having joined some 56 years ago. Margaret Facey was actually Derek's neighbour, and he introduced her to the Society. They would regularly come to meetings together.

In January of this year we heard the sad news that Diana Hartley had passed away suddenly and unexpectedly. Our deepest condolences were sent to her family.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

If you have not yet paid your annual subscription, please send your £20 per person to the Membership Secretary at Little Oaks, Kentwyns Drive, Horsham, RH13 6EU or (preferably) pay by bank transfer to: Horsham Horticultural Society, Account No. 00053900, Sort Code 30-94-41.

Please use your name as the reference.

2025 SHOW REPORTS

Our **spring show** on 6th April produced some lovely exhibits of Spring plants and flowers. Despite six weeks of having had no rain, the spring flowers filled the hall with good displays from a record number of members. In addition to viewing the exhibits, our members and visitors were able to enjoy tea and cakes, a grand raffle, as well as a good selection of plants for sale.

All classes attracted a good number of entries; 186 in total, including the photographic categories with some stunning photography on display. The Reg Smith cup for the most points in the photos was won by Liz Baguley.

The other cup winners were:

Stanley cup best exhibit in daffodils – Paul Dalby. Irene Crackston cup best exhibit pot or bowl of bulbs – Paul Dalby. Spring floral cup for three cut tulips – Gill Mansell. Secretary's cup for a petite arrangement – Liz Baguley. Woods Mill cup for three sprays of shrub – Linda Clinton. Domestic Trophy for most points in Domestic classes – Sue Hammond. Butchers Trophy for the best handicraft exhibit – Sue Hammond, for her embroidered picture. The Weald cup for the most points in the whole show was won by Liz Baguley. The Jubilee Cup, which is awarded at our last evening meeting in March, is given for the most points for items bought to our winter meetings. This year the cup was won by Jane Tickner.



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Our **summer show** followed weeks of heatwaves and near drought conditions, but despite the challenges, members pulled out all the stops to put on a good display. We had a high number and exceptional standard of entries. There were 223 entries across almost all of the classes, however there was only one entry in the Sweet Pea class as most plants had flowered early this year due to the hot weather. Sue Hammond was pleased to note that a couple of the trophy winners were first time entrants.

Marian Neden and Paul Dalby were the judges for the fruit, flowers and vegetables classes, and Gill and Vic Mansell had the pleasure of tasting and judging the many entries in the domestic classes, as well as the Handicraft section.

The prizes were awarded by the Society's President, Hazel Bockh, who thanked everyone, both for entering and for helping on the day. The trophies were awarded as follows:



Festival Cup – Carolyn Smith - Most points for flowers, excluding Roses; Shelley Cup – David Hide - Best Sweet Peas or Dahlias; Rose Bowl – Gill Mansell – Best Rose; Nora Poole Cup – Carolyn Smith – Best flower; Founders Salver – Paul Dalby – Most points for vegetables; Arun Cup – Gill Mansell – Most points for fruit; Garden News Shield – Andrew Latham – Best fruit or vegetable; Presidents Cup – Paul Dalby – Most points for flowers, fruit and vegetables; Ron Mitchell Cup – Andrew Latham – Best flowers, fruit and vegetables; Layton Cup – Linda Clinton

– Most points in domestic classes; Handicrafts Trophy – Lynn Roberts – Best Handicraft exhibit; Floral Cup – Debbie Morris – Best floral art arrangement; Padwick Floral Bowl – Paul Dalby - Most points in the whole show; Banksian Medal awarded by the RHS – Paul Dalby – most points in horticulture classes.

RHS GARDEN ENTRY DISCOUNT CARD

The Society is affiliated to the RHS, and as part of this affiliation we receive an RHS Garden Entry Discount Card. This card offers two adults a 50% discount off entry to any RHS Garden (Bridgewater, Harlow Carr, Hyde Hall, Rosemoor and Wisley), with the exception of Flower Shows and Glow illumination events. If you would like to borrow this card please contact one of the Committee.

Master the Chelsea Chop

Below is a simple guide to carrying out the Chelsea chop in your gardens, as featured in the RHS 'The Garden' magazine. Although this is a very well used technique with several benefits, it can still be a daunting procedure to chop off healthy stems from your plants!

This classic spring technique is so-called because it's done around the time of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. It is the process of cutting back herbaceous perennials once the growing season is in full swing. Doing this now can greatly benefit your border displays for several reasons. Chopping stems at this time of year will extend the flowering season, encourage more compact growth, and reduce the need for staking. Some plants will also flower much more abundantly, as the Chelsea chop encourages branching in a similar way as pinching out. To do it, simply cut back the stems by a third using shears or secateurs and put prunings on the compost heap.

What to chop – or not!

The Chelsea chop works best with herbaceous perennials that are naturally branching, such as phlox, penstemons, salvias, *Hylotelephium* (sedum), *Solidago* (goldenrod), *Oenothera lindheimeri* (gaura), echinaceas, helenium and aster. This technique isn't suitable for non-branching plants like irises, lupins and peonies, or for sandy, free-draining soils where summer drought can hinder growth.

Be playful

With large clumps of perennials you can take a selective approach – try cutting back only some stems and leaving others untouched. For example, trim half the stems at the front of the plant, leaving the unpruned ones behind to flower first, followed by the pruned stems later. You can get playful with the display – if you have multiple clumps of the same plant, cut back some and leave others, in a chequerboard pattern. This adds variety in height and the staggered flowering times bring extra interest and flair to your borders.



Seeds Galore!

2025 was classed as a 'Mast Year', a natural phenomenon which occurs every few years when certain tree species produce a superabundance of seeds to increase the likelihood of successful establishment. The reason mast years are particularly noticeable in woods and gardens in the UK is because three of our most common trees – pedunculated oak, ash and beech are masting trees. Weather certainly has a part to play. To produce a healthy crop, the trees need the right combination of temperature and rainfall in the spring.



When the trees produce smaller crops for a few consecutive years, they're effectively keeping the populations of seed eating species in check. But during a mast year, the trees produce more food than the animals can possibly eat. This abundance causes a boom in populations of small mammals like mice. More importantly, it guarantees some will be left over to survive and grow into new trees. Mast years have a major evolutionary advantage for the tree. Producing nuts is costly work and slightly stunts the tree's growth, but as it tends to happen every 5-10 years, it's worth the payoff for some of the crop to germinate into new saplings.

It was, of course, also a bumper year for fruit too. Many people reported having apple trees becoming top heavy, and plum trees producing more fruit than they could ever hope to eat. Hopefully this may mean that the squirrels will find no need to dig up our tulip bulbs this year!