



**July 2017**

**For immediate release**

### **THREE DAYS OF SUNSHINE FOR THE COUNTY SHOW**

**Despite the serious accident which closed the M20 London bound on the first day of the Show; organisers are delighted to report that 80,000 people attended the 2017 Kent County Show.**

Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager said, “We knew that Friday was going to be a challenge for people to get to us when we heard that the motorway had been closed due to a serious accident.”

Despite the motorway not opening until early afternoon the Show still managed to attract good numbers, but was down on the previous year’s Friday figures. This was made up during the weekend when higher than expected numbers visited the Kent County Show.

The three day event saw increased activity on social media with nearly everyone reporting having had a wonderful day. The Kent County Agricultural Society, organisers, were keen to ensure that animal safety and welfare was key during three very warm days. The Grand Parade of Livestock was cancelled on the first day and the vets on site worked hard to ensure that animals were kept cool. The slighter cooler weather on Saturday and Sunday morning resulted in a more comfortable temperature for all the livestock on site.

The Society would like to thank all the Trade Stand Exhibitors who rallied around with many of them providing water on their stands for the large number of dogs that are welcome to attend the Show with their owners.

Headlining the entertainment this year was The Shetland Pony Grand National which captivated the crowds in the main ring. The grandstands were full on all three days when the young riders started their races. The jockeys aged between 8 and 13 years old entertained the crowds although for them it was a serious competition and part of a qualifier for the ultimate Shetland Pony Grand National at the Olympia Horse Show later in the year.

The spectacular saw the children take part in a high speed dash on their pint size Shetland Ponies. This is how some of the country's racing legends started their careers. The young riders mirror the Aintree classic with full silks and racing colours, albeit their tiny steeds have a maximum height 42 inches. Spectators were able to cheer on their favourite horse and jockey during the two and half laps of the ring.

The overall standard of the equine competitions this year was outstanding with all the Show Rings hosting a full programme. The new classes were very well received with visitors particularly enjoying the new Side Saddle Costume Concours D'Elegance where the riders paraded in some simply beautiful costumes, enthraling the crowds. The Grand Prix Show Jumping which moved to Saturday was a thrilling competition with Robert Whitaker taking the first prize of £3,000 and second place as well. Two new classes were added to the Show Jumping which almost doubled the number of entries this year to 297. Visitors also enjoyed the fast paced spectacular Osborne Refrigerator Double Harness Scurry, the majestic heavy horse classes and the beautiful miniature ponies and horses.

Livestock entries saw a significant increase in 2017 and this ensured that visitors were able to see more competitions and enjoy a greater number of animals, particularly in the sheep area with the highest number of entries since

2007. Cattle entries were the highest since 2012 with Folkestone based, J Warnock winning Supreme Dairy Champion and Barwood & Padfield from Norfolk winning Supreme Beef Champion.

Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager explained, “The increased livestock entries, fantastic Show weather, wonderful displays and demonstrations gave this year’s Show a really vibrant atmosphere and we were also delighted to report, in spite of visitor numbers, no problems with the traffic flow and car parking. The new Food Hall had a few teething problems which will be looked at for next year with the help of exhibitor feedback. Whenever there is a large change to the layout it takes a few years for everyone to get used to the revisions. The footfall for our trade exhibitors is something we take very seriously”.

Elsewhere on the Showground the new Garden Life marquee proved very popular with visitors able to see Kent Beekeepers, Kent Federation of Horticultural Societies, Flower Show exhibitors, floral art competitions and the Garden Cafe in one large marquee. The shady woodland area was a cool haven for visitors who were able to escape the sunshine to wander down to the beautiful working horses and traditional craftsmen.

The T-Rex Show, Titan the Robot, Punch and Judy and Mr & Mrs Flora captivated audiences whenever they performed as did the ever popular Sheep Show, Dog and Duck Display and Birds of Prey.

The BBC Radio Kent, World Record Salsa Dance Lesson, attempt on Saturday was not successful but everyone that joined ‘Strictly Come Dancing’ male professional, AJ Pritchard had a wonderful time.

Kevin Attwood, Chairman said “We are thrilled with this year’s Show, the showground looked wonderful, visitors were happy and glorious sunshine helped to swell visitor numbers. The Trade Stands this year were exceptional with many of them offering wonderful activities especially for younger

visitors. This gave the Show a real family feel and everywhere you looked you could see how much fun people were having. In particular we are grateful to the agricultural machinery stands that brought their equipment up to the Show this year, the displays in the area were exceedingly well received by visitors who were fascinated by the technology and innovation that modern farmers use”.

The dates for the 2018 Show will be Friday 6th, Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th July 2018.

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For more information and images contact Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager  
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The Kent County Show is organised by the Kent County Agricultural Society. The Society has been supporting education and improvement in agriculture, horticulture, forestry and related industries since 1923. They provide grants to Kent Young Farmers Clubs, offer scholarships to university students, provide free school visits with their initiative 'Farming in the Classroom' and host over 2,800 children at the annual education event, the Living Land. The Kent County Show attracted 80,000 visitors last year and over 500 trade stands.

Registered charity number: 1001191.

Kent County Show – 6, 7, 8 July 2018

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