

SHREWSBURY FLOWER SHOW



HISTORY

- Began in 1836 as a Carnation and Gooseberry Show in Frankwell
- Fairs in town had a history of drunkenness and debauchery.
- Burgesses and Craft Guilds set about organising more salubrious events and the early forerunner of Shrewsbury Flower Show was held in 1857 near the showground at Coton Hill.

Shropshire Horticultural Society

- This was formally established in 1875 and the Flower Show and Horticultural Society Show were held together in the Quarry Park.
- The Bank of the Coldstream Guards played at that first event.
- Takings for the 2-day Show were £791-12s, giving a profit of £409.
- Did you know in 1923 the SHS bought Shrewsbury Castle from show profits for £2,621 and presented it to the town!

NOT JUST FLOWER POWER ... events and stage performances

- From 1880 balloonist James Whelan was a main attraction until 1893 when he died in an accident at the Show.
- In 1881 Bon Bon was in action on his tightrope – 150ft long and 40ft above the ground. He even carried a live bear cub on his shoulders and cooked an omelette when he was halfway across the wire.

BALLOON ASCENT AT THE FLOWER SHOW



Events (cont.)

- White Helmets –death-defying tricks on motorbikes.
- The Wombles in 1974
- Showjumping
- Military Bands
- Male Voice Choirs
- 2004 Katherine Jenkins sang to the crowds.



CONCORDE FLY OVER

- *August 1987 – The Centenary Show*
- Mr. Bass, local Travel Agent, chartered the supersonic aircraft to mark its centenary.
- To charter Concorde for the day was the cost of two small houses and enough seats had to be sold to cover the cost.



ROYAL VISITS

Queen Mary in 1926

Princess Elizabeth in 1949

Princess Alexandra in 2007



THE FIREWORK DISPLAY



THE FIREWORK DISPLAY

- Started in 1876. The borough coat of arms in gold encircled by the motto Floreta Salopia, out of which five golden firework fountains 30ft high shot into the sky.
- Since then only two shows without fireworks; the 1920 revival after the First World War and in 1971.
- Now fireworks finale on the two evenings, including the live rendition of the 1812 Overture.

The Edibles ..

- At the 1923 Show a bar marquee, named Hercules, was 240ft long and 40ft wide and provided over 100 jobs to local people.
- Since then food and drink at the Show has expanded into a Food Hall, dedicated to live demos from some of the country's best chefs.
- From 1969 onwards the Flower Show became increasingly commercialised with more and more traders renting spaces for stands.

THE FLOWERS

The main attraction, of course, is the flowers.

The show of 1875 started with 79 classes.

The Show now features three floral marquees and many show gardens.

Today it is recognised by the Guinness Books of Records as the worlds longest running horticultural show held in the same location.



PERCY THROWER

- In January 1946 he was appointed Shrewsbury's Park Superintendent, the youngest in the country.
- Created the present Quarry Park and Dingle layout from rough areas.
- He was the driving force for the development of the Show alongside his work at TV and was radio's first ever celebrity gardener.

NO SHOWS

- No shows were held during the first and second world wars when The Quarry was used as an allotment for growing food.
- In 1970 weather halted play as two inches of rain fell during the first day of the Show.
- The Covid Pandemic. No show held in 2020. 2021 cancelled, with a virtual on-line Show.

THE FUTURE - 2022

Here's hoping the next Flower Show will be held
on 12th & 13th August 2022

