

Coulsdon & District Horticultural Association

70TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Coulsdon & District Horticultural Society was formed in 1937 when the Chaldon Way area was developed. People moving in and wanting to get their ground in good order decided to join together and order a substantial load of manure for sharing - it was from that small beginning that the Association evolved.

War came and with it the 'Dig for Victory' slogan which encouraged those members not called up for War Service to take allotments and assist food rationing with fresh vegetables, thus the post war years saw the Society gradually grow in strength until in the 1960s we had over 1500 members and were using a large shed behind The Forge in Marlpit Lane as our depot. In those days, we had Area Representatives for most roads and the annual fee was collected at the door together with delivery of the Show Schedule.

Initially, there was only the GRAND AUTUMN SHOW held in the Territorial Hall, Marlpit Lane with dozens of tables laden with flowers and produce from our gardens. Then came the IRA terrorism days and the Army decided they could no longer offer their premises for hire. After that, we moved the Shows to the boy's school in Placehouse Lane and were able to continue there for many years - even hosting the BBC's GARDENERS QUESTION TIME for an enthusiastic audience.

By now the premises behind The Forge had gone and we worked from a garage in Bradmore Way belonging to the then Trading Secretary, Mr Davison. The need had come for bigger premises and so with permission from Croydon Council we leased a site with access between 28 & 30 Waddington Avenue - where we bought and had erected the double garage that is still our Trading Store to date. Our strength, in trading has been our ability to sell general fertilisers, compost maker, grass seed and more at very competitive prices and we have now extended our range to include proprietary pesticides etc. as well as items like garden canes, pots, strings, fleece and labels.

Although we gradually extended our shows to include Spring and Summer, we had to drop the latter from lack of support. Also by this time we had lost the use of Placehouse Lane School, and had moved the Shows to the girl's school in Stoneyfield Road (only to lose that to developers) but eventually found a new base in Coulsdon High School, Homefield Road. Regrettably this is not so central but is very near a bus route and there is ample parking both for exhibitors and visitors. We are, however, still holding the AGM/Spring Show bang in the centre of Old Coulsdon - at the Cameron Hall/Heath Room.

Joan Dimblebee, Chairperson. 2007.



