

# Press Release

18th February

**Entries open for Royal Bath & West Show**

It’s only 100 days to go until the Royal Bath & West Show, and entries are now open for competitions ranging from show jumping and livestock to floral art, cider and cheese.

Attracting competitors from across the country, the Show is a mecca for equine competition, following the creation of a £120,000 equine area in 2017, complete with woodland horse walks, parking and dedicated show rings. Highlights this year include a new section for traditional gypsy cobs, both in-hand and ridden, as well as a new stallion class in the riding pony breeding classes.

“The all-important ‘Cuddy’ – to find the supreme horse or pony to qualify for the Horse of the Year Show – will be judged by Alan Robertson from Ross-on-Wye,” says head of shows Alan Lyons.

Exciting competitions in the main ring are sure to pull in the crowds, with the popular Jockey Challenge pitching jockeys and showjumpers head-to-head around parallel courses. There will also be new classes for a driven team of three, four, or six heavy horses, as well as glamorous private driving, Pony Club games and the inter-hunt relay.

“There is an old saying that ‘no foot, no horse’ – and we are inviting the best farriers in the country to show off their skills in the blacksmith competition,” says Mr Lyons. “On Saturday we are thrilled to be hosting both the British Farriers & Blacksmiths Association Championship and the Apprentice Championship. We also have wrought ironwork classes, with points going towards the prestigious Champion Blacksmith of the Year award.”

After all that exercise, food lovers will be in seventh heaven when visiting the British Cider Championships and British Cheese Awards. Attracting several hundred entries, the competition is fierce, and judges will be spoilt for choice, with producers of the best cider and cheese in Great Britain looking to claim the champion title.

Top class honey will also be on offer in the bees and honey classes, which include best beeswax candles, mead, honey cake and of course hive displays and viewing galleries. “Bees are a vital part of our global ecosystem, and are under great threat worldwide,” explains Mr Lyons. “It’s essential that we all do our bit to encourage them, whether by learning how to keep bees yourself, sourcing local honey, or planting appropriate garden flowers.”

Anyone looking for floral inspiration should head to the floral art tent, which will feature breathtaking displays around this year’s theme of ‘This Precious Planet’. Other classes include Kitchen Gardens, Flowerless Beauty and Earth’s Riches. Competitors can also enter the new Pop-Up Garden category, which brings a mini-Chelsea Flower Show feel to the event with 3m x 3m show gardens.

“Somerset is a beautiful county, rich in natural resources – from apple orchards to precious rare species on our protected hills,” says Mr Lyons. “As England’s only Royal four-day show, we feel it’s important to showcase everything that our county has to offer.”

Inspired by these natural surroundings, artists have the opportunity to put their paintings, drawings, sculptures and original prints forward for the art competition and sale, with a first prize of £250. “Art exhibitions have been a regular feature of the Royal Bath & West Show for over 100 years and each year it seems to get better,” says Mr Lyons. “Our aim is to encourage and promote South West artists both amateur and professional.”

For those who prefer country beauty in movement, livestock competitions will take place on every day of the show, with the cream of the crop selected to take part in the impressive main ring parade.

“There really is something for everyone at the Bath & West Show – with live music continuing well into the evening and plenty of local food and drink on offer,” says Mr Lyons. “Exhibitors and visitors are welcome to camp overnight and really make the most of the occasion.”

* The Royal Bath & West Show will be held on 29 May – 1 June. Competition schedules and tickets are available from the website: [www.bathandwest.com](http://www.bathandwest.com) or by calling 0844 776 6777. Children - for the first time - can go free during the May half term, with a £5 discount on early adult bookings.

For further information or media enquiries contact Olivia Cooper on 01392 840009 or e-mail olivia@agri-hub.co.uk.

# About the Royal Bath & West of England Society

The Society was founded in 1777 in Bath by a group of philanthropists led by Edmund Rack. We are a registered charity organisation (Registered Charity Number 1039397). The Society was formed with the aims of encouraging agriculture, arts, manufacture and commerce.

Our charitable activities provide:

* Agriculture, veterinary, educational and art scholarships
* Technical events and Seminars
* Practical farming advice and conferences
* Countryside Education
* Diversification advice for farmers
* Education for children
* A market place for countryside products

As the Society enters its 242nd year it continues to deliver a wonderful mix of established traditional exhibits through to the latest energy technology and contemporary entertainment.

The entertainment and features around the 242-acre site ensure enjoyment for every member of the family and include attractions that are spectacular to watch, educational, inspirational, “hands on” or just plain fun.