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Maxey & Helpston Onion Show



3 October 1999

report & photos - John Pearson

MAXEY MEN KNOW THEIR ONIONS

Maxey's onions are the biggest - that's official! Our green-fingered villagers took the heavyweight honours at the 14th annual Maxey and Helpston Onion Show at the Blue Bell Helpston on October 3.

Keith Elliott was our star performer, winning three classes: Heaviest Sound Onion, Best Three Dressed Onions and the Maxey Cup. His massive 5lb 9oz overall winner - lovingly cosseted in Keith's greenhouse during the growing season - is the biggest ever in the competition's 16 year history. Keith snatched victory from Helpston's Roger Bickers, the winner for the past five years.

Keith was also delighted to win the Maxey Cup for best in village, which his late father Alf won back in 1985. Walter Lightfoot was runner-up.

Jim Marshall and Harvey Bond made it a Maxey 1-2-3 in the Three Dressed Onion class, their monster produce taking second and third places respectively behind Keith.

Organiser Roger Chown's gardening skills earned him second and third in the Five Onions Under 8oz class behind Margaret Holden of Helpston.

Following tradition, Keith Elliott's winning onion was sliced up (to check for lead shot) and devoured with bread and cheese by fellow competitors and spectators.

The Millennium Maxey and Helpston Onion Show will alternate back to the Blue Bell at Maxey. Be sure that Helpston's growers will return with a vengeance - and Keith Elliott will be keen to retain his trophy.

Results:

- ✿ Heaviest Sound Onion: winner Keith Elliott (Maxey) 5lb 9oz
- ✿ Three dressed Onions: winner Keith Elliott, 2nd Jim Marshall, 3rd Harvey Bond (all Maxey)
- ✿ Five Onions Under 8oz: winner Margaret Holden (Helpston), 2nd and 3rd Roger Chown (Maxey)
- ✿ Five Onions Grown from Sets: winner Roger Bickers (Helpston)
- ✿ Maxey Cup: winner Keith Elliott, 2nd Walter Lightfoot

BBC Radio Four recorded the onion show for a future programme. Watch this space for news of a transmission date.

Photos:

Maxey's onion masters (clockwise from right front): Keith Elliott, Roger Chown, Walter Lightfoot, Jim Marshall (with son Cameron), Harvey Bond



And the moment of truth: Keith Elliott slices his onion ready for inspection



Lots of loving care went into preparation for showing



Radio Four investigates the secret of Keith Elliott's success



Keith Elliott's overall winning onion dwarfs its rivals



No lead shot inside there. Right everyone, time to tuck in

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