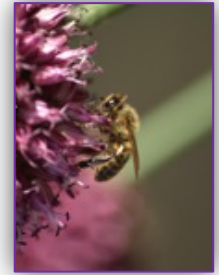


**SEVENOAKS AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS
BEEKEEPERS
BRANCH NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER 2024**

Editor: Mary Staffurth

Tel: 01732 462931 / Email: marystaffurth@yahoo.com

Branch website: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>



Honey Show and Craft Fair

Pictures by Liz Birchenough



The honey show was a success with plenty of entries for our judge, Paul Abbott, to assess. He was impressed with the standard of entries but, in the honey classes, some jars were not sufficiently filled. In the mead classes one of the bottles was of the wrong type and one of the candle entries did not have sufficient wax on the wick for the judge to light and re-light it easily.

The show was opened to the public in the afternoon so that people could visit the craft fair and wonder at the honey, wax and other hive products on display. There were good sales of honey and refreshments and the raffle was well supported. There were plenty of questions about beekeeping in general and especially about the yellow-legged Asian Hornet.

The prizes went to a range of entries. The Captain Turner Cup for the best in the clear honey classes went to Richard Powell.

The Inglis Mason Cup for the best in the set honey classes was awarded to Cliff and Pauline Hayward. They also took first prizes for a bottle of dry mead, 6 cupcakes, 2 identical candles moulded and 2 identical candles dipped.

The Wilbury Cup for 1 cake plain moulded wax was won by Jane Price. She also came first with 6 one ounce blocks of wax and 2 containers of cut comb.

The Bradbury Cup for 1 bottle sweet mead went to Liz Birchenough. She took first place with 2 jars light honey (clear).

The Jenner Rose Bowl for 1 honey cake was awarded to Tim Johnston. He also won the Crowther Shield for a mounted colour photograph. Tim's other first prizes were for 6 jars set honey labelled and ready for sale and a honey label of your own design.

The Carter Cup for the best in the Novice class went to Simon Olly for his clear honey.

Other first prize winners were Liz Seal for 2 jars medium honey (clear), and for 6 jars clear honey labelled and ready for sale. Sue Knights took first place for a frame of comb suitable for extraction, and the beeswax wrap. Martin Barrett won with his useful item of beekeeping paraphernalia made by the exhibitor. First place for any decorative or artistic item with a bee-related theme made by the exhibitor went to Bob Blair.

Cliff and Pauline Hayward won the Sloane Challenge Cup for the highest number of points.



AGM and Prize-giving

The AGM and award of Honey Show prizes will be on Tuesday 19th November at 7.30pm at Weald Memorial Hall, Sevenoaks Weald.

Spreading the Word

October was a very busy month for our membership secretary and treasurer, Liz Birchenough, who continued her visits to local groups and events to highlight all aspects of bees and beekeeping.

Big Green Weekend

The community at St Peter's Church in Ightham decided to hold a weekend of activities to raise awareness about the environment and encourage residents to participate. They invited a number of local groups and charities to participate. Luckily the weather was dry, but cold and breezy. This did not deter the litter picking group or the bug hunt in the churchyard. Martin Barrett and I were in the church hall with some other local groups, where we talked to residents about Asian Hornets and responsible beekeeping. It was gratifying to hear that everyone was aware of the hornet situation, and many were happy to help by taking one of our home-made autumn traps. We collected some very generous donations for the traps, and sold a few jars of honey. We also took the opportunity to publicise the Honey Show.

Beesuit Wows the Beavers

Continuing with the Kent Scouts Big Buzz plan, I visited the 1st St Mary's Platt Beavers to give them a very brief and basic introduction to bees. It was a joyful occasion, although actually finding the scout hut would probably have gained me my map reading badge! Although the children were only six to seven years old, they had some appreciation and understanding of how important bees were in the lifecycle of flowering plants. They found my bee suit quite interesting, especially as it smelt faintly of smoke. One of the more observant children asked why I did not wear thick gloves, because the bees could sting through the ones I showed them. They seemed quite impressed when I explained that you have to learn to handle the bees very gently and quietly to minimise the chance of getting stung. I am not sure any of them want to learn beekeeping in the future, but at least they are getting to grips with the complexity of our environment, and why we need to conserve the world around us.

Sevenoaks Silver Fair

Sevenoaks District Council holds an annual fair for retired residents, where they can find out about local support and interest groups. This year the event was at The Stag Plaza, in the theatre complex. There were about twenty local organisations represented, from community choirs to volunteer drivers. This was an opportunity to talk about Yellow-legged Hornets, sell a few jars of honey and invite people to the Honey Show. Several visitors referred to the storyline in *The Archers*, on Radio 4, where an Asian Hornet was found, and were particularly interested to see one preserved in perspex. The general comment was how small it was compared with the common European Hornet. I handed over some leaflets for the organisers to put up in the foyer of The Stag. It seems that word is getting out there.

National Honey Show



Martin Barrett went to the National Honey Show and snapped this picture of John Hendrie, who is the General Secretary, opening the show. As many of you will know, John was a very active member of this branch until he moved to Scotland several years ago. Pictured with him are Shelia Collins, Deacon of The Incorporation of Candlemakers of Edinburgh and Lynda Marston-Weston, Master of the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers.

October Social

October's meeting gave us an unusual insight into the work of a forensic scientist specialising in firearms. No bees were involved but Huw Griffiths, one of our committee members gave a talk about his career. It was also a chance for members to chat over tea and cake.

Send photos or articles for the newsletter to: marystaffurth@yahoo.com

Go to our website for all the latest beekeeping news: <http://www.sevenoaksbeekeepers.org.uk/>