



Forest Beekeeper

The monthly newsletter of the Epping Forest Beekeepers

October 2010

www.eppingforestbeekeepers.co.uk

'Fingerprints!'

A change of venue and style of judging ended in a day of entertainment and education for an audience drawn into the mind of Judge Geoff Wilcox, as he explained his assessment and scoring of entries during the 2010 Honey Show.

Newcomers and experienced competitors alike succeeded at the Chingford Horticultural Hall on September 11, where 'open' judging was an opportunity for beekeepers to evaluate their skills of preparation and presentation. The judge commented favourably on the quality of honeys, but was equally robust in his suggestions for improvement.

Competition preparation begins with the honey: if clear it must be fine filtered, or evenly crystallised and without frosting. The jars and lids, of identical manufacture and without defects, should be washed in warm water and left to dry upside down, after which polished with kitchen paper inside and out.

The honey is run down the inside of the jar to minimise the addition of air bubbles and filled so that no gap is visible between the bottom of the lid and the honey. Slight over filling enables the removal of bubbles or scum a day or so later; this process can be helped by warming the jar in a water bath.

Geoff recommended that after the above preparation, final polishing of the jar is essential: fingerprints, scratched lids, unclear honey or the beginnings of granulation will give the judge a reason to eliminate entries before he opens the jars. Don't give the judge a reason!

Audience participation in honey tasting was enjoyable and instructive, and though the mead, scones, cakes and confectionary was for the judge's palate alone, his pleasure and their quality was evident.

The Association and Show Secretary would like to thank those who helped to organise the Show, especially Peter and Jackie Clarke, Ken Piper, Joanne Alie, Andy White for cake-baking and especially George and Avril Smith for essential refreshments. Thanks also go to Geoff Wilcox for his introduction into the ways of a honey judge, and to the beekeepers who entered and thus made the Show possible. ✂

Contributed by Eric Beaumont

Forest Festival

This year's Forest Festival on Chingford Plains was attended by more than 30,000 people according to local press, and it seemed as if all of them visited the Epping Forest Beekeepers Association stand at some point! Supplies of honey sold out very quickly, despite being replenished halfway through the day, and a substantial amount was made for the Association. Roy Cropley's observation hive naturally attracted a lot of attention, and many leaflets were given away. The Beginner's Course starting next year is now full, and it was clear that there is a lot of interest in beekeeping. If only a few of those attending the Festival follow up their interest in the subject, we can expect more new members next year.

Many thanks to all those who helped to set up the stand and dismantle it, as well as all those who answered questions and explained the finer points of beekeeping to our many visitors. ✂

Christmas Social



Hopefully all your hard work in the Apiary this summer has rewarded you with loads of honey and now you can sit down and relax. This year we will try a different arrangement for the Christmas Social on Thursday **16th December** at Chingford Horticultural Hall. We will be selling tickets at £3.00 per head, so all you have to do is come along - all the food, drink and raffle prizes will be provided. Tickets will be on sale at the Autumn meetings starting 21st October and from Paola at km.electricsltd@googlemail.com ✂

Next meeting 21st October

FILM EVENING

The October meeting will be held on Thursday 21st October 2010 at our winter venue, Chingford Horticultural Society Hall, Larkshall Road, Chingford, E4 6NH.

We meet at 7.30 for an 8.00pm start. This will be an opportunity to get together and swap our beekeeping experiences from the summer and view some films which we have borrowed from the BBKA on a variety of bee related topics. ✂

Myriam Gilbey

We are very sorry to announce the recent death of Myriam Gilbey. Many of the more recent members will not remember Myriam but for many years, until prevented by ill health, she was an active member of the Epping Forest Beekeepers Association taking on the role of Show Secretary for a while. She lived in Buckhurst Hill, near Ken, and kept bees in her garden which backed onto Epping Forest. Myriam was an art teacher and so inspired many young people to develop their talents in this field. She was a competent lady with a good sense of humour and very good company. ✂

Topical Tips for October

By this time really all the feeding should be completed. If this is not so, or you are not sure about the quantity of stores needed, we suggest that you download the pamphlet on "Preparing Honey Bee Colonies for Winter" as sent out by Ted in a recent email, or ask for advice.

Protection against pests is also very important: The earlier Varroa treatment should have also been done but the oxalic acid is not applied until there is no brood present, usually after a cold spell in late December, or early in January. Mouse guards should be placed in the hive entrance and protection against woodpecker damage is needed if your hives are in an area where they are found. Wax moths attack stored supers and foundation if they get a chance. It is advisable to check these to make sure they are still free from wax moth. ✂

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Chair's Corner

Many thanks to everyone who worked so hard at the Forest Festival and at our Honey Show on 11th September. This was the first at Chingford Horticultural Hall - a great success thanks to Eric and his team of helpers.

Helen Chadwick ✂

