



Honey!.....I Shrunk the Tent



High winds and heavy rain deterred many of the stall holders from attending the Kenilworth Show earlier last month but not WLBK who, with marquees lashed to cars to avoid interrupting incoming flights to Birmingham International, persevered although it was p-p-p-p.....persistently raining. On a morning when one could be forgiven for having clocked the weather, turned over and gone back to sleep, the 10 WLBK stewards turned up to a man (and woman) for the 9.00 a.m. shift all primed and keen to give of their best to the, normally, madding crowd. Admittedly things were a little slow for both the first and second 2½hr shifts, but we did get some interest mainly from other stallholders moving around trying to keep warm. Shouts of glee erupted as we doubled our honey sales when the second jar rushed off the stand.

Ever resourceful, the enforced confinement of WLBK beekeepers quickly turned into a learning opportunity, a chance to network and the opportunity to sound forth about the branch. New beekeepers, emboldened by the proximity of more experienced ones, took full advantage of one to one discourse whilst experienced beekeepers practised their sucking of teeth and “it all depends” routine. For those attending the morning shifts, consolation can be found in the words of poet John Milton.....”They also serve who only stand and wait”. We did do a lot of standing and waiting.

By 2.00 p.m the rain stopped and the public came out, if not in their droves, but in sufficient numbers to provide a steady stream of visitors to the stand including an officer of the law who, ostensibly was on security duty but who was clearly smitten with the idea of becoming a beekeeper and spent twenty minutes interrogating the stewards as to what it was all about. He left, inspired, clutching a fistful of leaflets promising not to prosecute us for wasting police time! Despite the late start, sales of £400 of hive products and £70 from candle rolling were achieved. More importantly, by the close of the show the marquees had dried out making packing away a far more pleasant job than the setting up.

A disappointing day? Certainly, but definitely not a wasted one by any means.

The weather was better the following weekend for the Leamington Peace festival although a couple of cloudbursts dampened everything down a bit but did it dampen our steward's spirits? Not a bit of it as the following photograph illustrates.

Rain?...what rain! WLBK Stewards going above and beyond.....



Foot fall was down on previous years' but we still managed to take £1200 on product sales and raised donations in the order of £150 by the candle rollers.

Both events were splendidly supported by member stewards and, despite the weather, it was still fun.

Ivan A Perry

CLEANLINESS OF WIBK LOAN EQUIPMENT

Loan equipment in some cases has been returned in an unusable dirty condition. This has meant that members who are in charge of equipment have to clean it themselves, unreasonable and unnecessary extra work for them. Problems have arisen with:

Honey extractors. These must be washed out several times with cold soapy water, both on the inside and outside (including covers) to remove all traces of honey. Warm water will melt the wax and make it very difficult to remove. They should then be washed with plain cold water and dried with a clean dry cloth. They must be returned in a spotless condition.

ApiMelter The ApiMelter must likewise must be cleaned and left spotless according to the instructions provided. Please ensure that the stay for the lid is properly freed before the lid is closed. Not doing so results in the hinges becoming detached.

Boilers. Burco or similar boilers must be cleaned with a stainless steel scouring pad and a solution of salt and hot water. The interior must be clean, free of wax and other detritus. The exterior must also be clean.

Hives and associated parts. Wooden hives and parts must all be scraped clean, washed with a solution of washing soda and when dry scorched with a blow torch. Hives of other materials must be sterilized as advised by the person in charge.

We do not wish to be very draconian with culprits but any equipment returned in a poor condition will be noted. Please do help.

Peter Stanworth

Chairman

Out Apiary Opportunities

We have the offer of three out apiaries this month.

The first is at Fenny Compton on a private estate comprising a garden and adjacent fields which would suit one beekeeper. If interested contact David Faulkner at dfbox@aol.com for further details.

The next is at Barford Community Orchard, just outside Warwick, and suits being a Community Apiary accommodating up to three beekeepers. If interested in this one, contact Bernard Brown at bernardnbrown@outlook.com

And the third is at Crewe Lane Kenilworth and would suit a single beekeeper with up to 2 hives. If interested in this one, contact Bernard Brown at bernardnbrown@outlook.com

It's barbecue time again

Yes!... it's barbecue time again and the summer social event of the year.

You and your families are invited to come along **to King s Hill**

Nurseries on Saturday July 6th on what, for the past 8 years, has proved to be a glorious summer's evening. We provide the barbecue, the salad, bread and puds leaving you to bring your own choice of meat/fish/ veggie course, crockery, cutlery and drinks. The barbecue is lit – yes, it is a real charcoal one – at 4.00p.m and we should be ready to start cooking from about 5.00 p.m.

Timed so that there is still time left to go off clubbing afterwards, we are looking forward to seeing you and yours on the 6th.



Hints and Tips

*At this time of year you go to lift a heavy super and find that the top bars of the box below are being pulled up as well, often too late to prevent unnecessary stirring up of the bees.

If you do realise in time what is happening you can lever the box up half an inch or less with the hive tool, then take the weight on your fingers while you bend down to see which frames are stuck and use the hive tool to free them.

At this point your back gives up in protest! With a wedge to hand you can stuff it into the gap to take the weight and leave room to drift some smoke in. Then you can change to a sensible position, kneeling maybe, and gently free the stuck frames without hassle to you or the bees.

Of course, when you lift the box the wedge will fall into the grass and hide, so dip the blunt end into the brightest paint you have, or put some coloured tape on it. The wedge should be not much shorter than your hive tool and cut at a shallow angle.

*Porter bee escapes get very gunged up and maybe last time they were used you were more focussed on the honey and overlooked their need for a good clean. So now is the time to get organised and treat them to a good soak in soda solution (200g/litre) followed by a gentle scrub with a nail brush and reset the 'doors' to a matchstick width.

*If you are struggling to keep your smoker alight then try this recipe-

Before you put the marigolds or veil on, tear up some egg box cardboard and light a strip and drop it into the smoker. Add a few more pieces so that you have a bit of a fire going on then add wood shavings(the sort they sell for hamsters etc) Top it all off with as much dry rotten wood as you can fit in. Give it a couple of puffs and I find you have to stopper it with grass as it is still going strong at the end of the inspection!

If you have any hints or tips that you would like to share, please send them to h.essex@virgin.net...

Thank you Helen Essex

SHOW ME THE HONEY!

For many beekeepers the highpoint of the season is exhibiting at honey shows. Locally we have the **Branch Honey Show on September 12th at Kingshill** and the **County Show September 28th at Stoneleigh**.

The honey shows consists of a range of different categories, or classes, with something to challenge all levels of beekeeping skill.



There are classes for beekeepers to show their skills at honey presentation in all its forms, in wax presentation, in honey cookery, crafts, and gadgets and in photograph. In fact there are classes for almost any activity related to bees and the hive products.

We encourage every beekeeper to enter a show.

The discipline involved in preparing the exhibit teaches a lot about the proper way to present our honey and other hive products which are essential especially if you are selling your products. There are many senior handy tips to see what is required for successful exhibiting.

Each year, in the County Show there is a class for a Branch Composite Display

The exhibit must have a base not exceeding 600mm by 600mm and be of any reasonable height consistent with stability and safety. The display must include FIVE different items from the list of eight below, and be submitted by at least THREE members of the Branch. At least ONE of these members must be a NOVICE. The exhibit will be judged primarily on the quality of the items shown (as far as possible we could ask for our Branch Honey Show winners to help with these). Each item will be marked out of 10 points, and up to a further 20 points may be awarded for overall presentation and interpretation.

The FIVE constituent exhibits are to be chosen from the list of eight below:

- (a) One container of liquid Honey containing at least 227g gross weight.
- (b) One container of soft set or granulated Honey containing at least 227g gross weight.
- (c) One container of Mead containing at least 50cl.
- (d) One Beeswax candle in a holder. This candle may be lit during judging.
- (e) One cut comb, round or section of at least 200g weight.
- (g) One moulded block of Beeswax exceeding 150g weight.
- (h) One exhibit related to Beekeeping which is not listed above.



Last year the theme was 100 years of suffrage.

We did win the **£50 First Prize**

We are looking for volunteers to put the display together for this year incorporating the theme **50 years since the Moon Landing**.

Judging by previous years it does not have to be extensive but more a minimalistic tasteful depiction of the theme that the 5 chosen items can then be incorporated

into.

Volunteers are also needed to help at the County Honey Show.

If you feel able to help to support the Honey Shows in any way, please contact Helen Essex h.essex@virgin.net

Thank you

Editor Roger Wilkes, email address is roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk or hard copy can be posted to him at: 12 Mercia Avenue, Kenilworth CV8 1EU. **Content to him for next month by July 28th latest.**

Please send in plain text, unformatted, using Microsoft Word or another common program.

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