

north staffordshire beekeepers association November 2011 Newsletter

www.northstaffsbees.org.uk

To The Members

next meeting

Wednesday 2nd November

The Friends Meeting House Miller Street,
Newcastle-u-Lyme ST5 1JD

7.00 for 7.30

With Graham Royle - Guest Speaker

The Queen Marking Colour for 2011 is WHITE



When you come to Winter meetings please bring something small which we can raffle—this helps to defray the cost of the room. Thank you

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 2nd November

- Graham Royle – Bee anatomy

Wednesday 7th December – Christmas Social

- David Emery – (North Staffordshire Wildlife Trust) Staffordshire Butterflies

Wednesday 4th January 2012

- NSBKA Annual general Meeting

“Chairman’s Chat” – November 2011

First of all congratulations to all of you who entered the Honey Show last month, especially those in the beginner’s class. It was a shame the judging went on so long but we are going to discuss future formats of the Honey Show, length of meetings etc., at our next Committee meeting, so watch this space!

Rachael Lewis and I have been reviewing the Library and Rachael is trying to get all the books suitable for beginners into one box. There will also be a revamp of the listings to make it easier to select a book. We will be retaining the same system of slips, to record names and telephone numbers of borrowers, and I would urge you to follow this system. Quite a few of you will be getting a telephone call where books have been outstanding for some time, and regretfully there are some books missing without name slips in the plastic book liners. I would ask all of you who have borrowed books in the past to search your shelves and return any NSBKA library books you find. Thanks in anticipation!

Our November meeting at the Friends Meeting House will have Graham Royle from South Cheshire to talk on “Honey Bee Anatomy”. This will be his talk which he gave to the Spring Convention a couple of years ago. I was there and really enjoyed this illustrated talk, which is aimed at the beekeeper and not the scientists amongst us. I hope you will come, it is very educational.

Our Christmas social in December is a slight change from beekeeping and we will have David Emery from Keele Universities Department of Earth Sciences and Geography. He will give an illustrated talk on “Staffordshire Butterflies”. This should be a great evening, with food as well!

Tim Waye has asked me for ideas of future speakers and topics. He has still got spaces to fill for the next year, and we need to complete this list so that we can produce a meetings card for you by the AGM in January. This is something that we failed to do this year, and this has been missed by many of us. Either speak to or email either me or Tim. (01782 661890 tim@microwayes.net) If you can recommend an actual speaker, rather than just a topic so much the better, but either will be welcome. **Do your best – your help is needed.**

Cheers Dave Cheek (davidcheek@talktalk.net) 01630 647584

NSBKA Honey Show Report

Our 59th Annual Honey Show took place on the 5th October and the meeting was very well attended to listen to and watch Gerry Collins judge the competition. Gerry has been involved in exhibiting at honey shows since 1960 when he was a teenager and he was very willing to share his knowledge, valuable tips, experiences and anecdotes with those attending the event.

One of his main comments was that the standard of the product displayed on the show bench should be the same as the products that we beekeepers either sell or give away.

He pointed out that the main task of the judge is to ensure that all entries comply with the published show rules so if a class states two jars, then there must be two "identical" jars entered by the beekeeper otherwise the entry is disqualified even if the entry is the best! Therefore, the task of judging is basically a staged elimination process leading to the final task of judging the quality of the products not eliminated because of presentation faults.

When judging honey, the jars and lids must be clean and in perfect condition. He pointed out that whilst some years ago, entrants tried to find matching jars from the same manufacturers mould, today that is virtually impossible to achieve but the jars do need to be of the same type i.e. look the same. The contents of the jars should comply with the 2003 Honey Regulations which means that it should look clean and not contain any debris (bits of bees), wax or signs of incipient granulation. Gerry suggested that when bottling honey or preparing it for showing,:

- jars should never be dried with tea towels because they leave marks on the jars
- honey should be jarred in a clean/dust free atmosphere with all pets out of the room
- no lids should be changed at the honey show room because it is not dust free and dust will settle on the top of the honey and spoil the product

The judging process was straight forward insofar as he inspected each jar for cleanness and jar volume using a light source i.e. nothing there that should not be and there is no light is seen between the lid and the or what he calls "Yorkshire pound" i.e. underweight. He then opens the jar and smells the aroma and finally checks the viscosity and taste of the honey. He described some honeys as "being thin or watery" implying that it might have been extracted before it had been capped. He pointed out that, before extracting, if in doubt, the water content of honey can be checked with a refractometer to ensure that the honey is below the 20% water content limit and thus ensure that the honey will not ferment in the jar or result in the prosecution of the beekeeper for selling a substandard product.

Gerry said that as people eat with their eyes, the sight of jarred honey showing signs of frosting or incipient granulation does not imply that it is inedible but it is unsightly. As the various regulations apply to our products, the jars must contain the weight stated on the label and thus the use of certified scales is recommended when bottling honey.

When the jar is opened, he checked for cleanliness i.e. no scum or dust on top of the honey and he recommended that to prevent this and to ensure that all jars contain the correct weight, that the jars are over-filled and the scum is then removed with a clean spoon. Each jar should contain the specified weight and whilst it is illegal to sell jars which are underweight, it is not illegal to sell overweight jars of honey and "secret trading standard shoppers" do operate and are on the look-out for substandard or underweight products.

When considering the cleanliness of honey, he reminded us that honey is a food product and subject to the appropriate regulations but if care is taken during the beekeeping process, the chances of contamination with foreign substances or products are reduced. Therefore, don't put supers directly onto the ground where animals have been or people might have walked their dogs! Whilst the BBKA Full membership does provide the beekeepers with product liability protection, prevention is better than cure.

Cut comb should be unwired comb with all the cells fully capped and no cells containing pollen. The jars of "chunk" is where a large piece of honey comb is placed in the jar are surrounded by liquid honey. The comb should not be granulated and should be fully capped and the surrounding honey should be light and clean. Gerry said that whilst this product takes more time to produce, it is a good money earner and it very popular.

Continued:

Honey Show Report Continued:

The photograph class was very interesting and the only comments made were that the photographs were of a very high quality but he thought that all photographs should tell a story or be self-explanatory. Gerry is a good beekeeping photographer and always has his camera with him but he did advocate the use of plastic gloves to protect the camera.

The mead class was not well subscribed to but Gerry was very happy with the meads and thought them to be very palatable. His tests were similar to that for honey I.e. there is not dirt or yeast to be seen and he suggested that all meads for showing should be bottled at least a week before the show. Whilst Gerry was very willing to give the single exhibits in each class a first prize, he commented that the corks were not as per the show schedule and after discussions with the Show Manager (my better half), both exhibits were disqualified as not being to schedule – thanks Margaret!

The last section to be judged was the honey cakes which Gerry thought were all of a high standard but some were better than others. He suggested that the cakes should be made at least a week in advance of a show so that the full taste and aroma can develop and that most important of all, that the recipe should be followed exactly. He even admitted that usually, he actually bakes the cakes himself.

At the end of the Honey Show, Gerry reminded everyone present that whether showing or selling honey, presentation of the product is the key factor and that taking care and improving quality does win prizes and he encouraged all members to take part in the shows to help them improve their own beekeeping techniques and skills.

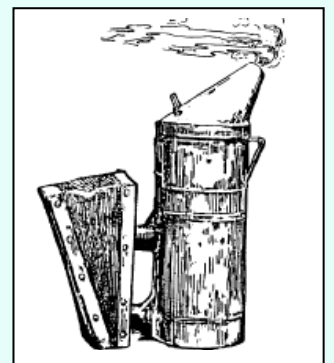
It was a long and interesting evening and everyone attending took away some useful tips and a smile on their faces resulting from Gerry's tales and anecdotes.

Thank you to all of those who took part and made the evening a success.

DT

How to Light a Smoker

1. Split dead wood into fragments and cut into shavings using a sharp knife.
2. Bandage left thumb.
3. Load shavings into bottom of smoker – include those embedded in hand.
4. Light match.
5. Light another match.
6. Repeat – “This is fun” as you light yet another match.
7. Apply match to shavings.
8. Put out burning glove and box of matches.
9. Blow gently into base with bellows.
10. Apply burn ointment to nose.
11. When shavings are alight add more.
12. When you have stopped coughing, go on to next stage.
13. Discovering that smoker has gone out whilst you were coughing, soak shavings from can labelled - Paraffin.
14. Treat arms and face for second degree burns.
15. Re-label can - Petrol.
16. When smoker is burning well, add remaining shavings.
17. When thunderstorm has passed, repeat all the above steps.



Ex Alnwickdotes Ebees

NewsLetter Reporter

- STILL required

The appeal in the last NewsLetter for some help appears to have fallen on deaf ears but help is still required as we are to provide you with interesting reading.

You do not have to be a genius with words or own a computer but we would like person or persons who would like to help maintain and improve the content of your NewsLetter for all members.

Please give it some serious thought
DT

NSBKA – Membership Renewal

If you have forgotten to renew your membership for 2011-12, please do it now.

The renewal form was published in August NewsLetter and if you have access to a computer it can be easily done on-line via the NSBKA website.

If you are a tax payer, please do not forget to sign-up for Giftaid because it costs you nothing extra and helps to maintain the low costs providing your membership.

Thank you

Beekeeping Bits - Buy & Sell or Give-away! - Free advertising space for Members

FOR SALE

Offers for the purchase of a four super frame food grade plastic tangential extractor. It is in good condition and ideal for a beekeeper with a small number of hives. Owned by ex-members. The extractor can be seen by contacting DT.

Don't try this at home!

Two beekeepers in China Wang Dalin, 42, and Lv Kongjiang, 20, battled it out over the weekend in Shaoyang, Hunan province, China in a competition known as 'bee bearding'.



Wang and Lv competed by standing on a scale wearing only a pair of shorts with goggles and corks up his nose for extra protection and using

queen bees they reared to attract other bees onto their bodies.

Wang won the competition after attracting 26 kg (57 lbs) of bees on his body in 60 minutes, while Lv had 22.9 kg (50 lbs),



Local media reported from the Telegraph Newspaper.

NSBKA Christmas Social Meeting – Wednesday 7th December

This meeting is strictly non-beekeeping. Its aim is to provide an opportunity for members to bring partners and friends to have a relaxed evening listening to a good speaker and enjoy good food and drink.

The basis of the evening is that everyone brings a dish for all to share and Pat Twigg has again volunteered to organise it but she does need the active participation of all members to make it happen.

It would help if (at the next meeting) you could tell Pat what you are able to bring so that she can ensure that a feast to suit all tastes is provided for your "delectation".

Please have a word with Pat at the next meeting or give her a call on 01630 673 299 and let Pat know what you can provide. These meetings appear to happen as if by magic but a great deal of work is put in to ensure that it does happen to ensure that all present do have a great evening.

NewsLetter Editor: Dave Teasdale. 01782 502495 or 07971 013787
or Email teasdale.david@btinternet.com