

KENT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Orpington Branch Newsletter October 2007

I hope you have all paid your subscription by now.

An apology to Kit for not mentioning his award of a High Commendation for medium honey at the Kent Show. I only found out about it by reading the results on the back page of the KBKA Newsletter.

Kit also won a Second for his medium honey at our honey show. Dennis did well with a First for his Sweet Mead, a Second for his Crystallised or Soft Set Honey and a Second for his Novice Honey. Helen had Firsts for her Sweetmeats and Lemon Curd, a Second for her Marmalade, and Thirds for her Flapjacks and Chocolate Layer Cake. Jim won Thirds for his Light Honey and Naturally Crystallised Honey. Finally, Mandy was Highly Commended for her Biscuits. So Dennis won the Orpington and Festival Cups and the Drinking Horn, Helen won the Trenear Trophy and the Confectionery Cup, and Jim won the Courtenay Lord Cup. It was encouraging that we had more entries this year but there is still a vacancy for someone to have a go at the wax classes. There was only one entry in the wax block class and only one for the candles so if you enter you are almost certain to get an award and there are two Orpington trophies you could win. Dennis acted as Judge's Steward and so was able to see at first hand how a judge assesses the entries.

It is important to know the rules for the show – something which Dennis did but I didn't. When I came to prepare the cups for engraving, I noticed that Dennis had already won the cup for the novice class once and I told him that you could not win it twice since at the second you were no longer a novice. He advised me to read the rules and he is quite right. The award is for an entrant who has never won a first prize for honey. This seems to be a change from last year when "first" was not included. In fact, if you look at the cup no name appears twice until now. I can't see any advantage in the change and it does mean that if the cup really suits the décor at your house you can keep on winning it year on year provided you avoid getting a First!

Incidentally, last year I wrote that Helen had been awarded the Confectionery Cup in error because it was for Bromley members only. That was wrong, since I now know that it is an open award. My apologies for getting it wrong.

Coming up on October 18-20th is the National Honey Show at the RAF Museum, Hendon. You have as good a chance as anyone of walking off with an award so why not have a go? There are also some very interesting talks taking place there.

The Country Fayre at High Elms was blessed with good weather and I think we did well with our honey sales and hopefully got more people interested in bees. Many thanks to all who helped. Sadly the Apple Day has been cancelled because of a shortage of council staff to support it. Maybe next year.

Our next event is a talk by Terry Clare at the Atomwide offices at 8.00pm on Wednesday October 10th. The subject is "Swarms and Swarming – a New Angle" which sounds intriguing.

The KBKA have arranged two talks at West Kent College, Brook Street, Tonbridge on Saturday November 10th starting at 2.00pm. Dr. David Aston will talk on "Integrated Bee Health Management" and Norman Carreck will speak about "The Importance of Honeybees to Agriculture and in the Landscape". There will be an entry charge of £5 to include refreshments.

An article in the September issue of "Beecraft" advocated the use of washing soda for cleaning and sterilizing equipment. In my youth, before the days of detergents, my mother always used soap flakes and washing soda for the washing up and it worked alright then.

There was an obituary in the "Daily Telegraph" for probably the best-known person in the beekeeping world – Dr. Eva Crane. Best known for her books on beekeeping matters, as an authority at the BBKA and as the editor of journals on bees. Interestingly, she started her career as a physicist and received her swarm of bees as a present on her marriage (how would you do that?)

Frank