

Swansea & District Beekeepers Gwenynwyr Abertawe a'r Cylch



**Chris Bown receiving his “Best-in-Show” award
from the Honey Judge, Bernard Diaper**

The award was given for Chris’s honey, exhibited in Class 13, the Commercial Class of six jars of honey presented as for sale to the public. The card is the prestigious ‘Blue Ribbon’ award given jointly by the BBKA and the National Honey Show. Well done Chris!!

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Editor: D. Salkilld

The Centennial Gower Show

Once again our Society’s marquee at the Gower Show was fantastic!! As one visitor said “our tent was the most interesting in the show ground because we had so many hands-on activities, whereas in the other tents, it was usually a case of walking around and just looking at the exhibits on display”. I think that says it all.

Our activities included the Bee Experience, candle rolling, two observation hives, microscopy, a children’s quiz, children’s colouring for the little ones, a display from Bees Abroad and of course, the Honey Show exhibits themselves.

The sales counter had local honeys and related products such as candles, soaps, cakes, gifts etc. and did a roaring trade all day.



The Special Display, ‘Sun, Moon and Stars’

To mark the Centennial Show we made a WBC shaped facade for the marquee entrance. There was also a spectacular display brought along by Bill Fisher and Sue Carter, themed on ‘Sun, Moon & Stars’. It had taken a prize in last year’s National Honey Show.

It was a joy to see the tent filled from early morning right up to show closing time. During the day we had the pleasure of talking to overseas visitors from Bulgaria, Australia, America, Germany and South Africa, and there may well have been others too!

From closer to home we talked to holidaymakers from Somerset, Yorkshire, Hampshire, London, Birmingham, Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire and many parts of Wales.



The WBC Facade

We were pleased to welcome the Chairman of the Welsh Beekeepers’ Association, John Bowles, who came down from North Wales especially for the event and took part in prize giving in the afternoon. The Honey Judge was Mr. Bernard Diaper, from Sutton Coldfield, Warwickshire, one of the BBKA’s senior judges

In all, there were 122 entries on the show benches. Bernard commented that the quality of exhibits on display was generally very high, with the exception of the mead classes, which could have been better. *See comments on page 5.*

Joe's Ice Cream kindly donated gift vouchers for the Children's Quiz. These were given to children chosen at random from all who took part. It was so popular that quiz sheets ran out during the day. We're never too old to learn and I learned that bees were sent into space on one of the Challenger missions in 1984. I knew that they could fly but that's remarkable.

Awards - The prestigious 'Blue Ribbon Award' for 'Best In Show', given jointly by the National Honey Show Ltd. and the BBKA, was awarded to Chris Bown for his honey in Class 13, the Commercial Class. Well done Chris!!

The Dorothea Daniell-Jenkins silver cup for winning most points in the show was awarded to Nicola Oulton who won first prize in four classes. Well Done Nicola.

Special awards were also given to Nicola Oulton for her Candles in Class 14 and to Gerti Axtmann for her Novice Honey in Class 9

Bernard & Shirley Diaper, Tom Davies and Gill Lyons generously donated some extra prizes, so that everybody who had won a first prize in the show received a small gift during prize giving.

Gratitude - The Society received a grant from the Welsh Government's Sustainable Development Fund for areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, aimed at assisting development on the Gower Peninsula. This grant helped with the expense of setting up the show.

Our thanks must go to the 'behind-the-scenes' team led by Show Secretary, Gill Lyons, who had been planning the event since late 2016. A lot of thought and organisation went in to make the show such a success.

Gill has asked me to say thank-you to all those volunteers who gave so generously of their time in organisation, preparation, exhibiting, set-up and stewarding on show day. Too many people were involved to name individually but all contributed to the success on the day.

A big "Thank You" to you all.

The Dorothea Daniell-Jenkins Cup

This cup is the only one presented in the Honey Section of the Gower Show. I've been having a look at it and found that it is made of solid silver, mounted on a black wooden base. It was hallmarked in Chester, 1933 – 1934, and was made by S. Blanckensee & Sons Ltd. of Chester, London and Birmingham. It is inscribed 'Gower Show, Presented by John Daniell-Jenkins', and lower down it says, 'Cup for Honey'. I don't know when the cup was first presented but presume it must have been sometime in the 1930s. D.S.

Concerns in Showing Meads

After judging, Bernard indicated that he was somewhat disappointed by the low quality of meads on show, so we will try to get a session on mead making into our Events Calendar.

Because of the low quality, no prizes were awarded for Dry Mead, Class 17 or for Sweet Mead, Class 18. Similarly, in Class 19, Metheglin, only a third prize was awarded and in Class 20, Melomel, only a second was awarded.

As well as the mead quality, another concern was in the way the exhibits were presented. None of the bottles were full! When showing meads it is normal to fill the bottles to within half an inch (12 mm) of the cork. This is so that oxygen in the air does not affect the meads.

More Bees Stolen from Anglesey

For the second time this year we have newspaper reports of bees being stolen from Anglesey, this time from a field in Rhydwyn. The police are investigating but in reality, there is little hope of their being recovered. It is worth thinking about putting identification markings on your hives just in case it ever happens down here. Painting the hives with unusual colours or branding them with your name or post code are good ways of marking them.

Examination Passes

Our congratulations go to Gill Lyons and John Bellarby who both successfully passed their WBKA Basic Assessment recently with high marks. We must also thank Nicola and Stephen for their work in preparing Gill & John for the exam. Well done!

Forthcoming Events

Meetings at the New Lodge Independent Social Club, Alexandra Road, Gorseinon, are held on **2nd & 4th Tuesdays** of every month **from 7.00 pm** onwards. All are welcome. We look forward to seeing you there.

September

Tuesday 12th - Talk on “Wax Moth and the Damage they can do” by Stephen Davies.

Friday 15th to Sunday 17th - MSWCC Conference, hosted by Gloucestershire BKA at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester.

Go to www.mswcc.org.uk for details and booking form.

October

Tuesday 10th - Talk and demonstration on hand creams, soaps etc. by “Honey Bee Beautiful”

November

Tuesday 14th - The Society’s Honey Show. More details later.

Thursday 26th to Saturday 28th - The National Honey Show, Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ www.honeyshow.co.uk

December

Saturday 2nd - 7p.m. for 7.30p.m. Christmas Dinner at the '**Welcome to Town**', Llanrhidian, North Gower. Please email Gerti at gerti.axtmann@gmail.com if you would like to reserve places.

When Bees Were Bees by Tom Davies.

In ending the tale of his visit to Allen Latham, of Connecticut Beekeepers, Mr. Jay Smith, of Indiana, described Mr. Latham’s methods of rearing queens as excellent for the area, and was also impressed by the amounts of honey obtained by Mr. Latham.

On the extracting side, Mr. Latham had devised an extracting frame that Mr. Jay Smith considered the best one that he had ever seen, in that it was the same size all way round and had no projecting parts to interfere with uncapping.

Wooden dummies in the super to keep the spacing uniform were used, the spacing enough to allow quite fat frames to be drawn out. The frames had been described and illustrated in the February issue of "Gleanings in Bee Culture", for the 1925 issue, sadly I don't have that copy, so I can't give any measurements.

To conclude the tale of Mr. Latham's methods of beekeeping, Mr. Smith stated that some of the hives used by Mr. Latham were made with double walls, to allow the gaps to be stuffed with insulation for the winter.

The insulation? Rabbit fur, which Mr. Latham was able to obtain from a local fur coat factory, and judging by the success of Mr. Latham's ventures, suited the purpose very well.

More next time, Tom.

August Rains

There was a report by the National Trust, mentioned recently in the Daily Mail, that August had been washout for bees and butterflies. Matthew Oates of the N.T. said "After a highly promising spring and early summer, the good weather was disrupted and the rains came down. It means we haven't had a good summer since 2006 – the wait goes on."

This situation is echoed by myself and by a friend in Gloucestershire who reports a lower than normal honey yield in his colonies. D.S.

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"More About Bees" by Tom Davies

On my way up to the Greyhound pub a couple of days ago to catch a bus into the city, I noticed in the hedges here and there a massive amount of flowers on the blackberries. With some nice weather, this will help to give some extra stores in the hives.

The 100th Gower Show turned out a wonderful event. The record crowds meant our tent was full just about all day long. I think that overall, we have the most interesting tent in the show, and with the amount of youngsters going in to handle bees, we should not lack for members in the future.

I was impressed by most of the exhibits, the standards were high. I particularly liked the decorated honey-cake exhibits. They showed a lot of concentration in the making of them, as well as lots of thought to the designs.

The rain held off long enough to give the crowds time to get around and have a nice day, and I had a look round myself. One of the tents I usually have a visit to is the Poultry Tent. I like seeing the mix of breeds, and the noise from the Bantams is such that I can hear them perfectly.

All things considered, a good day for our tent and the Swansea & District Beekeepers can be proud of the fact that our show is a good one and is improving over the years. Hope you have had a fair take of honey.

Tom.