

COMBINGS

The newsletter of the York and District Beekeepers Association



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Winter 2024

YORK AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS 2024/2025

President	Sue Hesp	01904 489449
Vice Presidents	John Fuller	01757 638388
	Rob Coleman	07930 893383
Committee		
Chairman	Bob Parnaby	07831 658124
Vice Chairman	Bruno Hannemann	07854 020879
Secretary	Andy Marsden	07703 120606
Treasurer and Membership Secretary	Jonathan Sanders	07551 386550
Equipment Officer	Rob Coleman	07930 893383
Education	Bruno Hannemann	07854 020879
Web Master & Publicity	Bruno Hannemann	07854 020879
Events	Christine Johnston	07899 007880
Librarian	Paul Appleton	07764 655718
AHAT Coordinator	Bob Parnaby	07831 658124
Other committee members		
	Adam Fairweather	07948 481947
	Jill Cheney	07958 282414
	Matthew Roberts	07810 473751
	Sarah Haynes	07733 346839
	Steve Kritikos	07899 007880
Other post holders		
Combings editor	Kate Wallace	07842 703984
Assistant Editor	Alan Johnston	
Apiary Manager	Ben Morgan	07723 036897
Regional Bee Inspector	Dhonn Atkinson	07775 119437
Seasonal Bee Inspector	David Bough	07824 408973

The password for the members area of the YDBKA website is: beesatyork

“Combings” is the newsletter of the York & District Beekeepers Association. Views expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Association as a whole or of the editor.

Contributions to, and comments on “Combings” are always welcome. I would particularly appreciate your pictures for “Reader’s Hives”.

Please send any copy or comments to: combings@gmail.com

Combings is published quarterly.

Please note the last date for copy for the next edition is: 18th February 2025

TWO EDS.

Another season has drawn to a close, there are always different challenges every year and this year was no exception!

Please do take note of Chairman Bob's notes about the steady decline in entries to the annual Honey Show.

Our committee work hard to provide a full calendar of events for us each year and we must all do more to support their efforts.

Do contact Bob, or any of the committee, if you have any ideas on how the Show in particular could be made more attractive to us, as members.

If you are reading the on-line version but would prefer to receive "Combings" in hard-copy please let me know and I will arrange for this. There is a hard-copy tick option on the membership form.

Wishing all members a Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year.

Our front page shows Chairman Bob Parnaby presenting the Bill Bell Cup for novices' entries to Andrew Raby at this year's Honey Show.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SPRING

There is always some work to be getting on with when you're a beekeeper! So, in the depths of winter, you can start planning for the season ahead.

The beekeeping suppliers usually hold winter sales in January, so this can be a good time to order the kit that you will need for the new season.

It's a good opportunity to order frames and make a start on putting them together; swarming-start has always been unpredictable and with a changing climate, it is even more so. It's always best to be prepared.

If you haven't already cleaned and sterilized any kit that's awaiting re-use, now is the time to do it, not 5 minutes before you need it!

When ordering wax foundation, it's worth investigating the best deals for exchanging any wax that you have recovered from your own bees. The suppliers will have the details on their website.

FROM THE CHAIR TRUSTEES REPORT FOR THE AGM 2024 – 20TH NOVEMBER 2024 BY ASSOCIATION CHAIR, BOB PARNABY.

Another beekeeping year comes to an end.

Last winter was terrible, with prolonged rain and associated flooding as well as very

little cold weather, so much so that the Met office records show that it was the second warmest Winter since records began.

Some colonies ran out of stores, resulting in average losses of 25% over the country as a whole, with 34% in our area of North East England being the worst affected.

Spring arrived in a fashion, but it was not until early May that there was any warm weather and that only lasted a few days till cooler and wetter days took over. After this period things started to pick up in mid-July and the bees really started bringing nectar in and this continued right up to late September with good honey yields resulting.

The Association once again ran a successful Beginners Course early in the year, but with a fewer number of students than in previous years attending the theory and practical modules and starting their journeys into beekeeping. Thanks to all the tutors who helped deliver the theory modules: Bruno Hannemann, Alan Johnston and myself.

The practical sessions were successfully run by Alan Johnston and myself at the Murton apiary. The practical for those with bees was held at the Escrick apiary led by John Fuller and Bruno Hannemann. Thanks for the help from Greg House, Rob Coleman and Paul Appleton, without the support of these experienced beekeepers the sessions wouldn't have been possible.

Thanks, are also due to Kate Wallace and Alan Johnston in taking back the creation and editing of Combings magazine from the spring edition onwards. This is then sent to Bruno Hannemann for layout and sending for printing. There are still significant number of members who prefer to receive a hard copy.

Our Annual Auction was held in May, with decent weather and thanks to the hard

work of the team of volunteers made it another successful event.

Special thanks go to Alan Addison and Michelle Mulder for operating the cash desk. This year we accepted card payments, which made the process easier and quicker for everyone.

This year we did have some live colonies for sale and these all went for good prices raising over £1500 for the two sellers concerned.

Altogether with several Association lots, and the commission charged, the net profit for our funds was £901.34.

There were a couple of problems that required a bit of forensic analysis after the event and the committee held a "Lessons learned" meeting to try and minimise any future problems by better management on the day.

A call will go out in the spring for volunteer stewards.

Unfortunately, the proposed Bee Health Day scheduled for 31 May was cancelled and a new date next year to hold a joint one with Harrogate and Ripon BKA has been proposed by the Regional Bee Inspector and his team but plans are not yet finalized.

Summer kept our team of swarm collectors busy. A special thank-you to all on the collectors list. It is a valuable service to the community which wouldn't be possible without the help of the members.

After several years as apiary manager, Martin Ainsley has stepped down and Ben Morgan volunteered to take up the mantle, Thanks to them both.

We had to repair the apiary fence early in the year due to some storm damage and also purchased some new equipment and colonies that were installed in April.

After last year's AGM a member suggested that the Hiscox donation be spent renovating the Pavilion interior. This is still at the pending stage as other things got in the way of taking this any further, none of the Hiscox money has been spent.

Eight members took the BBKA Basic Assessment this year and attended some tutorials at Murton conducted by Alan Johnston.

They all passed, so congratulations to them.

A few of this year's beginners attended a practical session on winter preparations at Murton in late August, Bruno Hannemann then held a demonstration on extracting honey.

The Honey Show in October was organised by myself.

The judge was complimentary of the quality and number of entries in the show.

Thanks to Andy Marsden, Vicki Leaf and Bruno Hannemann for assisting on registration night.

Andy Marsden, my wife Ann and I set out the exhibits ready for judging the next day.

The Annual Barbecue was reinstated this year and was held at Bruno Hannemann's. The event was well attended so it's likely that we will hold it again.

We are now accepting bookings for our 2025 beginners' course; there has been an appreciable number of pre-registration enquiries.

We have one key committee member retiring this year. Alan Addison, our secretary for the past three years, has done some sterling work and the whole committee thanks him for a job well done and we wish him well with his plans for the

future.

Alan has handed over to Andy Marsden who joined the committee at last year's AGM.

Jonathan Sanders, who took over the treasurer and membership post last year, has requested that we split the membership secretary from the treasurer post, Steve Kritikos who also joined the committee last year has agreed to take over as membership secretary.

Christine Johnston, our events coordinator, has organised the programme of events for next year, we hope to get this finalised at the next committee meeting.

There still seems to be a reluctance by members to attend meetings whether at Murton or on Zoom. During this year, we saw a very small number of members turning up for the monthly meetings, both at Murton, on Zoom and the apiary meetings. It is disheartening for the committee and the speakers, to have only a handful of people turning up at these meetings.

Perhaps the lack of engagement is a bit of a hangover from the Covid pandemic, but we really do need more involvement and attendance from the members.

I urge all the members to consider volunteering, or at the very least to attend the events that are organised for you.

I wish all the members a great festive season, and a short winter with no colony losses!

Hopefully see you all at the Association activities in 2025.

WIDE TOP BAR FRAMES

THANKS TO YDBKA VICE PRESIDENT, JOHN FULLER, FOR THIS ARTICLE.

In June 2024 the Yorkshire Beekeepers Association circulated a video of an interview with Jeremy Burbidge of Northern Bee Books, discussing the virtues of R.O.B. Manley, who was a well-known beekeeper and writer in the 1930's and 40's.

As you would expect in a discussion on Manley, the Manley frame was mentioned.

We are taught to get super frames drawn out on 1½" (38 mm) spacing and then to use in honey supers increase to 2" (51 mm). To use wider spacing initially would risk "wild comb" being produced between the frames.

I used 2" (51 mm) spacing for a short period in my supers, but it produced more work than it saved.

Manley worked out that frames could be drawn out successfully at 1⅝" (41 mm) spacing and so produced his self-spacing super frame at 1⅝" (41 mm) centres, with ten frames per super.

The Manley frame has 1⅝" side bars with 1 1/16" (27 mm) top bar. The two-piece bottom bar is the same width as the top bar and is referred in catalogues as Manley bottom bars.

I did not use Manley frames for the same reason that I never used the Hoffman self-spacing frames in my brood boxes. More so in a populous colony – when closing frames together during inspections bees get crushed - it cannot be avoided.

My solution was a compromise. I used frames of 1 1/16" (27 mm) top, bottom and sides in 10 slot castellated spacers, which gave me the same space as Manley's frames.

The big advantage of 1 1/16" (27 mm) frame is that when combs are fully drawn out, the cappings stand slightly proud of the wood-work – giving you the perfect guide for your uncapping knife.

INSPECTION RECORDS

It is essential to be aware of what's going-on in our hives and inspection records really do need to be kept, even if you only have one colony. If you have several colonies you will need to number or name them to aid identification. If you have a visit from the Bee Inspector, they will need to know the number or name of each hive in every apiary.

Some beekeepers keep written records under the hive roof (wrap them in plastic if you do this or the bees will chew the paper), others make electronic notes or record their verbal comments, some of us carry a notebook.

The advantage of keeping notes in the hive is that you always know where they are but portable notes mean you can refer to your records at home.

What needs to be recorded varies through the season, and with experience.

If you would like to have a guide, there are various versions available to buy from the bee supplies businesses or there are plenty available free on the internet.

Your notes can be abbreviated or expansive but there are some basics that need to be kept by us all.

Date - This sounds so simple but such a lot in beekeeping relies on knowing what happened when, so do always note the date.

Is the colony queenright? - You may not have to see the queen to ascertain all is well. Seeing eggs is usually a reliable indication, though do check the eggs are all laid in the base of the cell, and that there's a single egg in each cell (multiple eggs in a cell may indicate laying workers) and also that the laying is in a normal queen-right pattern.

Record if you have seen the queen (QS will suffice or MQS if you wish to record your marked queen, VQS will note a virgin queen seen)

Brood - Is the amount of brood as expected for the time of year? A strong build-up of brood is expected in the spring.

Make a note of the number of frames with brood. The majority of the sealed brood should be worker brood, capped with clean, biscuit-coloured wax. A high percentage of drone brood could mean queen problems.

Is there brood in all stages (BAS in my records)? Eggs, larvae and sealed brood. Note how many frames of brood are present.

Queen cells - Can you see any? Sealed or unsealed? Make a record of how many and where they are positioned.

Stores - How much honey and pollen does the colony have? Do you need to feed? Or add a super? Make note.

Space - Is there enough space to allow for colony expansion? Do you need to take any action?

Colony size - Its useful to note how many seams of adult bees are present within the hive.

Temperament - You may like to note the temperament of each colony (though you'll probably remember it well enough if it's a bit spiky!). This is especially important if you are hoping to raise new queens.

If you are unsure whether you need to do something immediately then you can take you records away, re-read what you've written and take a considered course of action.

Refer to your notes before the next inspection and you will be aware of what you need to do and any extra kit you may require.

MOVING BEES IN WINTER

If you want to move your bees a short distance, winter is the ideal time as the usual “less than three feet or more than three miles” rule can be disregarded.

Ideally your hive should be moved during a long period of cold weather, so when the bees come out they will do so slowly and cautiously and will not fly until warmer weather.

Any chosen winter site should be as sunny as possible and not prone to flooding. The site should be protected from the prevailing wind and not be in a frost pocket. The sunnier the site, the more opportunities for the bees to fly out to void themselves.

There are few forage plants available now, so our bees won't collect any food, though in late winter there may be pollen available from Snowdrop, Helleborus niger (Christmas Rose) and the ever-present Gorse.

YELLOW-LEGGED/ASIAN HORNET NEWS

Scientists at the University of Exeter have developed artificial intelligence (AI) to detect Asian hornets, which are now known as the Yellow-legged hornet.

The University said their automated system known as “VespAI”, has been developed to attract hornets to a monitoring station, capturing standardised images.

The system could identify the species with “almost perfect accuracy”, said the university.

The institution also said the system had been tested in the Channel Islands.

Dr Thomas O'Shea-Wheller, from the Environment and Sustainability Institute on Exeter's Penryn Campus in Cornwall, said the goal was to develop something “cost-effective and versatile” and that anyone, from governments to individual beekeepers, could use the system.

He said: “This study tested a prototype version, and the results were encouraging. “VespAI shows promise as a robust early warning system to detect Asian hornet incursions into new regions.”

The university said VespAI used a compact processor to operate and that it remained dormant unless its sensors identified an insect within the size range of a hornet.

It said the system's AI algorithm activated and analysed the image to determine if it was an Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*), or native European hornet (*Vespa crabro*).

If an Asian hornet was detected, the monitor sent an image alert to the user, allowing them to confirm the identification.

Dr Peter Kennedy, who conceptualised the system, said a majority of the reports submitted were “misidentified”. “Our system thus aims to provide a vigilant, accurate and automated surveillance capability to remediate this,” he said.

“VespAI does not kill non-target insects, and thus eliminates the environmental impact of trapping, while ensuring that live hornets can be caught and tracked back to the nest, which is the only effective way to destroy them.”

The university explained the system was tested in Jersey, which has experienced “high numbers of Asian hornet incursions due to its proximity to France”.

Dr O’Shea-Wheller said the high accuracy of VespAI meant that it would not wrongly identify other species or miss any Asian hornets that visited.

The research project included both biologists and data scientists from the University of Exeter’s Environment and Sustainability Institute, Centre for Ecology and Conservation and Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence.

USE OF THYMOL AS A MITICIDE.

Earlier this year I was asked how does Apiguard actually work against varroa?

I wasn’t entirely sure and as the manufacturer’s (Vita Europe) website doesn’t seem to offer any clarification, some research was involved!

Thanks to Fera’s Selwyn Wilkins for pointing me in the right direction.

Chemicals which are present in nature are known as ‘organic’. Plants, in particular, constantly have to evolve ways to survive against pests. So, unsurprisingly, several chemicals from plants have insecticide and miticide effects.

Unlike synthetic chemicals that are usually produced to target a particular pest, plants may have to fight against many different pests, sometimes simultaneously. Therefore, their chemicals need to be more of a broad spectrum, usually affecting several targets.

Essential oils have been shown to have insecticidal effects and thymol, derived from thyme, is commonly used against the varroa mite.

Some essential oils appear to have neurotoxic effects by affecting the function of octopamine and tyramine receptors. Octopamine plays important roles as a neurotransmitter and hormone in invertebrates. Thymol also binds to tyramine receptors, which are related to the octopamine receptors but whose function is not as yet, fully understood. Further evidence suggest that thymol may affects the function of gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA) receptors in insects, which are also important for nerve signal transmission.

The presence of multiple targets for thymol makes it more difficult for mite resistance to develop. In fact, there are no published reports of mite resistance to thymol. This does not mean that resistance to thymol is impossible. One way in which resistance could arise would be by improvement in the detoxification system of the mite, as ever, the advice is to use a variety of treatments as an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan.

DID YOU KNOW?

The honey yields from stingless bees varies between the species.

Though it is reported than some species may produce up to 20 kilograms, often no more than a kilogram is produced in a year.

Stingless bees' nests are not parallel combs like the honeybee, so frame hives cannot be adapted for use by stingless bees and a centrifugal honey extractor cannot be used. However, their honey can be extracted by a suction-pump.

Unlike honeybee, the stingless bees may forage from unhygienic sources, such as fluids from dead animals, sweat, urine and excrement. Despite this, in the areas where it is produced it is thought to be superior to honey from honeybees, as it is believed to have medicinal properties.

HONEY FRUIT CAKE

Thanks to Ann Parnaby for this recipe, which she says is similar to a Christmas cake but without the faff!

INGREDIENTS:

350g (12oz) mixed dried fruit
100g (4oz) caster sugar
100g (4oz) butter or margarine
150ml (1/4 pint) water
225g (8oz) self-raising flour
1 medium egg
2 tablespoons of set honey
25g or 50g (oz or 2oz) additional self-raising flour

METHOD

- Heat Oven to 150°C/300°F Gas Mark 2, grease a 175cm (7") cake tin.
- Place fruit, sugar, butter/margarine and water into a pan and simmer slowly with the lid in place for 20 minutes.
- Allow the mix to cool and then add the beaten egg, 225g flour and honey, stir in and add 25g of flour to create a medium batter at this stage add a little more flour if needed to create the medium batter state.

Pour into the prepared tin and bake for about 1½ hours until a skewer comes out clean.

WAX MOTH AND COMB MANAGEMENT

With the 2024 season effectively over, it's too easy to pack kit away and down hive tools. There are feeding checks to be done and winter oxalic acid applications against varroa but that's really about it. But the protection of stored frames against mice and wax moth is an important issue that's often overlooked.

A number of moth species are attracted to honeybee products – honey, wax and pollen – and include the greater and lesser wax moth *Galleria mellonella* and *Achroia grisella* respectively.

In practical terms, a wax moth is a wax moth and their management and treatment is the same for both. Given that they both operate in a fairly niche environment, it's not surprising that the greater wax moth has comprehensively out-competed the lesser, and is by far the more common of the two types.

In feral colonies they are arguably a useful insect. Dead or weak colonies are simply stripped clear of wax and pollen leaving virtually nothing, and thereby reducing the risk of disease transmission by robber bees. A strong colony is the best defence against most things, including moths, but stored comb is obviously vulnerable and precious.

It is the larvae of the moth which are responsible for the damage to combs.

The large *Galleria* larvae can reach up to an inch in length and, in the active season, travel just below the cappings on brood frames, feeding on honey, nectar and pollen.

The tunnels are clearly visible: opening along the length of the tunnels with the edge of a hive tool and then rhythmically tapping the frame with the hive tool usually brings them to the surface where you, or sometimes the bees, can dispose of them.

Stored comb requires different treatment. Any brood combs which I bring in from the fields during or at the end of the season, are only stored until such time as they are melted down, the wax reclaimed and the frames cleaned in boiling soda solution. Each stack of stored boxes is given a solid wooden top and bottom and that's about it until its time for a boil-up: I can't see any purpose in wasting time and money on frames that are soon to be sterilized and recycled.

Super combs are different. I know that some beekeepers render all their super frames down at the end of the season, clean them and re-wax with foundation ready for the following year. It's an exemplary practice, and almost a pre-requisite for European Foul Brood (EFB) control, but arguable unnecessary for most beekeepers in most circumstances. Boxes full of drawn super comb should be one of the beekeeper's most prized assets, along with good queens and experience. The facility to put a ready-drawn box of frames on a colony either for bee space or honey storage is a huge asset and such boxes should be well looked after.

Traditional advice is that wet supers, which have been spun out at the end of the season should be put back on colonies for the bees to lick out the last traces of honey and "cleaned-up" (The Americans call them "stickies", with good reason!). They are easier to handle once dry and are less attractive to moths and other pests as they contain little nourishment. As an experiment I over-wintered a quantity of supers in their "sticky" state for the last few winters, not for moth-study purposes but so that the first super given to an expanding colony in the spring is a wet one. They have proven to be more attractive to the bees, which can sometimes be reluctant to force their way up through a queen excluder for little reward, or in the case of a box of foundation, the prospect of hard work when they've just woken up!

A dry box, or foundation, once they're used to moving through a queen excluder to a wet super isn't a problem.

I store wet and dry boxes separately and labels them accordingly.

Each pile has a mouse-proof top and bottom and a large sheet of newspaper separates one box from another.

When we had really cold winters, exposing the supers to sub-zero temperatures killed the wax moth at all stages of its life-cycle. It is no longer such a reliable method. A couple of days in a chest freezer certainly works.

The preventative bacillus solutions, Certan and Mellonex are no longer available from the bee supplies businesses.

For the sake of completeness, I should note the use of acetic acid in treating wax moth. Glacial acetic acid is poured onto an absorbent pad, which is placed inside a sealed stack of supers and frames. The fumes from the acid kill the moth in all its stages. I tried it once, but it's such a dangerous, corrosive substance that I've not used it again. Use with extreme caution.

In summary: keep strong colonies; dig out moth larvae from visible tunnels; rotate drawn supers, so that one particular box isn't left unexamined for several seasons; subject frames to sub-zero temperature if possible; separate boxes within a stack, so that moths can't infect multiple boxes; check boxes regularly when not in use.

THE WINTER CLUSTER

Despite being cold-blooded, honeybees can still maintain a very exact thermoregulation and the brood-nest temperature is maintained (34°C-35°C) within the colony throughout the seasons.

Within the winter cluster, the bees that are actually situated on the stores of honey eat it in order to generate heat. The heat is made by vibration of the bees' flight muscles in the thorax.

The cluster expands or contracts depending on the need for warmth. The cluster must slacken from time to time to allow movement to another area of stores.

If there is a very prolonged period of cold weather then the bees will cluster very tightly and may remain clustered, and they may starve, even though there is plenty of food available to them.

2024 HONEY SHOW REPORT BY BOB PARNABY

The 2024 Honey show was held on 20 October and again proved to be a good well-attended event.

We had a repeat of last year's format to minimise the delays during the judging period with registration the previous evening. I would like to thank Vicki Leaf, Andy Marsden and Bruno Hannemann their help on the Tuesday getting most of the entries registered which allowed us to start the Judging next day. .

Special thanks to Janet Cole for writing out the prize cards.

Thanks also to all the members who brought entries to the Show. We were down on entries compared to the last two years but we still went on to have a successful evening.

Judging started at 5:30 and was concluded about 7:20 so after a quick look round the exhibits and tucking into the food, the presentations were made and there was just time for a short quiz, with the winners getting various beekeeping items and sweets as prizes. This meant that we could finish by 9:00 pm and all get home at a reasonable time after clearing up.

Seventeen members submitted a total of sixty-one exhibits, seventeen which were in classes 1, 2 and 3 for two matched jars per entry. That meant there were seventy-eight individual entries.

It was a bit disappointing that only two members from this year's beginners submitted entries but the poor weather early in the year may have had an impact.

There was also a decrease in the more experienced members submitting entries.

I am open to suggestions how we can halt the steady decline in entry numbers including how to register entries but without going back to registration and the judging being all in the same day. The organisers didn't get home until midnight, after a record number of entries in 2022.

The overall quality of entries was of excellent standard and only few were put aside at the first evaluation.

This year's judge was again Peter Lewis, who shared his thoughts and advice in a short Q&A after the trophy awards.

THE KEY POINTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Class 1. Light Clear Honey

An excellent selection of very light honey meant it took some time to arrive at the final three winners. There was one exhibit with the "Yorkshire pound" (underweight), one had some slight granulation, but the rest could hardly be separated until the final decision was made.

Class 2. Medium Clear Honey

Two exhibits were underfilled and were marked down, which was a pity as they had excellent taste and would have been in the running for first in class otherwise.

Class 3. Dark Clear Honey

One entry had some slight granulation; to prevent this it is quite acceptable to put jars into the warming cabinet just prior to the show date.

Class 5. Soft set

Only three exhibits but unfortunately one had started to ferment. It is imperative that the water content is checked in this type of honey as it can be more prone to ferment when it starts to set.

Class 7. Jar of honey presented for sale

This is usually the class attracting most entries but this year there were only six entries, one of which was underweight and there was a problem with the label not being correct, otherwise some very well-presented exhibits.

Class 8. 8oz cut comb

This is also a difficult class to get right, and this year there were three entries but with two drastically underweight and not cleaned up properly. The clear winner was praised by the Judge and they did win the award for best exhibit. This was attributable to the early yielding of balsam nectar, coupled with the use of Manley frames to achieve a thick piece of comb.

Classes 9 and 10. Mead

Only one entry in each class this year but both of excellent presentation, colour and taste.

Classes 11 and 12. Wax Blocks

Again, very few entries. Wax preparation is very time consuming and messy (but very satisfying) to get the wax to show standard.

Class 14. Candle any size

One entry was very good but was marked down as the wick had not been waxed and was difficult to light.

Class 15. Shallow frame suitable for extraction

Three entries this year. One had not been cleaned up and still had propolis which should have been scraped off.

Class 16. Standard Honey cake recipe

This recipe was a repeat of last year and there were 6 entries and there was a debate about the using the correct size of tin as some round tins can vary slightly in diameter, so we may need to put a bit more clarification in the schedule for next year. It was pointed out that when the cake is cut, the honey should show as a darker layer, as it is not mandatory to use the exhibitors own honey for this class it is quite permissible to buy in some darker stronger tasting honey to use.

Class 17. Honey Cake to your own recipe

One of the cakes was garnished with nuts.

In future we will amend the Show schedule to include a requirement to state the

ingredients for this class to prevent any possible problems with allergies.

Class 18 Hive products

There were only two entries in the class. We may need to provide more clarification for entries as currently it's very subjective and a bit like comparing apples to pineapples!

Class 19 Bee related Photograph

Only four entries but all had excellent quality and definition. The judge commented that he would like to see more entries as it's quite easy nowadays to use smart phones and get suitable results. He remarked that it's a local association show not the National, so please be encouraged to enter exhibits.

RESULTS

The winner of the Bill Bell cup for novices was won by Andrew Raby.

The John Fuller trophy for a wax block over 1lb was won by Bob Parnaby.

The David Gray shield for the best honey in show, was won by Ron Clark for his exhibit of light clear honey, in what was a very competitive class 1.

The winner of the Johnston shield for best exhibit in the show was Bob Parnaby for his cut comb in class 8.

Bob Parnaby won the Alf Race cup for the most points in the show with Bruno Hannemann in second place, Greg Sharp was third.

DON'T FORGET!

Check your hives every couple of weeks throughout the winter and especially after a period of bad weather. Strong winds may blow over hives or cause a tree or branch to be blown onto them. Heavy rain, may cause flooding in your apiary.

After a snow-fall do make sure the hive entrance isn't blocked by snow.

And watch out for green woodpecker, squirrel or rat damage...

Happy Christmas, beekeepers!



READER'S HIVES



Thank you to John Hunt, who is one of our intrepid swarm collectors, for this photo he took of a swarm in a hedge.

John reported he managed to get the swarm out eventually!