



DBKA Bees & Honey Feature Marquee - 2011

It was truly amazing to win the Gold Medal again for the Most Attractive Showground Feature. We had had no expectation of doing so well, and the news was both exhilarating and a real boost to the confidence of the team.



The Marquee looked beautiful with all our usual features of 'Taste of Honey', Honey Sales, Information, Candle Rolling, an Observation Hive, and the four Stevenson Trophy inter-Branch entries; plus sponsor Adams Home Hardware of Exeter, and two newer stalls - Lakehayes Organic Plants (Bee-Friendly Plants) and West Country Bee Suits. This year an area was set aside especially for the children where they could touch!! And of course, Mick Male expertly wove skeps for the three days.



Of special interest and nearing perfection was the Chamber; our large glass-sided unit holding a full colony of bees on wild comb drawn out over the preceding six weeks. It looked stunning. The public and beekeepers alike were fascinated by it and all credit goes to Jim Mogridge and Russ Beach, of Torbay Branch, for bringing this exhibit to such a high standard.



The number and quality of our competitive exhibits remained very high, and received praise from the judges. The Divisional Challenge Trophy was won by Holsworthy Branch, the Stevenson Trophy by Tiverton Branch, and Andrew Sluggett of Holsworthy amassed seven 1st prizes and five trophies. Wow! Robert Blackmore of Okehampton Branch was awarded the Blue Ribbon and the Devon County Agricultural Association (DCAA) Award Card (Best in Show) for an incredibly intricate piece of marquetry depicting the DBKA logo.

We were honoured to receive a visit from Mrs Mary Quicke, DCAA President-Elect. She proved very knowledgeable and interested in beekeeping, having experienced her mother's participation in the craft in her youth.

We also had the pleasure of hosting Kirstie Allsopp (TV presenter of 'Location, Location') and her production team as she makes a new TV series. Kirstie proved very adept at rolling candles, and cut a very dashing figure in a bee suit as she thoroughly enjoyed her session of live bee handling looking quite the beekeeper.

Of course, all this could not happen without the sheer hard work and dedication of the Sunday, Tuesday and Wednesday teams who set-up prior to the Show, and the Saturday evening and Sunday morning teams who broke down the features, returned the marquee to its pristine state, loaded the lorry with all the equipment and returned it to store. Huge thanks to all of you; it simply wouldn't happen without your commitment.



So all in all, the Bees & Honey Marquee was definitely the place to be, with a great atmosphere, dedicated and attentive stewards, and enquiring visitors. If you missed it, be sure to make a date for 2012 - 17th to 19th May.

Ruth Neal
Show Chairperson and Secretary