



The Birds and The Bees at the Kent County Show JUNE 2015

The 2015 Kent County Show will be featuring two outstanding display areas that are often overlooked by visitors. This year the Kent Poultry Club and the Kent Beekeepers Association will both have exceptional demonstrations, competitions and interactive areas and are well worth a visit over the three days.

Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager, said, "In the past few years we have been very impressed by the standard of these particular areas of the Show, both the poultry and the bees are indicative of what a County Show is about. Visitors are able to take part in interactive displays, learn about the different aspects of poultry and bee-keeping and really begin to understand how vital it is for us to maintain these traditions".

There are four beekeeping associations in Kent; the Kent Beekeepers Association with thirteen branches across the county and another three independent associations – Dover, Medway and Thanet. All the associations are members of the British Beekeeping Association. It is a mixture of members from all over Kent who attend the three day Show and put on the interesting educational demonstrations and displays.

John Chapman, from Kent Beekeepers Association said, "There are lots of different types of bee in the UK – around 250 species in fact, with 24 species of bumblebees, approximately 225 species of solitary bee and just a single honeybee species. Our Bee and Honey area will be set in a lovely green part of the Showground next to Murrain Wood, and we will have experts on hand

every day to explain the truth and dispel the myths about these wonderful creatures.”

Visitors will be able to taste the different honey available and learn about why there is such a wide variety of colours and flavours. Honey can be made from all pollinating flora with rapeseed making a lovely honey popular with children whilst adults tend to prefer a wild flower honey which has a stronger taste.

There is a good selection of jarred honey and honeycombs to buy with an opportunity to taste them beforehand. Visitors will also be able to see the entries to the Honey Show, along with the judge’s marks and comments.

Children and adults will be able to take part in making their own beeswax candle to purchase. The first method is candle dipping (a traditional way to make candles). Beeswax is often used for hand dipped candles because it is a slow burning wax and the layers go on thicker, resulting in less dipping required to get a reasonably thick candle. Another method for making candles is to roll them, visitors will get the opportunity to roll a candle using beeswax sheets and a primed wick. An additional activity, particularly enjoyed by children, is to make a solitary Bee House with the help of experts.

One of the biggest draws to the area is the ‘Observation Hives’, where visitors are able to see a working colony; where 98 percent are workers, approximately 200 are drones, with one Queen Bee. Next to the Observation Hive will be ‘The Bumble Bee Trust’ with information about the short haired Bumble Bee.

The Beekeepers take part in Live Bee Demonstrations, four times per day with an experienced narrator talking through the day to day hive activity.

Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager, said “This demonstration is not only informative and educational but a wonderful opportunity to understand the important role bees play in the food chain. It is estimated a third of the food we eat is

pollinated by bees, honeybees are responsible for the major part of this pollination and therefore play a crucial role in ensuring we can grow a varied range of produce in the UK.”

The Live Bee Demonstrations take place on all three Show days at 10am, 12noon, 2pm and 4pm.

The Kent Poultry Club Marquee will be themed as 'The Garden of England' and will feature a mock Oast House and duck pond. The club are very active and will have plenty of members on hand to explain the top breeds for keeping fancy birds and chatting about the best way to get a daily supply of fresh eggs.

The marquee has a lovely little area where visitors can pet a chick, hen or duck. The animals are specially selected to sit quietly and lap up the attention. During the Show there will be around 15 - 20 ducks on show as well as some beautiful examples of the best poultry breeds we have around Kent and the UK such as Sussex, Dorking and Orpington.

The Club also combines the Kent County Show visitor attraction with the more competitive Poultry and Egg Show, which attracts some of the best exhibitors in the country. On Friday they will host the Member's Egg Show, Saturday an Open Poultry and Egg Show and on Sunday the competition will be The Open Egg Show and The Poultry Club of Great Britain Regional Egg Show.

Following the judging and displays visitors have the chance to purchase hatching eggs throughout the Show, so for those interested in or already have poultry, this is a great opportunity to purchase eggs that are ready to hatch from some of the best breeders. The Breed Classes are broken down into; Large Fowl, Bantam, True Bantam, Rare Breeds and Waterfowl. This year the club will be raising money for Kent Air Ambulance, with the funds from the sale of hatching eggs and from the 'Egg Auction' held on Sunday going to help this worthy charity. The Sunday Auction is a chance for visitors to buy the eating eggs that have been judged in the competitions. The group also run a

Tombola. Funds from the sale of the tickets goes to the Poultry Club to help pay for the exhibit each year.

Lorna Luckhurst, Club Secretary said “The Show is a huge commitment for the club and each year and we have a dedicated group of volunteers who give up time to come along and be on hand to chat to the public. Each year we are over-whelmed by the number of people who visit with a genuine interest in keeping poultry. The chicks always prove very popular, but it is the expertise that many find so helpful. Visitors ask "what breed is the best layer?" "do I need to have a cockerel" "which is the friendliest bird to keep?" are just a few of the questions we get asked”.

One of the most asked questions for amateur poultry keepers is how to manage red mite. These parasites are the poultry keepers biggest enemy during the summer months and if left unchecked will eventually kill the bird. The Kent Poultry Club members have expert advice and tips to help raise and keep healthy and happy birds.

Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager said “When you visit the Marquee you can really appreciate the amount of work they have put in. The enthusiasm and passion of the members is very obvious, we really appreciate their interaction with the public and helping visitors that already have birds, or best of all, encouraging people to start a small coop”. The Poultry Show Marquee can be found in the Agricultural area, so make sure you pop along, say hello, pet a chick and watch the Appleyard, Aylesbury, Campbell and Indian Runner ducks happily swimming on their very own Kentish duck pond. Full details of the Kent Poultry Club can be found on their website.
<http://www.kentpoultryclub.org.uk/>

The online ticket system is now open to purchase discounted tickets for the 2015 Show. With a whole host of entertainment lined up, incredible equine competitions, livestock classes, lots of food and drink stands and all our specialist areas, the Kent County Show is an exciting and wonderful day out. A family ticket will cost £41 in advance or £48 when bought at the gate. The family ticket entitles 2 adults and 2 children aged between 5 and 15 a full day entrance. Children under 5 go free and parking is free. Adult tickets are £18.50 in advance and £22 on the gate, concessions are £13 when bought online and £15 on the gate. Child ticket is £5 in advance and £6 on the gate.

The Kent County Show starts at 8am and stays open until 6pm although there is no rush to leave as some of the food stands stay open later. The Show has over 120 different activities, workshops, displays and competitions which run throughout the day and are often repeated daily.

For more information and images contact Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager

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Kent County Show – 10, 11, 12 July 2015

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