

We already knew that this year's Southport Flower Show would be special, since it was celebrating its 90th birthday. However, over in the Honey Tent, we had a treat in store.



Visitors were greeted not just by friendly beekeepers, offering free apiculture journals and informative leaflets, but also by a case of delicious local apples, pollinated by Ken's bees.

We found that the public in general was very receptive when they heard about our efforts to preserve not just the craft of beekeeping, but also bees in general - as illustrated by their added interest in bumble bees and other wild bees.

Questions were coming thick and fast, and our stewards did their best to answer even the most obscure enquiry.

On all four sides of the marquee visitors were able to see displays relating to beekeeping, as well as many exhibits – this being the home of the Southport Beekeepers annual show. Wax, honey, cakes, mead, more honey – all presented to a very high standard and reflecting the richness of beekeeping in this area.

Members of the public were fascinated to hear about the honeybee's lifecycle, how queens are raised, where the dark or the light honeys come from. Over at the observation hives, our bees did not disappoint, with queens obligingly laying eggs in front of our very eyes – a rare treat.



At our honey tasting stall we were delighted to be able to offer a variety of honeys for the public to sample - and purchase direct from the producers.



Barry was busy demonstrating the art of skep-making and explaining how bees were traditionally kept in straw skeps – and why today's beekeepers tend to prefer man-made framed hives; he also garnered a lot of interest for our forthcoming Beekeeping Taster Day – so much so that we ran out of leaflets!



Dodging the rain, John was of course on regular duty outside, demonstrating the opening of hives and telling the public about the work of the beekeeper. This is rumoured to be the most popular of all the live demonstrations taking place at the Southport Flower show.

Despite candle-rolling activities being in full swing, we paused during the Friday morning session for a very special occasion: Margaret presented Malcolm and John with certificates for years of service to beekeeping – 70 year and 60 years respectively. What a fabulous achievement!

