

The President Honoured.

2009

Our president Dennis Ryan was honoured recently with a mayoral reception in his home town of Clonmel but he is such a modest person no one would ever know that this happened to him because he would never say it. So I will fill you in and give you a little insight as to why this prestigious event took place and why Dennis was the honouree.

Denis began his working career as a secondary school teacher in Callan town in his native Kilkenny. His father was a beekeeper and bees and honey making were part and parcel of everyday life in the Ryan household. He moved to Clonmel and took up a teaching post in the High School, and settled down with Carmel, his lovely wife, a Cork woman, and raised two fine sons –Richard and Denis (junior). He retired last year 2008.

He began beekeeping in earnest about 16 years ago and fell in love with the craft as passionately as his father before him had .He, along with some other enthusiasts, set up the very first “study group” in Cahir in 1993 with just six students to start, and such was the excellence of the group and their encouragement of each other in the study, that all reached senior level and three of them went on to receive the federation certifications of lectureship. Dennis was one of these and from there he progressed to further studies and was conferred with a National Diploma in Science-(Apiculture) in the Cork Institute of Technology. This award is very precious indeed and is no longer in vogue, regrettably. He completed all courses in the FIBKA educational system, from the preliminary right through to the lectureship, attending at Gormanston annual summer course every year and eventually lecturing there in all the programme areas. Since then he has continued to lecture on every aspect of beekeeping both practical and scientific not solely in Gormanston but all over Ireland and further afield in England and Wales. This year he has been invited to open the National Honey Show in Surrey such is the high esteem in which he is held. And at the same time he continues to impart his knowledge and expertise to the students in the study group in Cahir where he still enthral his students with his devotion to the learning. This group currently runs in excess of twenty at intermediate and senior level. He maintains that he is still a learner himself!...a learner managing seventy plus stocks of bees! He never will tell us how many the “plus” stands for!

He was secretary for the Clonmel honey show for thirteen years. A pet passion of his doing a masterful job of making it the biggest honey show in Ireland during this time. His gentle persuasion of beekeepers to “show” their honey, wax and products is beguiling and he himself continues to support every honey show in the land –here and abroad-with his own exhibits for the shelf. Indeed he played no small part in organising and running the “39th Apimondia International Apicultural Congress” held in Dublin in 2005, the first such congress in Ireland. During the congress the first ever International Honey Show was run and Dennis won several gold medals for his exhibits! Such is his expertise that he gave a demonstration during the conference on making beeswax candles. He continues to inspire us new-timers to no end!

He was secretary of the Galtee Bee Breeding group for approximately ten years. He is an integral part of this very prestigious and excellent Bee Breeding group of enthusiasts who are endeavouring to conserve our native Irish honeybee-Apis Mellifera Mellifera. He lines up with the rest of us, shovel and spade, shirt sleeves rolled up keeping the Breeding apiary in perfect condition to house our wonderful bees.

On many an occasion Dennis has entertained us with the bagpipes-another of his great loves! He is a member of the Dr.O' Hurley Cashel Pipe Band and they have won many All-Ireland titles competing in championships from Lisburn , County Antrim, to Cobh in County Cork .He played the pipes for the very first opening ceremony in Gormanston and continued doing so subsequently until about a year ago. Now we have seen him kilted out and all but we also note that he never ventures near the hives so dressed!..... We miss the bagpipes Dennis and would so much like to hear them again around the place.

Dennis was nominated for the executive council of The Federation of Irish Beekeepers Association .During his term he held the position of Bee Disease Officer and lectured and advised on the first “Varroa” seminars.

He was then elected as vice president in 2005 and subsequently president in 2008.

This is the highest honour that members of the Federation can bestow on any beekeeper.

And so this is why Dennis Ryan was honoured by the people of Clonmel with a Mayoral Reception to acknowledge the contribution Denis has made and continues to make for Beekeeping in Ireland and farther afield. It was convened in the council chambers, on the 26th of September past. Councillor Denis Dunne, Mayor of Clonmel presided, as did his fellow councillors .Each spoke fulsomely in praise of Dennis for his marvellous work. Then some great beekeeping friends added their appreciations.- John Corbett, chairman of S.T.B.K.A, Micheál Mac Giolla Códá, chairman G.B.B.G, and the Honourable Norman Walsh OBE of Drumore and District B.K.A. And how fitting that all this took place in the town of Clonmel. - Cluain Meala i.e. “The vale of honey”.

Is soléir go dtagann an beachaire is meala as Cluain Meala agus tá a fhios againn go mbeidh a thioncharr le feiceáil go deo na ndeor.(Its clear that Clonmel has given us a very special bee man and long may he continue to inspire us)

Congratulations Mr. Dennis Ryan, president F.I.B.K.A.on your mayoral reception.