

Bryan's berry best in world

A GREEN-fingered gardener is celebrating after finding out he has reached his ultimate goal – becoming Gooseberry Champion of the World.

Bryan Nellist (73) of Egton Bridge scooped the much-coveted title of champion grower at the village's Old Gooseberry Show last Tuesday for his Woodpecker berry, for which he was awarded the Harland Challenge Cup.

He has won the accolade four times over the years but weighing in at 35 drams (2.19 oz or 62 grams) Mr Nellist's berry this year was the heaviest in the show by far.

But after some careful research with help from the village's vicar David Haddon-Reece and members of the Mid-Cheshire Gooseberry Show Association, Mr Nellist discovered his berries are, in fact, world beating.

He told the Whitby Gazette he now holds the world record by a small margin, beating Kelvin Archer's previous 1993 record of a berry weighing in at 34 drams 25 grains by just over two grains or 0.1 grams.

He told the Whitby Gazette: "I am gobsmacked."

"They have conceded I'm now the champion grower of the world."

"I was quite excited when it first came up about it."

"It's never been achieved before."

"I would hope it will go in the Guinness Book of Records – someone has said that will be the case and we will be looking into that."

**Report: Alex Fredman
Pictures: Ceri Oakes**

"Some people don't pick their gooseberries until the morning before the show but I picked this one on Saturday which is a bit unusual."

"If I had left it until Monday morning it would have weighed a few grains more but I was too busy helping get ready for the show."

Mr Nellist has been growing gooseberries for around 40 years after becoming interested while working on Egton estate as a game keeper.

He said what he loves most is the friendly rivalry among competitors.

And he said he won't be eating his prize produce.

"I'm going to hang onto it until Egton Show although I don't think it will last that long," he said.

"I've taken some photos of it though. I'm already starting to prepare for next year, pulling up the old bushes and replacing them with new ones."

This year there were around 90 entries in the show held at St Hedda's School Room.

Chairman of Egton Bridge Old Gooseberry Show, Eric Preston, said people came from all over the country, attending from Lancashire, Cheshire and Lincolnshire.

He said the weather has been against growers this year.

"It's been a rollercoaster," he said. "Cold, hot and wet, it's been a



Chairman of the Egton Bridge Old Gooseberry Show, Eric Preston, presents the Harland Challenge Cup to overall winner Bryan Nellist last Tuesday
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struggle. It's never right for us.

"The berries have been a bit indifferent."

"We've got very good ones and

very poor ones."

Next year's show, keeping with

tradition, will be on Tuesday 3 August and will be open to the public from 2pm.



A plate of gooseberries awaits inspection

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Full rundown of results

EGTON BRIDGE OLD GOOSEBERRY SHOW RESULTS

Harland Challenge Cup for heaviest berry: 1 B Nellist 35.00 Woodpecker, 2 G Watson 31.04 Woodpecker, 3 J Hart 27.25 Montrose.

Red Gooseberry: 1 Mrs A Hart 26.16 Just Betty, 2 B Bielby 25.00 Lord Derby, 3 C Grey 22.25, Christiana; **Green Gooseberry:** 1 H Hebdon 26.02 Bank View, 2 Mrs K Brown 20.11 Surprise, 3 JA Leng 19.07 Admiral Beattie.

White Gooseberry: 1 WS Lethem 24.11 Blackden Furze, 2 Mrs K Brown 21.03 Katherine Hartly, 3 F Brierley 21.01 Lord Kitchener.

Hyatt Rose Bowl, maiden: 1 T McCartney 26.20 Millennium, 2 PW Bennison 24.14 Woodpecker, 3 TR Willis 23.19 Woodpecker; **best beaten berry D**

Hardacre 21.25. Ventress Plate, twins: 1 G Watson 21.12 Woodpecker; 2 B Nellist 47.00 Woodpecker, 3 G Bielby 41.04 Montrose.

Miss May Cup, maiden twins: 1 H Fishpool 37.09 Woodpecker; 2 TR Willis 35.70 Woodpecker; 3 T McCartney 28.16 Blackden Gem.

Raw Trophy, heaviest 12: 1 B Nellist 1lb 4oz 12drams 4grains, 2 G Watson 1lb 4oz 11drams 11grains, 3 J Hart 1lb 3oz 0drams 23grains.

Welford Cup, heaviest 6: G Bielby 9oz 9drams 15 grains, 2 Mrs A Hart 9oz 4drams, 18grains, 3 TR Willis 8oz 4drams 14grains.

Spenceley Trophy, maiden 6: TR Willis 8oz 4drams 14grains; **RD Swales Memorial Cup, 4 colours:** Mrs J Brierley 4oz 11drams 8grains; **Graham Challenge Cup, champion grower:** Brian Nellist (54 points).

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Judge Ken Fletcher inspects a pair of gooseberries

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War led to decline of gooseberry shows

GOOSEBERRY shows were once popular all over the north, but declined after the First World War, dwindling from about 170 to only 20.

Now there are only two of these original societies left – one in Cheshire and the Egton Bridge Show where official records go back to 1800.

The society uses the Avoirdupois system of grains and drams (27.34 grains to one dram, 16 drams to an ounce and 16 ounces to the pound).

Other interesting facts include:

- If a husband and wife compete, they need to keep their plants in separate pens.
- If an exhibitor moves house and wants to take their bushes with them – some have passed through many generations – a member of the show

committee has to be present.

- An average portion of gooseberries contains about a quarter of the daily Vitamin C requirement.

- The phrase “to play gooseberry” comes from the days when the fruit was a euphemism for the devil.

- Gooseberry bushes can cope with cold weather down to $-35^{\circ}\text{C}/-31^{\circ}\text{F}$.

Check out all the latest show reports, results and photos on our website www.whitbygazette.co.uk

Search on for superheroes

THE search is on for the Whitby area's young superheroes.

The British Red Cross has launched its annual humanitarian citizen awards which celebrate the valuable contribution young people make to the lives of others. They are now looking to find 2009's most inspirational young heroes from across Yorkshire.

Emma Johns, Red Cross Humanitarian Citizen Award co-ordinator, said: “Sometimes ordinary young people do extraordinary things.

“They may not wear masks or capes, but every day young heroes across the UK make a big effort to improve the lives of others.

“They help in many different ways for example, by giving first aid, befriending vulnerable people, fund-raising or campaigning for a worthy cause.”

Nominations close on Friday 25 September and finalists will be invited to attend an exclusive awards ceremony in London, hosted by ex-Blue Peter presenter Komlie Huq.

Unlike other award ceremonies, the Humanitarian Citizens awards are judged by young people themselves who have previously won the award.

If you know any young superheroes who deserve the Humanitarian Citizens award, you can apply online at www.redcross.org.uk/theaward, e-mail the British Red Cross Schools and Community Education Department at ejohns@redcross.org.uk or call for a nomination form on (0207) 877 7246 or write to: Schools and community education department, British Red Cross, 44 Moorfields, London, EC2Y 9AL.

Pupils successful in music exams

THE following pupils of Sandra Stewart were successful in the music exams held recently by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and Rockschooll, at Eskdale School, Whitby: Corey Hart Grade 1 singing (Merit), Hannah Smith Grade 4 piano, Katie Owen Grade 5 piano, Aimee Bird Grade 4 singing (Merit), Evie Thomas Grade 6 singing (Merit), Jessica Jarman Grade 6 singing, Francesca Laws Grade 8 singing, Hannah McQuade Grade 8 singing.

Also successful were the following pupils of Tony Cross: James Raistrick Grade 3 French horn, Alisha Hankin Grade 3 piano, Becki Cousins Grade 3 singing, Eleanor Horowitz Grade 3 singing, Rosie Havelock Grade 3 Singing, Aimee Bird Grade 5 Singing, Shona Crossan Grade 5 Singing (Distinction), Rachel Horowitz Grade 6.



Bryan Nellist with his award-winning berry

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Show-goers take a look at the exhibits

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