

BEE BRIEF

PLYMOUTH BRANCH NEWSLETTER

JULY 2012

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Sunday 5th August All Members Meeting
Apiary Manger
Sunday 12th August Novices (11) Mike
Hogan
Sunday 19th August Improvers (6) David
Milford
Sunday 26th August Novices (12) End of
course. Mike Hogan

Apiary Meetings for 2012

STARTING TIMES FOR

Saturdays 2pm

Sundays 10 am

www.plymouthbeekeepers.btik.com

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Project.

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JULY

Sunday 1st July All Members Meeting
Apiary Manager
Sunday 8th July Novice (9) Mike Hogan
Sunday 15th July Improvers (5) David
Milford
Sunday 22 July Novice (10) Mike Hogan
Sunday 29 July All Members Meeting
Apiary Manger
August
Saturday 4th August All Members Meeting
Bill Finnemore

An Invitation from Torbay Branch to Visit their Renowned Cockington Apiary

Here's an opportunity that's too good to miss. Doug Westaway, for the Torbay Branch committee, has invited the members of the Plymouth branch to a Devon Cream Tea afternoon on Saturday 21st of July with "the best scones and cream you have ever tasted." Who could resist an invitation like that?

As you may already know, Cockington village is considered to be one of the prettiest in Devon, and with its stately Manor House and craft centre is itself a tourist attraction. *"Nestling deep in a hidden valley right in the heart of Torbay, Cockington is still surrounded by tranquil countryside, and generations of visitors have been charmed by its unchanging beauty"*, says the leaflet. It's worth making a day of it.

The Cockington apiary is well known as one of the most attractive apiaries in the Devon Beekeepers' Association. From 2.00 pm we're welcome at the Apiary for an afternoon that includes that special Cream Tea, so I expect to see plenty of you there. They will need to know how many to expect of course, so please let me know either by phone, or E mail. 01752 255088, or email. trevorbushell@onetel.com

Scientists discover how mite is killing bees

PARASITIC mites linked to the deaths of millions of bee colonies worldwide may have destroyed them by incubating and spreading a potent virus, according to a new report.

The findings, published in the journal *Science*, could help explain the collapse of bee colonies in recent years, which are a threat to agriculture.

The research was carried out in Hawaii, where the varroa mite did not arrive until five years ago.

It has not yet spread to all the islands, which meant that scientists could investigate its impact on the spread of deformed wing virus (DWV).

The team, led by Stephen Martin of the University of Sheffield, found the "spread of varroa has selected DWV variants that ... allow it to become one of the most widely

distributed and contagious insect viruses on the planet". The mites act as a "viral incubator" and inject the virus into the bees when they feed on their blood.

The sudden disappearance of bee colonies, known as Colony Collapse Disorder, has not yet been experienced in Hawaii, "but all of the associated pests and pathogens are present," the researchers said.

It is thought that parasites, viral and bacterial infections, pesticides and poor nutrition resulting from the impact of human activities on the environment have all played a role in the decline of bees worldwide since 2006.

The decline in bee populations has become a multi-billion dollar threat to agricultural production.

Honey prices to rise as beehives struggle

By Louise Gray
Environment Correspondent

THE price of honey is expected to rise after a decline in bee numbers caused by the wet weather and disease.

The number of colonies in England fell by 16 per cent from October to April, following a 13.6 per cent decline in the winter of 2010-11, the latest survey by the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA) found.

The losses were much higher than the 10 per cent drop that would be expected naturally. Over the winter of 2007-08

beekeepers lost a third of hives, but the decline had been slowing until this year.

The BBKA blamed factors including the varroa mite, an infestation that wipes out hives, and the weather.

The warm autumn increased wasp activity, allowing the insects to push bees out of hives. The winter's cold spells fell just when bees were breeding, making it more difficult. Now the rain has been making it impossible for bees to forage.

Dr David Aston, chairman of the BBKA, said the problems could affect honey production. "Losses of honey bee

colonies in the winter are still unacceptably high," he said. He urged beekeepers to improve and update their skills and called for a change in EU and British government policies to provide more forage for all pollinating insects.

He also called for research into the effect of pesticides and to develop treatments against bee pests and illnesses. In the last 20 years there has been a 50 per cent decline in bee numbers in Britain, according to some studies, partly blamed on development of the countryside for intensive farming and housing.

Two recent articles from the Daily Telegraph. One the price of honey is going to rise. Sell the Ford and buy the Jag.

Two scientists have told us the mite is killing our bees, that we already know, but what is the cure. Perhaps they should read the article by Jon Aeryl. page 14, in the May issue of BBKA News.

Beekeeping has been in the news on the radio for the past two weeks. The farming program on radio 4, has had a mention about beekeeping, the mites, and also the weather.

LOANS FROM THE BRANCH

From time to time we receive requests to borrow items of equipment. Unfortunately the only item for loan is the Honey Extractor since all other equipment is needed at the apiary for branch meetings and colonies. If you wish to borrow the extractor you must sign it out using the book in the portacabin. Please be aware that the period of loan is very limited because of the high demand on it after the spring and main honey flows. Please make arrangements through a committee member about returning it or passing it on.

Branch Library

The branch library is currently in the portacabin at the Lee Mill apiary. It has a wide range of material, old and new, available for loan. As well as books there is useful material like pamphlets, construction charts and DVDs. The loan period is restricted to a maximum of 3 weeks so that popular items are able to circulate freely.



The Central Association of Bee-Keepers

Bringing Science to the Beekeeper

Early notice of autumn events...

Social Evening Thursday 25th October

6.30pm

Venue: as National Honey Show – St George's College, Weybridge, Surrey

Speaker: (tbc)

Lecture followed by finger buffet including wine or soft drink.

Stratford Conference Friday 23rd – Sunday 25th November

Venue: Legacy Falcon Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon

As usual there will be seven lectures spread at a leisurely pace over the weekend.

Members and non-members welcome.

Booklet news:

- Karl Showler's booklet is being printed and will be with members soon.
- Two further booklets are in the pipeline.

CABK website:

Our website is hosted with the BBKA website, which has recently been redeveloped. As a result of the BBKA's new arrangements we are seeking to redevelop the website and to move it to another host. Please bear with us while we try to find the best way to make the transition.

Pat Allen, Secretary John Hendrie, Treasurer

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www.cabk.org.uk

A request sent to Plymouth Branch

I am involved with the Plymouths Buzzing project (see below) Buglife's Plymouths Buzzing project is part of the national initiative get Britain Buzzing (for more info see our website:<http://www.buglife.org.uk/conservation/campaigns/Get+Britain+Buzzing>). We are creating a new urban wildflower meadow in the Stonehouse area of Plymouth to aid pollinators such as bumblebees, hoverflies, butterflies and moths – this meadow is 1.25 ha in size. We have prepared the ground and have seeded the meadow with the assistance of Plymouth City Council who own the site and are partners in the Plymouth's Buzzing project. In the spring we will be planting the meadow with 6000 plug plants with the help of the local community and six local schools, in partnership with The Millfields Trust. In December we submitted an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to continue the Plymouth's Buzzing project and create a further 4.5 ha of urban wildflower meadows in Plymouth. The site in Stonehouse is Brickfields Triangle, and I am planning a community planting day on the 10th of March in which families can come along and help me plant out over 3000 wild flowers, I was wondering if I sent you an email advertising it you would ping it round to the offices for me?

Many thanks Duncan Allen
Assistant Conservation Officer - South West England Buglife –
The Invertebrate Conservation Trust
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5 Craigie Drive
The Millfields
Plymouth
PL1 3JB
Telephone: 01752 253087 www.buglife.org.uk

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