



Bee Brief



**Plymouth Branch Newsletter
September 2017**

HONEY SHOW

**PLYMOUTH BRANCH
OF DEVON BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

**Thursday 12th October 2017
Elburton Village Hall**

Open to all members

New members especially welcome

Doors open at 7pm ~ judging starts at 7.30

See page 5 for more information

PLYMOUTH BEEKEEPERS' Apiary Programme 2017

SEPTEMBER		
Sunday 10 th	Novice Meeting	10 am
Sunday 17 th	CANCELLED General Meeting inc. Apiary Maintenance – all members	
OCTOBER		
Thursday 12 th	Branch Honey Show – Elburton Village Hall – Judge: Jack Mummary	7 pm
NOVEMBER		
Thursday 23 rd	Branch AGM - Elburton Village Hall	7.30 pm
DECEMBER		
Sunday 10 th	Branch Christmas Lunch – Boringdon Golf Club (sit down 12.30 pm / £5 deposit) TBC	12.30 pm

Meetings will be held at the Branch Apiary Site unless advised otherwise

Directions to Branch Apiary at Lee Mill, Ivybridge:

- Turn left off the A38 at Lee Mill and follow the signs for Tesco
- Drive past the Tesco entrance, take next right for Central Avenue on the industrial estate
- Drive down the hill of Central Avenue, looking for East Way on your right
- Drive along East Way, looking for Cadleigh Close on your left
- Drive into Cadleigh Close; the apiary site is behind the big iron gates of the tyre factory
- Park inside the gates, walk up the concrete path & the portacabin is on your right

CHAIRMAN'S BLOG

Hello again. Well, the main flow has now gone so I hope you all had at least some sort of honey crop this year. I'm not sure what the statistically valid situation is, but anecdotally, it seems as though this has not been a particularly good year for honey. I've spoken to several members over the last few weeks and they have all told the same tale, the honey crop is way down from its usual level. It's difficult to understand exactly why this should be, but one member I spoke to said that the nectar flow was much more sluggish than usual and his bees were not foraging with much enthusiasm, even in glorious sunny weather. Some members have reported that they got no honey at all, so if you are one of those, don't despair; you're not alone. However, if you are one of the lucky ones **please don't forget to enter your honey into this year's Honey Show on Thursday 12 October** at Elburton Village Hall (doors open at 1900).

If the pests and diseases stay away, there is something deeply satisfying in opening up a healthy, queen-right colony to carry out a hive inspection. And it's always even better when the warm sun is shining and you can see thousands of eggs awaiting their transition to larvae. Sadly, we're all going to have to wait until April 2018 before we get a chance to enjoy that experience again (unless you happen to be going on a beekeeping holiday to the southern hemisphere)!

Now that we have taken off what honey the bees have allowed us, we should have treated our colonies for varroa infestation. With that in mind, you may or may not be aware that there's a new kid on the block. It is called VarroMed. It's dispensed from a plastic bottle in much the same way as many of us used the late lamented Hive Clean. Its active ingredients are oxalic acid dihydrate and formic acid. Importantly, it is licensed by the veterinary medical authorities for use throughout the European Union as a treatment for varroa, and as the UK is still a member of the EU (no matter how much the Brexiteers might dislike the fact) it includes all beekeepers in UK. Valerie and I have decided to try it this year and we carried out the prescribed three treatments during August. It is applied to the gap between the brood frames at six-day intervals. It causes a fairly rapid and numerous mite drop, but I would say no more so than did Hive Clean. But of course, Hive Clean was never licensed as a treatment for varroa; nevertheless, I for one shall miss it. I shall miss it not only because it worked, but also because it came in at around £20 per bottle depending on where you sourced it. VarroMed is eye-wateringly expensive. It is manufactured by Bee Vital and is advertised on the web at £28 per bottle. OK you might say, its £8 more expensive than Hive Clean but if it's licensed and it works, it might be worth it. Well, before you get your credit cards out, I need to tell you that the £28 does not include VAT or delivery. Add on those two demons and each bottle costs around £39!! So this mention in the blog is most definitely not a recommendation; it's just to let those who weren't aware know that this treatment is out there.

As summer now recedes into the past our thoughts should also be turning to feeding for winter. Some call it the autumn feed because that's when it's given to the bees, but as this is the food that the bees will use to get them through the winter I always refer to it as the winter feed. Any food given to the bees during the cold winter months is a supplementary winter feed. So for the newer beekeepers out there and for the avoidance of doubt, you should start feeding for the main winter feed this month if you haven't already started. Some beekeepers start as early as the last week in August. Continue feeding until the bees stop taking it down. All the food should have been taken down by the end of this month; an average colony needs 40 lbs (18 kilos) of stores to get through winter. But please don't wait for winter to start. That really is far too late. By timely feeding we give our bees their best chance of avoiding starvation during the winter months.

P.S. PLEASE HELP BERNIE

Our treasurer works very hard and does an excellent job keeping the branch accounts in order, so can I appeal to all member to think about making his life less difficult during the period when subscriptions are due. There are now less than four months before we all have to renew our subscriptions. When you do, and if you use the on-line BACS transfer facility, please download and complete a membership renewal form, scan it (if you have a scanner) and send it to Bernie (his e-mail address is Bernie868@hotmail.com) or post it as soon as you have transferred the funds. By doing this you will save him the bothersome task of trying to match payments to missing forms. Thank you.

Until next month,

All the best,

Terry

Message from Roger Round

Soft Bakers Fondant

Available from Honey's Bakery at Horrabridge

Tel: 01822 852038

Phone to make your order and the Fondant will be available for collection on a Thursday

A case of 12.5kgs is £13.50

Park in the pub car park opposite the Bakery

SCHEDULE OF HONEY SHOW CLASSES

- | | | |
|-----------|--|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 x 1lb Jars of light run honey
(in standard 1 lb jars with plastic or metal tops) | Slater Cup |
| 2 | 2 x 1lb Jars of medium run honey
(in standard 1 lb jars with plastic or metal tops) | Edwards Cup |
| 3 | 2 x 1lb Jars of dark run honey
(in standard 1 lb jars with plastic or metal tops) | Tucker Cup |
| 4 | 2 x 1lb Jars of crystallised honey
(in standard 1 lb jars with plastic or metal tops) | Winnicott Cup |
| 5 | 2 x 1lb Jars of creamed honey
(in standard 1 lb jars with plastic or metal tops) | Perpetual Trophy |
| 6 | 1 Pair of beeswax candles
(One pair of identical candles made from pure beeswax.
One candle may be lit by the judge) | Prosser Tray |
| 7 | 1 Bottle of Mead (any type)
(all bottles to be clear punted with new flanged corks) | Mansfield Tray |
| 8 | 1 Frame of comb for extraction
(may be any type of shallow frame) | Eric Goss Tray |
| 9 | 1 Jar of honey labelled for sale
(Labelling to E.C. regulations. Honey may be of any variety.) | Interserve Tray |
| 10 | 6 x 1ox blocks of beeswax
(all blocks must be identical and may be from any shape mould) | Poole Tray |
| 11 | Beeswax Open Class
(any wax item or product eg polish or wax block etc) | Bandvulc Tray |
| 12 | 1 Honey Sandwich (see recipe)
(white paper plates will be provided for display) | Ward Cup |
| 13 | 12 pieces of Honey fudge (see recipe)
(white paper plates will be provided for display) | Barton Cup |
| 14 | Novice Class
(any category of beekeeping exhibit from classes 1 to 12 entered by a novice) See Show notes for further guidance. | Milford Cup |
| 15 | Open Class eg photo, gadget etc
Open to all items of beekeeping interest not covered by classes 1 to 12) | Mayflower Marina Cup |

SHOW SCHEDULE CLAUSES

- 1 This show is held in accordance with the show Rules (1994) of the British Beekeepers' Association and Exhibitors are bound by them.
- 2 Entries must be made on the form provided and filled in on the evening of the Show.
- 3 The entry fees are free!
- 4 Judging will commence at 7.30pm.
- 5 No exhibit or any part thereof shall be removed until after the prize giving.
- 6 The Show will be open to members and exhibitors at the close of judging.

SHOW NOTES

- Honey** Keep everything clean and shiny, no odd bees, legs etc. A clean jar makes the honey look clear and bright.
- Classes 1 – 5:**
- Class 6:** Candles may be displayed free-standing or in candlesticks. Do not overheat the wax as this makes the wax become darker and most judges prefer a bright amber colour. Use fine filters, if possible, to remove impurities which may come to the surface and spoil and otherwise fine exhibit. Polish the candle to get a good smooth shiny appearance.
- Class 7:** Mead. Again cleanliness is a must. The punt will show up any debris and any fermentation will show up at the bottle neck. A nice clear yellow always looks pleasing but the ultimate goal is the flavour. Use good quality honey for good quality mead.
- Class 8:** When choosing a frame make quite sure that it is not granulated or weeping honey. The capping must cover the surface to the edge. Cleanliness is desirable but not essential if it is an old well used frame.
- Class 9:** Make sure that you are up to date on all the E.C. regulations.
- Class 10:** Make sure that your blocks are 1 oz, some judges will weigh them. All six blocks should be identical in colour and shape so melt all the wax together first for uniformity.
- Classes 12,13:** Keep to the recipes provided
- Class 14:** Novices – choose your exhibits from any of the above classes. A novice is someone who has never won a prize in the category entered eg an option for beginners honey if you have not won a honey prize before.
- Class 15:** Open to all beekeepers, young and old, to show off photos, gadgets, poems etc.

Honey Show Recipes

Class 12

Honey Sandwich

6oz Margarine

4oz Caster Sugar

1 tbsp Honey

3 Large Eggs

6oz Self-Raising Flour

Pinch Salt

Cream margarine, sugar and honey until light and fluffy. Whisk eggs and beat into creamed mixture. Fold in sifted flour and salt. Divide into two prepared 7" sandwich tins and bake in moderate oven for about 30 mins. Turn onto a wire tray and when cold, sandwich together with honey filling.

Filling

4oz Icing Sugar

1 Tablespoon Honey

2oz Butter

Blend together until smooth.



Class 13

12 Pieces Honey Fudge

1lb Granulated Sugar

¼ Pint Evaporated Milk

¼ Teaspoon Salt

2oz Butter

2 Tablespoons Honey



Boil sugar and milk for 5 mins. Add honey and boil until "soft ball stage" at 240°F (Thermometer is needed as the temperature is critical). Add butter. Beat until creamy, pour into buttered dish. When nearly set, mark into 12 squares. Use full amount for entry.



September 2017

Dear Members,

In the last month, we have discussed several items at the Trustees meeting and we would like to bring you up to date with these suggestions or progress on existing projects.

Last year there were 590 Beekeepers who applied to take the basic assessment training and of those 518 actually to the assessment and the pass rate was 97%, of those 502 beekeepers there were 348 who passed with credits.

General Husbandry was another one, 43 applied to take the assessment 10 withdrew so 33 took the test, 21 of those passed which is 64% and is an improvement on the past few years.

Advanced Husbandry had 36 candidates applied with 32 taking the test, 18 passed which is 56% and is also better than previously.

Defra have sponsored the Husbandry again this year, so watch for the sessions in your area and take advantage of the sponsorship, it is well worth while.

The Trustees have also reinstated the Technical and Environment committee, it will be joined with Research and will be called Research Technical and Environmental Committee. It will be headed by Pam Hunter and already three scientists have been recruited to advise where we would be best placed to make a real impact on Bee Research. More information in the months to come.

We are installing two new exams and they are being trailed now, one is on Bee Health and sits between the Basic and the General Husbandry, the other is on Bee Breeding, not to be confused with Queen rearing. This is to improve the quality of Bees in our own apiaries.

We would like to eventually have Bee Breeders situated around the country to help maintain good bees, if you are interesting in the trials please contact Val Francis or Pam Hunter.

Now to the Spring Convention, this will be different as the Committee headed by Joyce Nesbit is looking to get behind what you want and to provide that in 2018. We are going to try to colour code the events, new beekeepers, those with a few years' experience and those who are very experienced. We want to encourage new beekeepers to attend lectures and workshops aimed at their level of beekeeping, to help them to improve their skills, they can of course attend any workshop and lecture but we are trying to encourage new beekeepers to come along and enjoy the experience of the Spring Convention. We also want to stretch those who have experience so we are looking to get the mix just right, if you have any suggestions please contact Joyce Nesbit yourself, she will be pleased to hear from you.

After another successful show (Countryfile Live) the Shows Committee met to discuss the possibilities for helping the Area Associations to promote beekeeping at Major regional shows. Suggestions are invited as to how the Shows Committee could help you. It was agreed that the Shows Committee work again with the local associations to promote beekeeping and pollinators in general at RHS Chatsworth and Countryfile in 2018

The IMYB project was a huge success and those volunteers who were there over the weekend gave the contestants something to remember, it was voted one of the best of its kind to many thanks to Ruth and Ian Homer for organising this great event.

Countryfile on the TV also included interviews with the English contingent and an overview of the whole event, let's hope that this brings some interest from youngsters who up to now have never considered bees or beekeeping.

You may know that National Bee Supplies stopped trading earlier this year, the company has been taken over and the new owners 'Suttons Seeds' are keen to work with us to promote beekeeping, we are in the initial stages but George Brown thinks it looks promising.

There is another book now in print, it is about feeding and is available from the BBKA Shop, or if you have invited a Trustee to give you a talk, they will probably be able to bring you some without the postage charges. It will be also be available at the National Honey Show, there will also be one written by Celia Davis on Plants, we are hoping that will be ready at the same time.

These have proved very popular, the General Husbandry certainly helped me to get through my assessment successfully.

We have obtained quotations for next year's insurance and have managed to get a further reduction of £2,500.00 not a lot, but after last year I did not think I would get any reduction at all.

The All Risks Insurance, is work in progress, we had an original quotation for £75K which would have meant £3.00 each if everyone took the insurance out. This was not practical or affordable to those members who may have wanted to take this insurance up, So we had to search elsewhere. We have managed to get a proposal to supply this insurance, but it is in its infancy and the finer details are being worked out. The Insurers seem willing to allow three years for take up, this is what controls the price I have to thank those negotiating this as that is such a good concession. As soon as we have more information we will let you know.

By the time you receive this letter you will probably have received the budgets for next year and we seem to be on track to have a small surplus this year, (fingers crossed)

The Swarm Video. All the shooting necessary to provide the video material is now "in the can" as they say. Launch date ADM this was one of the 3 videos originally sponsored by Rowse.

Bees in the Curriculum

Almost complete, style and content agreed and a launch date set for the National Honey Show. This is the teachers' pack to enable them to incorporate be honey bee and other pollinator education in primary schools across the country.

School Visitors Pack. This has been developed by Sue Webster and is currently being trialled. Launch date Spring Convention. This package is for the lay school visitor, a beekeeper, to deliver talks and activities in primary schools. Hopefully, this introduction will also inspire the teachers to take up and use the Bees in the Curriculum pack. Training will be available for beekeepers who want to participate. Training will be made available from May onwards.

Healthy Hive Guide. The update of this booklet is still on schedule for delivery at the spring convention.

General & Advanced Husbandry. Subsidy money has been provided by Defra and training will proceed again this coming year under the watchful eye of Marin Anastasov.

More candidates are sought for trustees with an interest in education & training to serve on the E&H committee. Get your nominations in to the BBKA office please.

Our finances are looking good again, we have watched everything to get best value for money and we will end the year with a surplus again, some of this is due to the fact that Research has not used their budget this year, Pam Hunter who is the lead has had surgery which has immobilised her for a while, but she is back in harness now and is pursuing new ventures in research.

The Web page design is now approved, we just have to get the script correct, it looks very good, but we want it to do so much more than previously, it also has to be user friendly, so there is a way to go yet.

The new Data Base system is looking to be on target for January next year that will be such an improvement for the associations and for the office staff as well.

The Kitchen at Stoneleigh has been fitted, some tweaks are needed but the basics are there. We can also open windows in the conference room without fear of them dropping out on the head of a pedestrian walking by. Work on the main offices starts at the end of this month and will be very disruptive for the staff, walls have to be built and some dismantled, the noise and the dust will not be pleasant however it will be worth it all when it is finished. We are hoping it will take eight weeks so should be finished by the end of November, but we are talking about builders so we will have to wait and see.

Because all the office and the stock has to be moved and then the stock all moved back again, we are looking at the opportunity of installing a stock control system, we hold stock for Adopt a beehive as with doing this in house it saves a considerable amount of money and the previous 'packers' made quite a lot of mistakes, Clare says she would rather do it herself and get it right. We also have all the new booklets, they are sold through the shop and also taken to shows by Trustees and the Shows committee, we want to be in a situation where we have a base stock level for reordering so that if anything needs updating we have the time to do this. We also need to know that the stock issued is accounted for, this year it has made a difference to the costing for the BBKA News as it comes under that umbrella.

Sharon Blake who is the editor of the BBKA News has worked wonders this year, producing four books up to now with more in the making, she has also managed to reduce the print costs by £5,000.00 for the BBKA News.

Sally Carter gets in the advertising for the magazine and despite the books being 'extras' she has managed to get our regular advertisers to dip their hands in their pockets and support each book, a fantastic job by anyone's standards, this keeps the price down for our members.

We have recruited a new member of staff to help George with his fundraising, Clare Hartry has joined the team and has fitted in quite nicely. She is a young Mum and has a Master's Degree in Journalism and has worked with the Association of Applied Biologists on their Journal Food and Energy Security, Clare has all the right attributes to help George in his quest for funds.

We will have six vacancies for Trustees in January, If you want to see how the BBKA is managed and would want to help influence its future, please apply to be a Trustee by asking your branch to sponsor you with another branch to second you. You need a passion for bees and to be a team player. It can be a challenging role but it has a lot of job satisfaction which goes with it. We work with likeminded people, after all we all look after bees.

The skills are used within sub branches , Education, HR, IT, Finance, Shows, Fund Raising, Research and Governance, then we combine all those at the EC meeting discussing the best way forward for each section and ultimately for our members. If you have experience in any of these areas please consider joining us to make things better.

Margaret Wilson, BBKA Vice Chairman



PLYMOUTH BEEKEEPERS LIBRARY

A complete list of the books is available on the website, so please spare a few minutes to look at the available titles.

The library also has a small quantity of DVDs.

Books and DVDs can be borrowed for one calendar month, after which they should be returned or renewed. Renewal can be by telephone or by email. Failure to return or renew results in a small fine.

If you have a request on a particular topic and would like help to choose the right book please contact me and I'll be happy to help.

If you read one of the books and can recommend it (or otherwise) then please let me have your feedback.

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Link to PBKA Library

www.plymouthbeekeepers.btik.com/LibraryBooks



The Buzz – Honeybees & Beekeeping



August 31, 2017

Bees are a sticky business but life is sweet

Article about Roger Payne, Paynes Bee Farm in the South Downs.

Read more on the Times website (you can register for 2 free articles if you don't subscribe):

www.thetimes.co.uk/article/bees-are-a-sticky-business-but-life-is-sweet-2ghqdnxvg

Septmber 6, 2017

Pollen hitches a ride on bees in all the right spots

Bee bodies may be built just right to help pollen hitch a ride between flowers.

For the first time, scientists have identified where and how much pollen is left behind on bees' bodies after the insects groom themselves. These residual patches of pollen align with spots on bees' bodies that touch flowers' pollen-collecting reproductive parts, researchers report online September 6 in *PLOS ONE*.

Read more on the Science News and PLOS ONE websites:

www.sciencenews.org/article/pollen-hitches-ride-bees-all-right-spots

journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0182522

July 14, 2017

Herbs: why not grow your own?

Herbs are a fantastic way to attract bees and other pollinating insects. Not only that, but they're delicious, versatile, and an absolute cinch to grow. If you want to spice up your life with a bit of nature, even if it's just a windowsill, then herbs are the way to go. The Soil Association's Head of Horticulture, Ben Raskin, gives his expert advice on the top five easy-growing herbs that will add flavour to any home or garden.

[Click here for this Soil Association website article](#)

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DBKA Website - Members Area Password:

If you have forgotten the password, contact Terry McAuliffe or Jean French.

Notice

Gary and Steve would like to inform all new and existing customers that we no longer trade under the name of "Cornwall Honey" and have no affiliation to the website or other social media tools related to Cornwallhoney.co.uk



Business is as usual but we are now trading under the name of "The Honey Company"

Therefore please correspond using the email:
thehoneycompanyuk@gmail.com

The website which is under development is:
www.thehoneycompany.co.uk

We look forward to seeing you all in the future.



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