



MONTGOMERYSHIRE BEEKEEPERS
ASSOCIATION

The BeeHolder

January 2012

*"As Beeherds Watched Their Stocks
by Night"*



"BUT I ONLY CAME TO GIVE THEM CANDY - HONEST!"



Forthcoming Events

January TBA	MBKA Apiary Training Day Oxalic acid treatment	Gregynog Hall, Tregynon
January 14 th Saturday 7.00pm	MBKA Annual Dinner – see menu on later page Christmas dinner in January, yummm.	Gregynog Hall, Tregynon
February 11 th Saturday 10am	MBKA Bee Keeping Course (Beginners) Brian Goodwin one day beginners' course.	Gregynog Hall, Tregynon
February 22 nd Wednesday 7.00pm	MBKA Annual General Meeting, date and time TBC Guest speaker Wally Shaw (no relation), free hive raffle.	Plas Dolerw, Newtown
February 25 th Saturday 10am	MBKA Bee Keeping Course (Intermediate Day 1) Brian Goodwin two day intermediate course.	Gregynog Hall, Tregynon
March 3 rd Saturday 10am	MBKA Bee Keeping Course (Intermediate Day 2) Brian Goodwin two day intermediate course.	Gregynog Hall, Tregynon
March 18 th Sunday 10.00am	MBKA Apiary Training Day Spring Inspections	Gregynog Hall, Tregynon
March 24 th Saturday	WBKA Bee Convention (see http://www.wbka.com/events.html) Lots to see, hear and buy	Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells
April 20, 21, 22 Fri, Sat, Sun	BBKA Spring Convention Harper Adams University College Campus, Newport, Shropshire	
April 22 nd Sunday 10.00am	MBKA Apiary Training Day Continued Spring Inspections	Gregynog Hall, Tregynon
May 13 th Sunday 10.00am	MBKA Apiary Training Day Swarm Control and Making Increase	Gregynog Hall, Tregynon
June 17 th Sunday 10.00am	MBKA Apiary Training Day Family Day	Gregynog Hall, Tregynon
August 19 th Sunday 10.00 am	MBKA Apiary Training Day End of Season and Pre-Winter Preparation	Gregynog Hall, Tregynon
October 25, 26, 27 Thurs, Fri, Sat	The National Honey Show	see http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/ St George's College, Weybridge, Surrey

For the latest information, check the website – www.montybees.org.uk.

If you would like to suggest a speaker or a topic for a meeting, or if you would like to have an apiary visit held at your apiary next summer, do contact a member of the committee (see page 19).

Caption for the last cover cartoon

Peter Darley (Bournemouth and Dorset BKA) suggests that the DRAC cartoon on the front of the last BeeHolder was captioned "My God, he must have swarmed"!

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Annual General Meeting

The Montybees AGM is not the fusty old fashioned style AGM that most (non-beekeeping) clubs or societies have. Yes, of course we have to read the necessary reports and elect any new officers required (the secretary post is up for grabs), but our association is legally obliged to do these things. We do, however, **push this stuff through as quickly as we can** so that we can get on to the guest speaker, who in 2012 will be **Wally Shaw** (no relation to Tony).

Wally is chief technical officer of the Welsh BeeKeeping Association and the person who makes technical liaising with the Welsh Assembly on behalf of all beekeepers in Wales. He will give a talk entitled "**The bees know what they are doing, but does the beekeeper?**". Those of you who have heard Wally speak in the past will know that this will be well worth coming along for.

Attendance at AGM is rewarded by a **FREE** raffle of a National hive with one **FREE** ticket going to each member who attends (only one ticket per membership). Plus food and drink on a lavish scale. It also gives the general membership the opportunity to have their say in how the Association functions.

Editor

Editorial

Here we are, all getting ready for Christmas as best we can in this climate of austerity. So far the actual climate has been relatively kind, if a little damp, compared to last year. Hopefully the bees are tucked up cosily in their hives, enjoying midnight feasts of sugary "junk food", oblivious to the trials and tribulations we make for ourselves in our often overly complicated world. Perhaps we could learn from their simple ways (but not if it came at the cost of having dinner plate sized mites sucking out our juices).

If all goes to plan I should have the magazine out around about Christmas, so maybe I have finally tamed this beast we call the BeeHolder. Mind you, I wouldn't bank on it until we see when the April issue turns up.

As always, I would like to ask any members out there with ideas for articles to get in touch, or even better, write an article or take a (preferably bee related) picture and send it in to the magazine. The preferred method is e-mail to editor@montybees.org.uk.

Don't forget that this magazine is also available on the web site (montybees.org.uk) with more colour and a handy, downloadable pdf file.

Chris Leech



Gregynog Apiary Report

Hello everybody, I hope your beekeeping year has been an enjoyable experience. We have had a very busy season in Gregynog, starting the year with four colonies having lost two in late February. Spring inspections started at the end of March just as the weather improved, and lots of feeding was required. We also had problems with Queens failing.

In early May we purchased five nucs which progressed well until late June when we had problems with swarming. This was the most frustrating part of the whole year as it's just not possible to be in the apiary at exactly the right time to prevent (or catch) swarms. Despite all of this, we increased our stock to a total of ten colonies by the middle of August.

There was no honey to harvest this year, which was a bit odd as there were some strong colonies which hadn't swarmed and so you would expect to have produced much honey. I know this is not an isolated case, so we will have to wait until next year and try again.

Winter feeding was completed by the first week in October and mouseguards have been fitted. I will be going over during the last week in December to put fondant on the hives.

On reflection I think the apiary has been well received by our members with good attendance at meetings, and most members giving positive feedback. See you all at Gregynog next year.

Dave Bennett
Apiary Manager



We Welcome as New Members ...

Roger Stone [Newtown] and Ruth Stafford [Welshpool].

Note that the place names given are nearest town rather than individual villages.

**The cars are packed bumper to bumper.
So now there's no question at all.
It's either a Cliff Richard concert
Or Montybees' AGM in the Hall.**

From the Eke, courtesy eBees

The National Honey Show Cheap cheap cheap when you know how.

It is on for 3 days and entry fee is £15 per person per day. Now that may seem like £45 for each person to attend all three days. **BUT** (and here is part of the sweet madness of the beekeeping world) at one entrance to the show one pays lots of £15s whilst at another end one can buy membership of the National Honey Show for £12. This entitles one to go to **all** events with a guest. So two people for 3 days for £12 at one door and at £90 at the other door! Beats the "Two for the Price of One" at Tescos. Better yet, get a none beekeeper to take you as a treat and sit amused at the dinner table whilst one's host explains that beekeepers are fascinating and endearingly mad.

Find out more at their website (including photographs taken during the show so that you can play "Spot Tony at the Honey Show"). The URL is <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/news.shtml>

Tony Shaw



Bee Course It Is There

This is the answer to the question How do we learn about bees? You will see in the forthcoming events section (above) that there are some bee courses coming up in the new year. Now that we have the training apiary at Gregynog, we will be utilising it as much as possible for that purpose. Not only does it provide our members with the opportunity to learn more of the craft, it helps spread the workload of looking after the bees.

And of course our old friend Brian Goodwin will be providing three days of courses at Gregynog. These will be a combination of classroom and hands-on in the apiary, subject to weather. The first course will be a one day session from 10am to 4:30 pm on Saturday Feb 11th aimed at the new/novice beekeeper.

A two-day Beekeeping course for those who have had a minimum of a 12 months of keeping bees will be held on the consecutive Saturdays 25th Feb and 3rd March, again 10 am to 4:30 pm at Gregynog.

Brian's courses have been very well received in the past and he is good at pitching the content of the course to the right level given the experience of the students.

There will be a fee for these courses (not yet finalised), which will include coffee and tea, but please bring lunch to share.

Editor

Chairman's Chat

At our last meeting (Bees in the time of the Pharaohs) Treasurer Roy Norris remarked how few of our members attended the various bee conventions held in Wales and England. The excuse for not attending the big annual BBKA jamboree could have been that Stoneleigh (Warwickshire) was too far away. But in 2012 the BBKA Spring Convention will be held at Harper Adams University College Campus, Newport, Shropshire – Yes SHROPSHIRE – on Friday 20, Saturday 21, Sunday 22 April 2012

And surely the Royal Showground at Builth Wells, where the Welsh Bee Convention is held, is in everyone's reach? Saturday March 12th 2012

What excuse could there be not to attend at least one of these conventions? Well it may be that few know of the benefits. Amazing bargains in Bee equipment from the trade stalls. Some liken the rush as a veritable feeding frenzy akin to reef sharks attacking a bucket of bait thrown into the water. Then the lectures, so good that each year the seating has to be increased to cope with the crowds. Then the conversations over lunches or teas; so much knowledge may be imparted. Then the workshops for the specialists. Those who ask for our association, our small Montgomeryshire BKA, to get more "advanced" should just take a small day trip to our neighbouring counties to get the very knowledge and training they desire.

My particular favourite is the National Honey Show in Weybridge at the end of October. I've been taken for the last three years as a birthday treat. "How naff is that?...a Honey Show for xxx sake!" I can hear some say. Well those 3 good people who have taken me have been non-beekeepers and each have come away mesmerized by the experience. Every year, a few days after the show, I have sat amused listening to my benefactors explain to other non-beekeepers the joys of the visit to The Honey Show. The conversation is always the same "...I must say I got lost half way through some lectures and Tony had to explain to me afterwardsbut even he didn't know what some of the equipment on sale actually did ...but what was amusing was to listen to beekeepers explaining to each other how bits of equipment worked. I can see how one can get hooked on beekeeping..."

To make a beekeeper friend at a convention or show all one needs to do is stand by a Trade Stall gazing intently at a small piece of equipment held at arms length. Within minutes one will be in a conversation. More minutes with the arm up and a group discussion is taking place. Why do Roy and I see so few of our members at these conventions?

Statistics show that the more training and knowledge one has about bees, the fewer are the losses. We can give some training in the Montgomeryshire BKA. This coming year we have an oxalic acid Training demonstration in January and other themed demonstrations throughout the year at Gregynog; we have our usual beginners course in February run by Brian Goodwin and we also have a two-day advanced course in February/March again run by Brian. But our catchment area is too small for us to provide some of the more specialist or esoteric stuff. The more advanced stuff must be left to bigger organisations than ours.

Please don't criticise us for not providing a course on artificial Queen insemination or Royal Jelly collecting: just get in your car and go the 30 to 50 miles to a workshop at one of the National Bee conventions.

See you at one or more next year I hope.

Tony Shaw
Chairman MBKA

Apiary Training Days

Our apiary manager, Dave Bennett, with the assistance of SBI John Beavan, has come up with a list of dates on which specific training will be given at the apiary. Hopefully this will give our members chance to gain hands on experience with some aspects of beekeeping with which they are not familiar. Looking at the list of topics there should be plenty to interest the novice and intermediate beekeeper, and those with more experience might want to get a different perspective on things or even help out if demand is high.

Each of the sessions is planned for 90 minutes, starting at 10:00 am, though I imagine that sticking to these times will be subject to the vagaries of the bees, the weather and whatever social interaction breaks out.

Note that these training days are separate from in addition to the more general training courses being given by Brian Goodwin.

January Oxalic Acid Treatment

The date of the January Oxalic acid treatment cannot be fixed in advance, so if you would like to attend, you must give Dave a phone number/e-mail address so that he can let you know when it will be. Probably middle of January but keep a check on the website. We will also have syringes and (already made up) oxalic acid for sale so that you can apply your own having seen the technique demonstrated. Each syringe will do one hive and if you have just one or two hives this will be the most convenient way to obtain and use oxalic acid.

The bees will rest during February

Sunday March 18th - Spring Inspection

This session will cover what to look for in the spring, focussing on feeding and Varroa control.

Sunday April 22nd - Continued Spring inspections

The bees should be livelier by now, so there should be plenty of things to look out for.

Sunday May 13th - Swarm Control and Making Increase

This is vital information in the current situation where feral colonies are struggling to survive and replacing losses of kept bees is an ongoing battle.

Sunday June 17th - Family Day

This will be split into two groups, parents in one and children in the other. Last year the apiary family day was a big hit. Definitely bring picnic things!

Sunday August 19th - End of Season and Pre-Winter Inspection

Removing honey (yum), Varroa treatment and the pre-winter inspection are covered at this meeting.

All courses are free to MBKA members, but please do let us know if you are hoping to attend one or more of the meetings. Not only is it useful for planning that we know attendance numbers, but courses may get cancelled if there is little or no interest. Either fill in the slip posted with the Christmas dinner invite, or contact Dave by phone or e-mail (see page 19).



Reports on Meetings

October 20th – Making Beeswax Products

At the October meeting at Plas Dolerw Jane Frank and Michelle Boudin gave an interesting workshop in using honey and beeswax in simple home made skin care products.

Michelle started off the evening demonstrating a simple ointment. An ointment (also known as salve or balm) is a water free mixture of beeswax and oil which can be scented with essential oils. Prior to the meeting Michelle had soaked dried horsetail leaves in olive oil which was gently heated to infuse the ingredients. The oil is then strained and leaves discarded. Horsetail is very high in silica and potassium and strengthens the skin, hair and connective tissue. At the meeting the olive oil infused with horsetail was placed in a double boiler with beeswax and shea butter. This was gently heated to melt the ingredients together, then allowed to cool slightly before benzoin and some lavender essential oils were added. These also have skin healing properties. The ointment is then allowed to cool slightly then poured into jars and left to cool further. If the mixture is too soft once completely cooled, it can be re-melted and more beeswax added to create a firmer consistency. To make Comfrey ointment replace the horsetail with Comfrey leaves, Marigold petals can be used to make a calendula ointment. Lip balms are made in the same way. Ointments do not need preservatives because they contain no water.

Jane then demonstrated how to make a beeswax and honey soap. Soap is made by combining lye (caustic soda) with oil. Jane used Pomace olive oil mixed with coconut oil, sweet almond oil and castor oil which was melted together in a double boiler. In a separate bowl spring water is mixed with honey and the lye added, this heats up in a dramatic bubbling fashion and changes colour. When the water and oil are at the same temperature (about 70°C), the water mixture is added to the oil and mixed together with a hand blender until 'trace' is achieved. Trace is a technical term in soap making and may take 20 minutes or so. If trace is not achieved the soap has to be discarded. Any colours or essential oils are added at the trace stage. The soap is then poured into a mould, wrapped up in towels and left for 24 hours when it goes through an interesting jelly like translucent phase before setting hard. After 24 hours it can then be turned out but must be stored for at least 4 weeks to cure (for the caustic soda to neutralise). The soap is then ready to use.

Jane also demonstrated making a simple moisturising cream using honey. This is a two stage process where sweet almond oil and beeswax is melted together in a double boiler, and water and honey is heated in another. When they are at 75 to 80°C the water is added to the fat mixture whilst whisking continuously for at least 5 minutes. As it cools the mixture thickens to a cream like consistency. When the cream falls below 35°C other ingredients can be added such as preservatives, active ingredients such as vitamin E and essential oils.

Full recipes can be found on the Monty Bees website. Ingredients and other supplies can be found on www.aromatic.co.uk

The skin is the largest organ in the body and provides a protective barrier against the outside world. However it is highly absorbent (which is why nicotine patches work) so we must be careful what we apply to our skin. All three recipes are simple and demonstrate how easy it is to make your own products without the need for harsh chemicals (such as sodium lauryl sulphate and parabens) commonly found in skincare products.

Jane's soaps and creams can be bought from her website <http://www.frankessence.co.uk/>
See also pictures on page 10.

Michelle Boudin

November 24th – Bee Keeping in the Time of the Pharaohs

*As most beekeepers are aware, honey found in the tombs of Egypt is apparently still fit for consumption. This is more a tribute to the bees' ability to preserve, rather than that of the ancient Egyptians. So the Egyptians clearly harvested honey in ancient times, but did they keep bees, and if so how? **Pauline Norris**, egyptologist, kindly agreed to shed some light on the subject.*

There are only four pictures of bees surviving from ancient Egypt, and none at all from the period 600BC to 1000 AD. Before 600 BC accurate dating is not possible, which makes the study of Egyptian beekeeping quite difficult.

A sub-species of *Apis Melifera* has existed in the Nile valley and as far south as Sudan since ancient times. They are characterised as good housekeepers but poor producers. This is the strain of bee most likely kept by the Egyptian, who believed that bees and honey were created from the tears of the sun god, Ra. Their name for bees translates as "the flies that build" and they also believed that bees come into being through bugonia (this was the belief that bees were spontaneously generated from a cow's carcass and that by putting a cow's head under a tree, when the flesh had rotted off bees would emerge from the eye sockets. Actually these would probably have been a species of hover fly which the Egyptians mistook for bees. The belief was popular in the Mediterranean regions until eventually disproved in 1668.) This coming of life from the dead made bees a symbol of life.



Hieroglyphics including a bee at the seventh symbol

The climate and annual flooding of the Nile made the plains of Egypt very fertile and productive all year round. This allowed honey gathering right through the year. It is the decorations in the tombs of the well to do which provide the only records of bee keeping. The bees were kept in cylindrical pots, stacked to form a hive. Smoke was used as an aid to handling the bees. The entrance hole is at the front, and the back of the cylinder is removable allowing the bees to be smoked and the comb removed from the back, which meant that the brood was largely unaffected at the front of each cylinder. This would have made it a less destructive method of keeping bees than other techniques. The circular combs would be put in a cow's hide and trampled to separate the honey from the wax.

The honey produced from the kept bees was clear, but wild honey gathered in the desert was red in colour and preferred as a delicacy. Rameses II used to send parties out into the desert to look for honey protected by guards. The best honey was eaten or offered to the gods, whilst the rest was used in wine, cake making, bread, mead and even fed to crocodiles. They were aware of its antibacterial effect and use on wounds. Honey was used during mummification, as a glue and was famously found in the tomb of Tutankhamun.



The Egyptians made extensive use of beeswax, which they probably extracted using hot water techniques. It was bleached in the sun and used to bind paints, make masks, writing tablets, to wax hair, boat building, mummification, sacrificed to the gods and even used to make wax effigies in which to stick pins. From the quantities of wax sacrificed to the gods, they must have had a lot of hives.

Chris Leech



Ancient Egyptians harvesting honey (tomb painting)



One of Jane Frank's soaps



Horsetail

Surprisingly this photo of bees on a winter cleansing flight makes a beautiful image. And not a washing line in sight (see page 14).



Courtesy of Konrad, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (via eBees)



Green woodpeckers (above left) can be relentless in their pursuit of bee larvae. Picking up the vibrations of bees in a hive, they will peck a hole like that in the right picture. The handles on national hives make them "easy peckings". A screen of chicken wire will protect from these albeit unlikely winter pests.

Courtesy Warwickshire BKA, via eBees

IMYB Report

Back in July we helped sponsor a team of young beekeepers from Wales to participate in the International Meeting of Young Beekeepers at Warth in Austria. Here's what happened.

The Team consisted of Toby Beavan (12) from Ruthin, Ianto Hammonds (13) from Ceredigion and John Elsby (13) from Anglesey. This gave us a good representation from different parts of Wales and the youngest team to be competing.

Day 1 - We travelled out to Warth from Manchester airport on the 11th of July, changing flights in Munich. Matt Notley from the English team also travelled with us. When we landed in Vienna we were met by a representative from the Austrian beekeeping school who then took us to the venue which was around an hour from the airport. More information on the venue can be found at <http://www.lfs-warth.ac.at/page.asp/index.htm>

It was late afternoon by the time we arrived. After unpacking we all took part in games to socialise with everyone. This was followed by an adult planning meeting - after the youngsters had finished testing the boundaries on the lights out rule!

Day 2 - This was the first full day of the competition and with temperatures soaring all the young people got mixed into teams with 1 leader each; this had been carefully worked out to make sure no team had 2 people from the same nation in it. My team to take around the competition consisted of 1 Russian, 1 Latvian and 1 Slovenian. This section of the competition covered manual work with bees (real colonies of bees) microscopy, recognition of beekeeper's tools and beekeeping-connected plants as well as a section on products. To give an example of what they had to do, within the products section there were 5 jars of honey, two jars were fine but one of the two was a bitter honey. The other jars all had something wrong with them and all 5 had to be correctly identified.

Day 2 was finished with a social evening to include the presentation of the nations. Our young team gave a presentation about the nation of Wales and beekeeping practices here. It was fascinating to listen to the other talks and I regretted that we hadn't taken hand outs as most of the other groups had (though this was mostly cheese and flower bulbs from the Dutch team).

Day 3 - The young people all sat the academic section of the tests in the morning (2 x 1.5 hour exams) while the adults got a tour of the facilities. The beekeeping section of the college teaches young people to be commercial beekeepers and also produces tons of honey and 700+ queens annually. It was really interesting to see how they work with bees in Austria, one major difference is that no protective clothing is worn. The afternoon of Day 3 consisted of result announcements and presentation of prizes and certificates. All the young people had organised games and sports for the rest of the evening, while the adults took part in a meeting to gather feedback and improvement suggestions.

Day 4 - This last day of the trip saw a change of plan for us as we left the college early and planned to visit Schonbrunn Palace. But when we arrived in Vienna the German, Latvian, English and Welsh teams all wanted to stay together for the last day, so we looked around Vienna City as a group. We landed back in Manchester at 11pm.

The fact that we were placed 15 out of 16 is partly attributable to the team being so young, the amount of beekeeping education we do compared to other countries and how seriously we take competitions compared to other countries. The actual competition was far less important to us than the wealth of knowledge we all brought back from the trip.

John Beavan

Swarm Control Manager's Report 2011

The year started off fairly quietly and swarms were reported early May onwards.

Quite a few were in inaccessible places and appeared to be feral colonies of some standing which had over wintered and grown to such a point where they were becoming noticed by the public. However none of these were harvested despite numerous efforts by different beekeepers as they were in hollow trees, beneath floorboards, in soffits and behind stud walling.

During the early summer reports of swarms dropped off considerably, but then as the year went on the reports increased and quite a number of members were able to get hold of good swarms. Even so some lost their swarm overnight. Locking them in and feeding them is my solution, once you can get them building wax they seem to settle down and will be happy to occupy the hive.

Problems were again found due to members who asked for swarms, and at the time could not be contacted and when eventually contact was made were unable to collect them because they had either no means of collection or nowhere to hive them.

Another problem for me was the fact that when ringing some members I found that they had been finding and collecting their own swarms to such an extent that some had filled up to 5 hives and had no where to hive another swarm.

Both of these problems took a lot of unnecessary time and money ringing round, whereas if they had contacted me earlier to say that they were no longer interested in or able to collect swarms the waste could have been avoided.

Generally I think that most members, who required swarms, did get one or more, depending on the respective locations of the beekeeper and the swarm.

The last swarm reported was in the first week in October. This turned out to be in a roof 3 stories high with no access, and again appeared to be an older feral colony.

Roy Mander

"It's going to take millions of years before **they** evolve into a viable species"



Reflections

Whilst having a coffee with a fellow member of the MBKA I found myself explaining the “awakening” of bees during the sudden warm spell we often get in February. The bees fly out like a swarm and defecate just a few tens of metres from the hive. The sudden bright day also brings out the washing after months of indoor drying. The bees stain the sheets with myriad spots of golden yellow, my wife is furious. I am also furious because on such a day the car will also be spotted by the bees. The windows are thoroughly smeared and the normal windscreen wash has no effect. I would gladly do all the washing of sheets just to avoid the cleaning of the car. My friend had not understood the joke in the cartoon on page 5 of the last issue of the BeeHolder; a couple of bees contemplating soiling some clean white sheets on a washing line.

This little anecdote about bee behaviour is the sort of thing that comes from discussion rather than from books. I have always found more learning over our MBKA teas than the preceding lectures.

Another subject we got onto was the direction bees fly. His bees always go straight toward the local village ignoring the apple trees close by. I have the same experience, my bees start foraging a hundred metres from their hives. Books that advocate planting bee friendly flowers close to an apiary have it wrong. I tolerate Himalayan balsam in my garden because the bees love it so much. But I find no evidence that my bees are working these plants. However Debbie Francis who has hives two kilometres away reports that her bees come back in white with the characteristic balsam pollen. So Debbie’s bees are coming to my garden for the balsam whilst mine ignore it. The same happens in my out apiary. The garden I use is more than four miles from the nearest beekeeper. It is groaning with himalayan balsam, yet I have never seen a honey bee on the balsam. However the balsam is worked by numerous bumble bees; thousands of them. Clearly the balsam is working its magic but not for my bees. There must be some evolutionary advantage in ignoring fodder that is close by a hive.

Do any other beekeepers have similar experience? What can be the explanation?

Arthur Findlay

Perhaps they don't want to feed close to the hive because that is where they defecate and discard dead (possibly from disease) bees?

I'm sure that a lot of our beekeepers have experiences and knowledge well worth passing on. Why not write an article for the next BeeHolder? If you are interested, get in touch before 16th March!

Editor

Early Swarm

Now's the time to renew your MBKA membership. The “early swarm” renewal scheme is designed to save you money and ensure that you are covered from 1st January each year for the notifiable diseases covered by the BDI scheme. If renewal is delayed until after March 31st the insurance cover does not begin until 40 days have passed from the date of renewal. Please don't delay and lose cover.

Association membership under the early swarm scheme for 2012 is £25.00, which includes the BDI cover for 3 colonies. If you have more than 3 colonies, or if you haven't received the Early Swarm newsletter, then check with me.

Roy Norris





Toby's Top Tip

Winter is a good time to read bee books and they are a good Christmas present for beekeepers.

Toby Beavan



The Lighter Side of Beekeeping

Talking of bee books as presents, I very nearly got one myself. Rather than a bee book, it is a beekeeper book, "The Bad Beekeepers Club" by Bill Turnbull. It is an autobiographical piece telling of how he got drawn into beekeeping almost by accident, and of the bee related adventures he has had since. The style of the book is very proboscis in cheek, perhaps how Bill Bryson would write if he had been English?

The trick of calling it the Bad Beekeepers Club relieves the author of having to educate the reader and takes the pressure off the reader feeling he/she has to learn something from it. Although I haven't finished it yet, I have to confess not only to being entertained, but also informed, by what I have read so far. So while you may not read it and become an expert in queen rearing, you will be able to take some comfort in knowing that you aren't the only person to have made the odd mistake whilst keeping bees.

Bill Turnbull is the radio and TV presenter of such shows as "Today" and "Breakfast Time" and so claims to be a BBC man twice over.

Chris Leech

Christmas Dinner

Our next MBKA event will be the sumptuous Christmas Feast, held as usual in January. As there was no meeting during December (again, this has become tradition) it is a great opportunity to catch up with fellow members and get back into the right "frame" of mind for the forthcoming season.

We have chosen to hold it at Gregynog again this year, and we will be entertained remotely by Graham Winchester, plus potentially a surprise special guest. The live Lembit feed will definitely not be active this year.

The meal is planned for 7pm on Saturday, January 14th at Gregynog Hall (see here for directions). Cost will be £20 per head. Please contact Dave Bennett ASAP (details on the website and on page 19 of this magazine) to book your place. The menu follows :



MBKA Christmas Menu 14th January



Pumpkin Soup (V)
with Mature Cheddar and Fresh Herbs

Atlantic Prawn Cocktail
on Crispy Lettuce with Lemon Twist and Cucumber
Carpaccio

Succulent Fresh Melon with Parma Ham
and Sesame Toast Croutons

Creamy Liver Paté and Melba Toast
with Fresh Strawberries and a Balsamic Reduction



Roast Breast of Turkey
with Apricot Stuffing, served with Rich Roast Gravy and Pigs in Blankets

Grilled Shropshire Pork Loin Steak
topped with Caramelised Apple and Red Onion served with Sage Gravy

Baked Fillet of Salmon
topped with a Buttery Herb Crust and White Wine Sauce

Roast Vegetable Tarte Tatin (V)
topped with Caramelised Goats Cheese and Fresh Herb Cream Sauce

Served with a selection of:
Roast Potatoes with Thyme and Garlic
Brussels Sprouts, Carrots and Swede



Fine Christmas Pudding (V)
with Creamy Rum Sauce and Brandy Butter

Vanilla Cheese Cake (V)
with Warm Forest Berry Compote

Orange and White Chocolate Bread and Butter Pudding
with Vanilla Ice Cream

Cinnamon Panacotta (V)
with a Baked Toffee Apple and Vanilla Custard



Coffee & Mini Mince Pies (V)



V = suitable for vegetarians

Bee Power

In late October, 2012, interstate 15 in Utah, USA, was closed down for several hours because a lorry carrying more than twenty million bees overturned (see picture on back page). The lorry was on its way to California, taking bees to pollinate an almond crop next spring. The bees escaped from their hives and local beekeepers had to work overnight trying to catch the bees.

It was one of around 160 lorries of bees being sent from the Adee Honey Farms which are based in South Dakota. The southbound lanes were closed near to the border between Utah and Arizona for several hours. The road reopened the next morning, but drivers were warned to keep their windows wound up.

"The driver lost control, hit the concrete barrier and rolled over. Of course, we then had bees everywhere." said the spokesperson for the Utah Highway Patrol.

Chris Leech

be informed, be up to date, be entertained
it must be
THE BEEKEEPERS QUARTERLY
the 64 page full colour magazine in its 25th year
view a sample at <http://www.bkq.org.uk>

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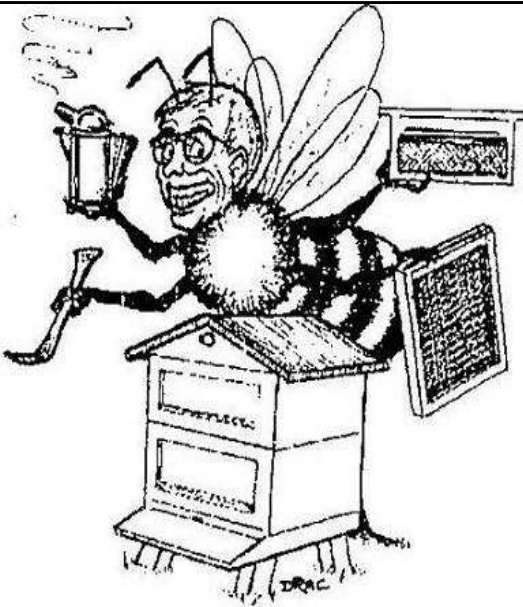
<http://www.groovycart.co.uk/beebooks>

HOW TO KILL AN ASSOCIATION

1. **DECLINE** all officer and committee appointments – you're too busy. Then offer vociferous advice on how THEY should do things.
2. **DON'T WORK** – it's courtesy appointment. Then complain that the club has stagnated.
3. **DON'T INITIATE** new ideas – that requires thinking. Then play Devil's Advocate to those ideas submitted by others.
4. **DON'T PARTICIPATE** beyond paying your dues (they're too high anyway). Then complain about poor financial management.
5. **DON'T ENCOURAGE** others to become members – that's selling. Then complain that membership isn't growing.
6. **DON'T READ** newsletters or notices – they're not important. Then complain that you're never kept informed. (Give yourself a pat on the back if you read this).
7. **NEVER VOLUNTEER** your talents – that's ego fulfilment. Then complain that you're never asked and never appreciated.

And when the clubs grows in spite of your "contribution".....

Manawatu BK Club, NZ (courtesy of eBees)



BRIAN NORRIS

FOR ALL BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT
AGENT FOR THORNES

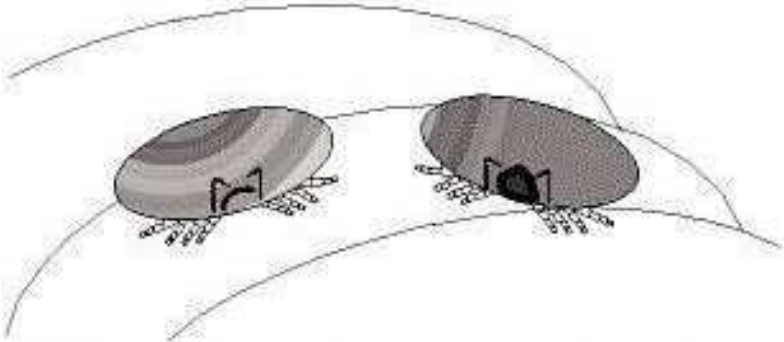
HIVES IN DEAL AND CEDAR

DISCOUNTED ON CERTAIN ITEMS
FOR ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

CATALOGUE AVAILABLE ON
REQUEST

Address: Little Garth, Garth Lane,
Bettws, Newtown,
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Telephone: 01686 625250

VARROA TALK



**Why is it we always seem to get
acid rain just after Christmas?**

(Cyril Davis : Warwickshire Beekeeper Dec 2011: courtesy eBEEs)



The MBKA Committee

PRESIDENT	Jim Crundwell tel: 01686 668475	
CHAIRMAN	Tony Shaw tel: 01686 412140	chairman@montybees.org.uk
TREASURER	Roy Norris tel: 01686 622217	treasurer@montybees.org.uk
SECRETARY	Currently vacant tel:	secretary@montybees.org.uk
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Michelle Boudin tel: 01686 413968	membership@montybees.org.uk
MINUTES SECRETARY	Jane Frank tel: 01588 620711	minutes@montybees.org.uk
FRONT OF HOUSE	Jessica Bennett tel: 01686 626872	fronthouse@montybees.org.uk
'BEEHOLDER' EDITOR	Chris Leech tel: 01686 413968	editor@montybees.org.uk
SPRAY LIAISON OFFICER	Bill Gough tel: 01686 688640	sprayliaison@montybees.org.uk
STAGE MANAGER	Noel Eaton tel: 01686 630447	stage@montybees.org.uk
APIARY MANAGER	David Bennett tel: 01686 626872	apiaryman@montybees.org.uk
SWARM CO-ORDINATOR	Roy Mander tel: 01938 555834	swarm@montybees.org.uk
NEW MEMBERS' REPRESENTATIVE	Andy Brown tel: 01691 648595	newmembers@montybees.org.uk
WEB MANAGER	Chris Leech tel: 01686 413968	webadmin@montybees.org.uk
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Ralph Mills tel: 01938 552154	committee.1@montybees.org.uk
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	Doug and Jane Wood tel: 01686 623154	committee.2@montybees.org.uk

SEASONAL BEE INSPECTORS (March to October inc.)	Peter Haywood John Beavan David Coles	tel: 01758 721349 tel: 01824 707286 tel: 01497 820419	peter.haywood@fera.gsi.gov.uk john.beavan@fera.gsi.gov.uk david.coles@fera.gsi.gov.uk
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**REGIONAL BEE
INSPECTOR** **Frank Gellatly** tel: 01558 650588 francis.gellatly@fera.gsi.gov.uk

To arrange for a visit by a Bee Inspector contact Frank who will make the necessary arrangements

CENTRAL SCIENCE LAB: 01904 462510

Any of these contacts can be used to ask a Bee Question. They are here to help you



Bee cause havoc on Interstate 15 in Utah



This was obviously taken in last year's snow
(reproduced from Somerton BKA, courtesy of eBees)

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