



**MONTGOMERYSHIRE BEEKEEPERS
ASSOCIATION**

The BeeHolder

Winter 2014



Llangurig Show August 2014

The second time in two weeks that we had to tie our Marquee down (sport) against the winds

Contents

Llangurig Show (photograph).....	1
We welcome as new members	2
Forthcoming Events.....	3
Editorial.....	4
Chairman's Chat.....	4
Letter to the Editor.....	5
Next Meetings.....	6
We've learnt beekeeping (A summary of 2014).....	7
Promoting bee-awareness.....	9
MBKA Committee Vacancies.....	14
Varroa Control.....	15
Annual Dinner.....	17
Llangurig Show.....	18
Lost.....	18
The MBKA Committee.....	19

We welcome as new members ...

My apologies if you have joined recently and are not mentioned – let me know for the next edition.

Peter McCready, (Llanidloes), Howard Wright (Caersws), Elaine Smith (Llandrindod Wells), Steve Adams (Meifod), Jenifer Trythall (Llanfyllin) and Tony Morgan (Machynlleth).

Note that, to protect the innocent, the place names given are the post town rather than anything more precise.





Forthcoming Events

November 26th Wed 7:00pm	Book launch at Plas Dolerw, Newtown Brian Goodwin launches his new book	
January 11th Sun 11:00am	Apiary Training Day (Oxalic Acid Day) at Gregynog Hall, Tregynon	**
January 17th Sat 7:00pm	Annual Dinner at Maesmawr Hall, Caersws	
February 25th Wed 7:00pm	AGM with guest speaker TBA at Plas Dolerw, Newtown	
March 15th Sun 10:00am	Apiary Training Day (Spring Inspection) at Gregynog Hall, Tregynon	**
March 25th Wed 7:00pm	Queen genetics and Artificial insemination Peter Blake and Mike Saunders (from LudlowBKA) at Plas Dolerw, Newtown	
March 28th Sat 8.30am	WBKA Convention at Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells	
April 12th Sun 10:00am	Apiary Training Day (Spring inspection cont) at Gregynog Hall, Tregynon	**
April 17th & 18th Fri & Sat	BBKA Convention at Harper Adams University, Telford	
May 10th Sun 10:00am	Apiary Training Day (Swarm control) at Gregynog Hall, Tregynon	**
May 16th & 17th	Spring Festival at Royal Welsh Showground, Builth Wells	

** these Apiary Training days are weather dependent so please check latest detail with Roger Stone 01686 688562

For the latest information, check the website or Facebook.

Editorial

I'm trying a bit of a new style for BeeHolder this time around. The emphasis is moved away from reports on meetings and more attempts at articles on bee issues.

The other thing I have to apologise for is the non-appearance of the Autumn issue of BeeHolder. Coffee tables will once again have to accommodate Good Housekeeping and Country Life. It is going to puzzle archivists and baffle literature researchers in future centuries, but the explanation was that time got away from me (in my very busy but not very organised life), there was the whole Committeegate thing and by the time November was looming the decision was taken to skip an issue and bring out the Winter issue a bit early.

Chris Leech

Chairman's Chat

Those of you without email will have missed the turmoil of the last few months. It has been upsetting for the whole committee and is one of the reasons this BeeHolder has come out late. On behalf of the whole committee I apologise for any confusion and upset that you have felt. Things are getting back to normal. Please recognise that we all have a great passion for the health of bees and beekeeping and sometimes that passion overflows into other areas. Let us leave it at that and move on.

This will be my last Chairman's Chat before retiring at the AGM as per our constitution. I should have retired last year but some bright spark found a clause in our constitution saying a Chair could be asked to run for a single further year if nobody else came forward. I did not approve because I felt that having reached 70 I should have been allowed to rest. But I can never win because I was called ageist. Our AGM in February 2015 will not be the usual attempt at setting a record for brief AGMs, as there will be important things to discuss. There will be the normal heavy set of papers sent to all members and plenty of opportunity to engage in discussions before the meeting, but we will need your input at the meeting to help elect both a new Chair and some other committee posts. As in other years we are bribing you to attend by having the free draw for a complete National Hive AND a lavish buffet to encourage attendance AND discussion AND there will of course be a speaker.

I am particularly pleased that Master Beekeeper Jim Crundwell is coming to the Brian Goodwins Book Launch on 26th November for it will be the very last event I am organising for the MBKA, and Brian and Jim were together at the very first meeting I organised 7 years ago. Then it was a Brains Trust on old bee equipment. The barbed wit, repartee and straight forward erudition fascinated the audience all those years ago and will again next Wednesday. Come and watch these two Titans of the Beekeeping world in their battle of wits.

HELPING PEOPLE HELP BEES

That has been an MBKA Logo for many years. It has almost become a mission statement. Discussion in committee has often centred on the extent to which we do help people help bees. Do we bother to go out to Events and Village Fetes or should we concentrate more effort in helping existing members? Help us get the balance right. Do give us your opinions.

Tony Shaw, Chairman

Letter to the Editor

The follow letter from Becky Nesbitt was received after the deadline for the last BeeHolder, but it is still relevant as the debate about Neonicotinoids is still ongoing.

Dear BeeHolder,

Firstly I wanted to say thank you to club members for such a warm welcome I received when I attended the Christmas dinner as a new member of Montybees. After a two year break from bee keeping, I've found myself very rusty and find BeeHolder and the regular emails from Keith to be incredibly useful, and a gentle nudge to push me in the right direction.

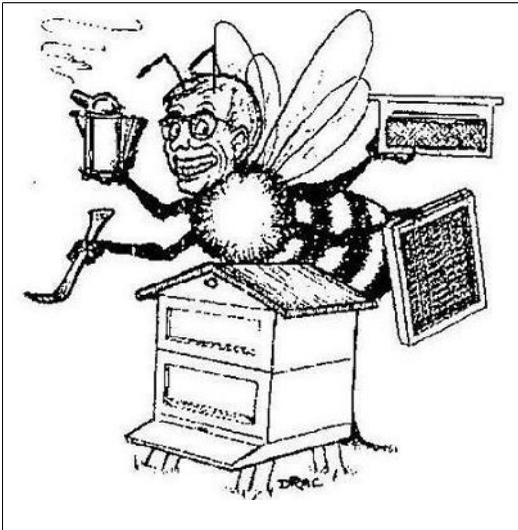
Secondly, I wanted to share with BeeHolder some thoughts on the neonicotinide debate. Although, after much consideration I personally am now considering the ban to be the right way ahead, the arguments for and against are nuanced. A key issue for me is the indirect impact on rain forests, banning neonics will mean less oil seed rape being grown across Europe, yet with demand remaining the same and palm oil a cheap alternative, we will see even more pressure on the Indonesian rain forests. I used to sit on WWF's Round Table for Sustainable Palm Oil, so this is something I feel quite strongly about....like many of the issues facing our interconnected planet, there are no easy answers.

This is why I was concerned by the petition from Avaaz, which implied this was a straight forward question, and all about big business profits. I believe a well reasoned, rational and scientific argument coming from us as a respected bee keeping association would have more impact - perhaps working together to produce our own response is -something to think about in future debates?

Looking forward to meeting more members at MBKA events, and perhaps debating this over a slice of cake and a cup of tea

Regards,

Becky Nesbitt, Llangurig



BRIAN NORRIS

**FOR ALL BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT
AGENT FOR THORNES**

**DISCOUNT ON CERTAIN
ITEMS FOR ASSOCIATION
MEMBERS**

CATALOGUE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

**Address: Little Garth, Garth Lane,
Bettws, Newtown,
Powys, SY16 3LN
Telephone: 01686 625250**

Next Meetings

26th November 7pm Plas Dolerw - Book Launch and Winter Fair

So many of us have been trained by MasterBeekeeper Brian Goodwin. Now is the time to see him a new light as the author of an interactive Ebook called "Bee Collectibles". so it is a great opportunity to bring that old piece of bee equipment which has been puzzling you and have it and or its method of use identified. Jim Crundwell will also be there; Brian and Jim have a great deal of bee knowledge between them, so this is a golden opportunity to ask those questions which have had you stumped as a sort of BeeKeepers Question Time.

Also at the meeting will be some stalls so that you can stock up with Christmas presents.

The book contains details of the following items :

- Medals awarded at honey Shows etc

- Coins and Banknotes Intaglio Seals

- Treen Tokens issued to replace coins by traders

- Lantern Slides Photos and Ephemera

- B.K. Supplies catalogues

- Unusual B.K. equipment

- B.K. Education Items Postcards

- Stamps Card sets

- Microscope slides Bottles

- Glassware Friendly and Fraternal Societies

- Masonic, Oddfellows, Buffs etc

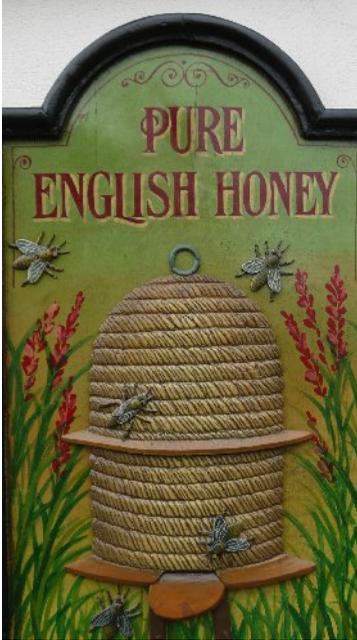
- Porcelain and China Spoons and cutlery

- Staffordshire Flatware Toys

- Jewellery B.K. Association Badges

- Buttons Horse Brasses

- Clocks and Watches



The cover of Brian's book

All together there are over 2000 documents and photos.

25th February 7pm Plas Dolerw - AGM.

As usual there will be a free draw for a National Hive for all members attending. And also a sumptuous buffet. AND a guest speaker , subject to be announced later. This is your opportunity to say what you want from the Association and we make no apologies for bribing people to come! Do consider standing for committee , ask any committee member what this entails.

25th March 7pm Plas Dolerw - Bee Genetics and Artificial Queen insemination

Peter Blake Chairman of LudlowBKA and Mike Sanders, their Apiary Manager, will explain why they despair of getting a "nice Bee" by traditional methods of free flying selection and have taken the route of artificially inseminating Queens. There will be a demonstration of the techniques involved.

We've learnt beekeeping (A summary of 2014)

At an Open Hive day we meet at a Member's Apiary to learn about how they manage their bees. Not all our hosts are experienced beekeepers. What unites them is their generosity in sharing their experience, their joys, and often their heartbreaks at keeping bees.

The Open Hive experience is always different from that at the Training sessions held at the our apiary at Gregynog where one can see how the same colonies have progressed from one month to the next and learn the yearly cycle of beekeeping activities from skilled beekeepers.

2014 was a remarkable year in that all Open Hive Days sessions occurred in wonderful balmy weather. All had excellent welcoming and helpful hosts, wonderful food and a pleasant ambiance to chat about bees. Teas are a time when the quiet analysis of hives can take place. The older beekeepers are a rich resource of knowledge and generally love giving information. Few expect text book answers. Each beekeeper will have developed his or her way of coping with bees in their particular environment and adapted to their particular life style. Text books often neglect this aspect of beekeeping. When listening to experienced beekeeper always ask where their hives are, what sort they are, how often they open them and why why why. A good starting point is "did you always use that method?" or "has your beekeeping changed over the years." Beekeepers are generally a friendly bunch, so don't be put off by a forbidding countenance!

May's meeting at Bishop Castle's was at the time of the maximum flowering of the oil seed rape. Driving through vast expanses of rape really brought attention to the fact that the bees we were about to see were feasting on a monoculture. And what hives! placid and blooming. The ancillary interest of course was how so many different hives and methods and ownership could comfortably exist in such close proximity. The contrast in bee behaviour in the June meeting at Llanymynech could not have been greater. It was another oil seed rape area but this time the crop had finished and the great expansion of bees during the May period was now hungry and angry. They had largely eaten their stores and Hannah was saying that she wished the honey had been taken off at the end of May and the colonies fed sugar to see them through to the next nectar flow in late July. But husband Henk was a softy and thought he was being kind to his bees by not taking away the Honey (*now there is a discussion point - Ed*). Having monocultures is going to give bees a problem whether they have their honey removed or not. The number of bees at the end of the rape season is going to be in excess of the carrying capacity of the area inanycase. What is the difference in having to give a colony

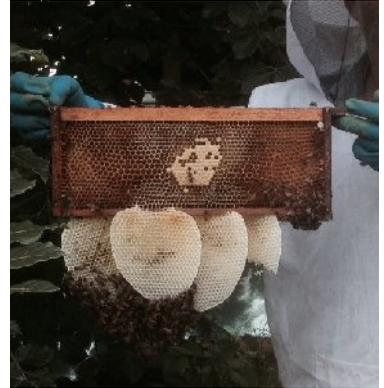
8 kilos of sugar or 16 kilos of sugar (8kg - Ed).

July we were in Keith's home apiary. Keith is an intuitive beekeeper who, within a few years of starting beekeeping has put together an impressive array of hives. What an unexpected joy it was to see so many queens teased out of their cells and distributed to those who needed them.

August saw us at Forden where BeeKeeper Ruth Stafford had unavoidably been away from the hives for far longer than she had hoped. She had asked Keith and Tony to inspect before the meeting. The hives did indeed show signs of neglect. It was decided to leave the problems for the meeting on the grounds that such hives were a great learning experience for new beekeepers. The hives were just the thing that our President, Master-Beekeeper, Jim Crundwell and our Spring Trainer, Master-Beekeeper Brian Goodwin, would have welcomed to show their second-year students. Both would get their students to talk over the problems as they opened the hives. Whether

it is driving car, learning to fly or opening a hive it is a good practice to talk out loud to show yourself and others that you are becoming more aware of what is happening before you. Those who have been on a Speed Awareness Course will have learnt how useful this technique is.

Another good learning experience was at Kerry where Mervyn Evans keeps 26 hives. Most of the hives had not been examined save for the taking off of the supers. Mervyn is interested in Honey and got 605lbs from his colonies this year. Many of his colonies were very small. To some it might have seemed ruthless to strip honey from such small colonies. Colonies were fed with sugar immediately and any hive that is weak is united with a stronger neighbour. In spring the number of colonies is increased again by splitting and catching colonies in those hives left vacant. Mervyn has been keeping bees for some time and his way of managing bees is obviously successful in that he gets honey and a minimum number of vibrant colonies are always in the apiary. What has happened is that Mervyn has been selecting for a type of bee that is adapted to his life-style. That surely is what we are all aiming to achieve.



So here is a test: what has gone on here? And what would YOU do about it?

Promoting bee-awareness

(The MBKA's small part in evolution of beekeeping theatre)

The word Beekeeping implies the inter-relationship of two animals, bee and man. It has been a turbulent relationship; one where Man has unwittingly caused immense problems for future generations of both the Bee and Man. Only recently has it been recognised that the harm started many thousands of years ago. And only recently has it been recognised that getting a solution to the world-wide decline in bee numbers is something that can only be done by engaging whole human populations in the problem. In short, think bees when deciding on a £1 jar of honey and a £6 jar of honey or when deciding to spray insecticides on the wretched aphids on the Dahlias and cabbages. Bee-awareness is something that has evolved in the same way as beekeeping practices and beekeeping equipment has evolved. In both cases the evolution has been driven by wars, famines and philosophies. This essay is a tale of how some small Beekeeping Associations have taken on the challenge of being part of the evolution of bee-awareness.

Those who have been to various Bee Conventions and Honey shows will have noticed a stall run by the Beekeeping History Group. Usually manning the stall is Will Messenger who came to talk to us in April 2010, <http://www.montybees.org.uk/content/reports-meetings>. Will is an advocate of “natural Beekeeping”. This is perhaps not surprising because in the period Will studies, the 17th to the early 20th Century there were few artificial chemicals given to bees, and there were few chemicals added to fields that could harm bees: perhaps we could say that there was only “Natural Beekeeping”. Will is a messenger for an ideal bee arcadia.

But “Natural” is a strange term when used about bees. For many thousands of years bees were kept in Pots and jars and Skeps; not really natural. The honey was gathered by destroying the colony. The effect of this was that bees were subjected to many thousands of years of genetic selection by Man. To survive various bee races evolved a propensity for prolific swarming. Instead of being merely the natural way that the Honey



Tel Rehov excavations, Clay Pot beehives 9th century B.C.E

Bee replicates itself, swarming now took on an additional function - Escape from Man, the new predator. And we are still suffering from this. It may take many hundreds of years of selective breeding to reduce the swarming propensity of bees back to that which existed

before man killed bees for their honey.

During the Age of Enlightenment many started to believe it morally wrong to kill bees for their honey. The start of the fight back towards a more natural bee had begun. The Age of Enlightenment also spawned such revolutionary ideas as universal suffrage, the anti-slavery movement, the protection of children from exploitation, the RSPCA, and women's rights: beekeepers were in good company. Many attempts were made to devise hives that would allow honey to be extracted without harming the bees or losing the queen. Most of us today use hives based upon the principles derived by Langstroth 1810-1895. He was a Congregationalist Church minister. Indeed many of the 18th and 19th pioneers in beekeeping were men of the cloth or maverick free thinkers, Wildman 1734-1781 for example was a travelling showman bordering on Folk Magician.

The types of hives and ways of using them evolved by trial and error. The worse designs and ideas fell by the wayside, the best survived and were further developed. All old beekeepers

will remember ancient ideas, about say, queen rearing, or discouraging drones in a hive, that are now considered wrong. Human Ideas, (Memes) are subject, of course, to the same evolutionary pressures as Genes. However World War II caused everything to change. The Enlightenment was put aside. All the fighting nations scrambled to increase agricultural production by any means. Marginal land was drained, and fertilisers and pesticides were used in vast quantities. A lot of profit was made and, after the war, those companies that had been involved in "War Production" were unwilling to see their profits slashed. It was a brave farmer who could resist the push for pesticides. However by the early 1950ies the scientific community were starting to ring alarm bells about the effects of so much toxin being

June 20 1772 Exhibition of bees on horseback!



At the Jubilee Gardens, Islington, this and every evening until further notice (wet evenings excepted).

The celebrated **Daniel Wildman** will exhibit several new and amazing experiments, never attempted by any man in this or any other kingdom before. The riders standing upright, one foot on the saddle and one on the neck, with a mask of bees on his head and face. He also rides standing upright on the saddle with the bridle in his mouth, and, by firing a pistol makes one part of the bees march over the table, and the other swarm in the air and return to their hive again, with other performances too tedious to insert.

Daniel was the nephew of Thomas Wildman, both of them serious beemen and serious show-offs. Devon natives of obscure origin, they came to public attention by virtue of their early talent in insect wrangling.

<http://ahistoryblog.com/2013/04/09/thomas-and-daniel-wildman-flourerunt-1760-1780-improving-the-shining-hour/>

used by agriculture. Few took any notice. Then, in 1962, there was a breakthrough; a populist book, *The Silent Spring* by a respected academic Rachel Carson, caught the imagination of the public. Those chemical companies who threatened law-suits backed down when they recognised the ground-swell of public concern about the future of their planet. By



Hereford BKA has been demonstrating beekeeping since about 1885



the 1980s it was not merely the well informed, letter-writing elite who were marching for the health of our food. Environmental movements started to engage the public and get them to add pressure. Supermarket shelves changed to pander to the new public consciousness. Even governments listened. Bee Associations also allied themselves with environmental movements recognising that the public needed to be made more bee-friendly if many beekeeping problems were to be tackled. For example, with a more bee-friendly public a drop in garden insecticides became possible and it's a fact that suburban gardens now carry a smaller toxic load than the average acre of British farmland. It used to be the other way round. Don't just blame farmers for using more pesticides, the balance tipped because the average urban dweller used less.

Just as the shape of the hive evolved so have the ways of showing beekeeping to the public. What better way to get the public attention than to show beekeeping with live bees? Shropshire BKA has displayed live bees in a cage at the Shrewsbury

Flower show since the 1980ies. Swansea's Bee Tent, seen as a regular feature at the Spring Festival at the Royal Welsh Showground, has a different format; the bees are sealed within a tent and the public, (children particularly encouraged) don beesuits to enter and handle the bees. They have had over 3000 people entering the bee tent since 2007.

In 2009 Montgomeryshire BKA built its own Bee-Cage based on the Shrewsbury model. Our Seasonal Bee Inspector, John Beavan, helped us design an operating protocol which had the innovation of having a beekeeper outside the cage explaining what was happening inside. John Beavan and his 12 year old son were the first to demonstrate bees in the MBKA Bee-

Cage at the Glansevern Food Festival. The Beavan family could not do the performances on the second day so our Apiary Manager did it himself. But a neighbouring stall holder was so impressed by having seen a child in the cage that she volunteered her son for the afternoon performance. We realised that Swansea are right: bees and kids are a winning crowd drawer.

That first child came with parental consent but we recognised that we would have to have a better system of formalising consent if we were to have children in the bee cage in future years. We plagiarised the consent forms that Swansea had developed and adapted them to our own circumstances. Swansea do their show at 6 venues a year. We have never done more than 3 shows a year. Our high spot was a series of bee education workshops run by Vicky Farrington a qualified infants teacher. Vicky would run an hour long Bee/Beekeeping course inside a MBKA Marquee and then take small groups into the bee cage to handle the bees. An older beekeeper would be on the outside of the cage explaining to the crowds what was happening. The children would then line up to get a fancy MBKA certificate of bee-handling signed by the MBKA Chairman. They would then be photographed proudly holding their certificates and alongside Vicky and the Chairman. The parents' cameras would be clicking and the picture and certificates would be an item in school playgrounds and classrooms the following weeks. Of course it is all theatre, the bees are merely unwitting extras manoeuvred for a performance. But the many BKAs that use such live demonstrations have found that they are an effective way to draw the public into bee-orientated conversations and to take away literature.

The weather in May this year made our use of the MBKA Bee-Cage particularly difficult. (see the Front cover of the last BeeHolder.) Our committee decided that the cage would not be used at the Llangurig Show where the weather was forecast to be atrocious.



The Mark 1 drone cage at the Llangurig Show

However, as in all things, disasters spawn innovations, and we took a cage of drones inside our Marquee away from the wet. We had heard through one of our members, that a commercial beekeeper, had great success taking drones to Shows and allowing the public to touch them.

The details were vague, glass tank ,Drones, people putting their hands in.....it sounded rather like one of the Bush Tucker trials in "I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of

Here”.

I saw a glass fronted lantern reduced from £16 to £8 bought it and went to my local garage where Beekeeper Andrew Smart has a reputation for lateral thinking. After some failed attempts at using cut-up inner tube Andrew devised a door made of gutter leaf traps through which the drones could not pass but through which a hand could be pushed. 12 drones were put in the cage on the morning of the show. A notice said “Dare you touch the Bees” It produced a lot of interest but few dared put their hand in. Once the first child had done it, encouraged by a beekeeping Grandmother, then others followed. One Dutch visitor stared at the cage for some time and then asked me “would you put your hand in?” - “If you by 5 raffle tickets I will”. He bought the raffle tickets and with exaggerated deep breathing to calm myself “I have to get myself ready” I said, I put my hand in slowly and stroked some bees. The Dutchman was amazed. I explained that all the bees were drones and drones do not have a sting.

“Can I show my wife that? “ he said and came back ten minutes later with his wife and daughter.

After studying the cage and the Notice “Dare you touch the bees?”, he said to his wife (in English) “will you take me out to dinner tonight if I put my hand in there?” Both wife and child told him not to be silly that he was terrified of bees.

“Will you take me out to dinner if I put my hand in there?” he repeated
“Yes”

The Dutchman composed himself with far greater theatricality than I had done. He made his hands shiver, he pushed them to the entrance seal, he pulled back, the girls had their hands to their mouths not quite believing and then he pushed through and gingerly and then more confidently stroked the bees. Looks of amazement and giggles of relief from the girls. After he had been congratulated he told them the secret that drones don't sting. I have no doubt that the idea will now spread around Holland. Our own Russ Colman investigated some of the problems we had come across and devised an improvement for the Carno Show: the Drone Cage Mark II. He reported that his Drone cage was a great conversation starter. Conversations about the plight of bees and how everyone can help and that if more verges were left uncut, more wildflowers planted and less insecticides used then this particular beekeeper would be happier and more confident of the survival of his bees. Bees in general would be helped and thus beekeepers in



Drone Cage Mark II at Carno Show

general would be happier, and also other pollinators would also benefit, and gradually, gradually, through small individual steps, a small piece of the Enlightenment would flourish. Think global act local.

Arthur Findlay

MBKA Committee Vacancies

The Committee structure has been much the same for several years and recent events have made us think more about the skills needed and work we could do better, or more of.

There is a good mix of backgrounds and Committee experience in the current set up.

Everyone has a role and this year we have seen more involvement than ever on training, swarm management, apiary management and taking bees to the public at shows and events.

We will need to replace two key roles at the next AGM, Chairman and Secretary. The ability to communicate well and lead the work of the committee in a fair and balanced way, also to inspire and motivate the membership to get involved are important skills for the Chairman.

For the Secretary some good organisation skills to help us manage the activities of MBKA and keep things in order is needed.

If you would like to talk to us about the roles please call or email me (details p19).

Heather Venis, Treasurer

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>

£26 per year from Northern Bee Books,

Scout Bottom Farm, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge HX7 5JS (UK)

sales@recordermail.demon.co.uk

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



Varroa Control

This is the time when many beekeepers worry about whether their hives will see themselves through winter. There is an abundance of advice from books and websites. Some of it seems confusing. Members have also remarked that advice given at the Open Hive Days and at the Gregynog Apiary has also appeared contradictory. This is because each person giving advice comes from a different perspective, maybe having different type of bees, different types of hives and different types of environments than the ones you have. Also you will have to remember that what some old beekeepers do to their own colonies and what they recommend others to do, can be very different. For example, I like experimenting with my bees, I am not interested in getting any honey. Some years I will not give any pre-winter anti-varroa treatment at all to any of my colonies. Some years I stuff a super of dried hop flowers or Thyme under the open varroa mesh floor that I have on some hives. I count that as Treatment. In eleven years I have only lost 2 hives over winter but then I do keep a very watchful eye on my colonies for the rest of the year. Others cannot keep such vigilance and I would never advise novice beekeepers to follow my example. Play safe and follow the nearest we in Wales have to "Best Practice" ie that recommended by the Technical officer of the Welsh Beekeepers Association, Wally Shaw OBE.

This is a complete list of treatments authorised by the Veterinary Medical Directorate (VMD) and officially endorsed by the National Bee Unit.

Authorised Varroa mite treatments:

- Apistan
- Bayvarol
- Api-Life Var
- Thymovar
- Apiguard
- Mite Away Quick Strips

Products awaiting registration in the UK or EU

- Oxuvar
- HopGuard

Products obtainable under prescription (Cascade):

- Apivar
- Checkmite +
- Formidol (formic acid)
- Api-Bioxal (oxalic acid)
- Ecoxal (oxalic acid)

The products obtainable under prescription containing oxalic acid which are trickled on the cluster are Api Bioxal and Ecoxal.

However Wally points out *"strictly speaking we should only be using one of the the products that have been registered in Europe. They are sachets of oxalic acid that you make up yourself in sugar syrup - so basically oxalic acid crystals at an enhanced price. When I looked into it the instructions for these products were for the wrong concentration for cold-temperate climate. Worse still is the regulation that these products should only be imported under veterinary prescription, but we have no provision for that at the present time - and, of*



Uncapping drone brood to make an assessment of the varroa mite population

course, this would further enhance the cost! In theory the same regulations will shortly apply to the purchase of UK approved products such as Apiguard - they may need a Veterinary certificate! Obviously this is a complete nonsense and may simply drive Varroa treatment underground - but it has yet to be resolved in a sensible manner."

Oxalic acid must be used with caution. Get the dose right and the substance works by irritating the Varroa mite more than the bee. The mite falls and dies, the bee recovers. Too high a dose and both mite and bee are killed. Too low a dose and both mite and bee recover! Wally is convinced that some of the adverse effects of Oxalic acid are due to poor delivery and states rather than have a syringe without a needle a blunted 17 gauge needle should be used to give a more controlled dribble over the seams of bees. The apiary team will be demonstrating the Use of Oxalic Acid in January 2015 as they have done in the past three years. The use of Oxalic acid remains the most recommended treatment against the varroa mite although we would all like to find something better.

On Oxalic acid Wally Shaw says *"...regarding oxalic acid, the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has been sitting on the fence about its use for more than 5 years. They know we all use it, technically (if it could be proved) it is an offence and could be subject to prosecution, but they just turn a blind eye. They have always been promising to sort the matter out and their latest communication of the subject is enigmatic in **that it is OK to use oxalic acid providing it is NOT for medicinal purpose and it does not say on the bottle or accompanying literature that it treats Varroa. If it does not make this claim then it is not a medicine and does not have to comply with medicinal regulations.** I hope there will be some clarification in the near future."*

"By the way, VMD say they are going to clamp down on products such as Hive Clean because they claim they DO to have medicinal properties and really they should have been cautioned or prosecuted long ago."

I go on record here that I use Hive Clean and icing sugar as do the Apiary Team on their own bees in their home Apiaries. I have a belief that these "treatment" work in reducing the Varroa load but I would not stand up and defend my beliefs in a scientific way. That is the great trouble with beekeeping: the NBU, the VMD and the WBKA can advise and we can choose to follow or reject the advice. Follow <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageId=353>

"Finally, non-treatment for Varroa. Some people are following this line and it seems that some colonies are able to survive for several years at least but that they do so with high levels of Varroa and deformed wing virus. We have got data from our own hives that show that Varroa is gradually becoming less of a problems, ie. treatment brings down fewer mites now than it did a few years back. This is a complex subject about which I have some ideas and we will probably experiment with non-treatment in the near future - but with our own hives not the Association's " (Wally is referring to the Anglesey Association but the principle of managing an Association Apiary differently from a private apiary is something that all Association Apiaries in Wales seem to follow).

Annual Dinner

Maesmawr Hall 17th January 2015 7pm for 7.30pm

We are returning to [Maesmawr Hall, Caersws](#) for the third time for our annual dinner - they have done an excellent job each year and are fairly centrally placed for the membership.

We have managed to keep the price the same as last year. The last two dinners have been great nights out, so this is definitely not an event to miss! See the picture on the front of the Spring BeeHolder <http://www.montybees.org.uk/content/spring-2014>

This is open to MBKA members and their guests. To book your place(s), fill in the attached slip and return Association to Helen Woodruff, Manledd Barn, Van, Llanidloes SY18 6NP, enclosing a cheque payable to MBKA for the full amount (£22.00 per person) by January 2nd. WE CANNOT ACCEPT PAYMENT ON THE NIGHT.

If you have any questions, feel free to ring Helen on 0779381 3538 or 01686 413135.

Or email her on freewolfhound@gmail.com

Christmas Fayre Menu 2014

Starters

Homemade Tomato & Vegetable Soup
Melon, Orange & Grapefruit Cocktail Drizzled with Midori Syrup
Chicken Liver Paté served with Toasted Ciabatta & Red Onion Chutney
A Prawn, Crab & Cucumber Tian served with Dressed Leaves

Main Course

Traditional Roast Turkey with Stuffing, Chipolata, Cranberry Sauce & Gravy
Roast Beef with Yorkshire Pudding & Gravy
Sea Bass Fillet served with Crushed Potatoes & a Lemon & Chive Butter Sauce
Mediterranean Vegetable & Snowdonia Cheddar Puff Pastry Tart with Balsamic Dressed Leaves

Desserts

Traditional Christmas Pudding served with Brandy Sauce
Lemon Crème Brûlée with Shortbread Biscuit
White Chocolate Cheesecake served with Winter Berries
Baileys Bread & Butter Pudding with Custard

After

Coffee and Mince Pies

Llangurig Show

It was wet and windy but the sun did shine. Our Assemble Member Russell George drew the raffle prize which was won by a lady from Birmingham whose name was lost in the chaos of having 45 people in our tent at the time. Many of those 45 were hanging onto the frame of the tent to stop it blowing away. Russell used the Show's PA system to make a long and impassioned speech in favour of bees and farmers' responsibility to care for the environment. Sometimes the appalling weather we suffer in Wales brings people together in a sense of comradie. Or is it just we welsh that tolerate bad weather?



A very wet Russell George A.M. speaking to the whole Llangurig Show from our tent and then presenting the Raffle Prize



Lost: Can you find it?

The Association has two of these Observation hives, (Two brood frames with a single super frame on top)

One has gone missing. Probably borrowed and we have forgotten by whom. If you know of its whereabouts do contact one of the committee.

These Observation Hives are for you to borrow for your village fetes, W.I and any other meetings that you have on your social calendar.



The MBKA Committee

PRESIDENT	Jim Crundwell	tel: 01386 424930
CHAIRMAN	Tony Shaw tel: 01686 412140	chairman@montybees.org.uk
TREASURER	Heather Venis tel: 0789 4796262	treasurer@montybees.org.uk
SECRETARY	Keith Rimmer tel: 01686 689061	secretary@montybees.org.uk
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	Sian Jones tel: 01686 689061	membership@montybees.org.uk
MINUTES SECRETARY	Maggie Summerfield tel: 01938 810906	minutes@montybees.org.uk
'BEEHOLDER' EDITOR	Chris Leech tel: 01686 413968	editor@montybees.org.uk
EQUIPMENT	Vacant tel:	equipment@montybees.org.uk
SPRAY LIAISON	Vacant tel:	sprayliaison@montybees.org.uk
APIARY CONTACT	Roger Stone tel: 01686 688562	apiaryman@montybees.org.uk
SWARM. CO-ORDINATOR	Roy Mander tel: 01938 555834	swarm@montybees.org.uk
WEB MANAGER	Chris Leech tel: 01686 413968	webadmin@montybees.org.uk
DATA MANAGER	Ian Hubbuck tel: 01686 413968	data@montybees.org.uk
TRAINING AND EXAMS	Julie Pearce tel: 01686 625430	training@montybees.org.uk
MEMBER AT LARGE	Dave Bennett tel: 01686 626872	committee.3@montybees.org.uk

Have you thought about joining the committee? We have some vacancies at the moment and also the chairman and secretary are retiring at the AGM next February.

**Caddon
Hives**

WBC & National Hives made from Cedar

Includes:

- 1 Apex Roof (Flat available)
- 2 Super box
- 1 Brood box (14x12 available)
- 1 OM Floor (WBC with feet)
- 3 Lifts and porch (WBC only)
- 1 Crown Board
- Bee escapes, mesh & inspection tray, entrance blocks all included!



£128

**Call: 01896 850755 / 249 or visit
www.caddon-hives.co.uk**



www.montybees.org.uk

© 2014 Montgomeryshire Beekeepers Association (MBKA)

The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor or the MBKA. MBKA is a member of eBEES, an exchange scheme for the beekeeping press, sponsored by Northern Bee Books.

Members of eBEES have the right to reproduce MBKA material free of charge provided that the source is acknowledged.

Outside of eBEES all rights are reserved.