

N O V E M B E R 2 0 1 9

An Hes

“The Swarm”

Newsletter of the West Cornwall Beekeepers' Association



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www.wcbka.org.uk

From the Chair...

Chair of West Cornwall Beekeepers' Association!

When I joined the Association several years ago I would never have dreamt that the honour of Chairmanship would have been bestowed upon me. I intend to ensure the association's future success, ably assisted by all of our hard working committee members. So, if anyone has any suggestions, problems or would like to help in some way, please contact us. It is the members' association and the committee will always try and do the best for our members.

I am sure that everyone who attended will agree that our AGM was a success. Our thanks go to Ben Penberthy for his entertaining talk. Welcome also to our two new committee members, Cat Gibbard & our new membership secretary, Phil Green.

We, in our part of the world, have been fortunate to be free of the dreaded Asian hornet so far. We must, however, remain vigilant with all the tools available to us. I have recently joined the Facebook pages of the Jersey Asian hornet group. They have destroyed nearly eighty nests this year so far and they've not been in Jersey long. It's worth a look to give an idea of the massive problems that these hornets can cause so the more eyes we can have looking for their arrival, the better. If anyone thinks that they've found one it is essential to take a photograph, whether it's dead or alive, & send it to our own AHAT team or via the Asian hornet app to the NBU. Our AHAT team will give advise and have posters which should be put up in every suitable location. Keep an eye out for Pete Kennedy's reports on here in An Hes which are always informative.

Let's hope all of our bees have been all been safely tucked up with plenty of stores for winter. Happy beekeeping to all our members!

Graham Caines



“If you're after getting the honey, hey, then you don't go killing all the bees”

- Joe Strummer

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Save the Date!

Monday 2nd December 2019
WCBKA's Honey Show & Christmas Party

Wednesday 11th December 2019
Embroider a Bee at the Redwing Gallery

Monday 6th January 2020
First Meeting of 2020!

News in Brief

New Committee Elected

I am sure you will all recognise the names Kate Bowyer and Mac Rowley Hawkins. They have just completed their stint at being our Chair and our Membership Secretary respectively. Many thanks to them both for their commitment to WCBKA and all the volunteer hours they have given to make us such a successful organisation. Also, many thanks to our President, new Chair and committee who will be meeting together every other month for the next year on behalf of us to arrange events and keep the association moving forward. They are:

- President: Lindsay Bryning
 Chair: Graham Caines –
chairman@westcornwallbka.org.uk
 Secretary: Val Hitchman –
secretary@westcornwallbka.org.uk
 Treasurer: Barbara Barnes –
treasurer@westcornwallbka.org.uk
 Membership: Phil Green –
membership@westcornwallbka@org.uk
 Committee: Mike Dunnell
 Committee: Miranda Garner
 Committee: Cat Gibbard
 Committee: Mick Jordan
 Committee: Mark Richards
 Committee: Carrie Sparrow

If you have ideas you would like the committee to discuss please contact Val Hitchman.

Bulk Purchase of Fondant

Once again we are offering a member benefit of the bulk purchase of fondant. There is no increase on last year's prices. We have "fondebee" by belgosuc available at £15 for a box (that is 5 x 2.5 kg sachets) or £3.00 per 2.5kg sachet.

If you want some please contact Mick Jordan on 01209 860630 or 07974154472 to reserve it and arrange collection (he lives near Redruth) or he may be able to bring it along to Better Beekeeping or the Honey Show and Party.

Payment is preferably by BACs:
 West Cornwall Beekeepers Association
 Sort code 30-96-56
 A/C 00706507

Reference: your surname and fondant

We will accept a cheque when you come to collect but please state fondant on the rear of the cheque.

Honey Show & Party

Honey, candles, cakes & savouries, & maybe mead as well. Award of cups and a party with mulled wine and seasonal food. Yes, it's nearly December 2nd and time for our Annual Honey Show and Party at the Marazion Community Centre. Come along for some fun, taste some honey and see members' creative side in the Food and Drink section.

Our Honey Show Secretary this year is Heather Williams and John Roberts has kindly offered to judge.

Only 50p a class to have a go entering. Doors open at 6pm for entries and no more entries will be accepted after 7pm. The entry is being sent out with this edition. Good luck!

Kehelland Apple Day

We had our most successful day at Kehelland Apple day on 12th October. We were positioned near a stand selling beeswax wraps and right next to the apple pressing and so there was good footfall & plenty of opportunities to talk with visitors about honeybees. We were also able to sell every jar of Chy Vellan honey we took, as well as do candle rolling with children & adults wanting to try something different. Our takings were £150 on honey and £85 for candle rolling. We make a contribution to the Kehelland Charity.

Thank you so much to all the volunteers: Barbara Barnes, Kate Bowyer, Graham Caines, Val Hitchman, Mark Richards, Carrie Sparrow, Heather Williams and Jenny Lewis. It is such a special day out with plenty of stalls, pop-up food stalls, Cornish produce, live music & the traditional procession and orchard blessing. So look out for it in 2020.

AHAT Update: November

Those nests that did not generate queens in September are likely to do so in October/November. The urgency to destroy Asian Hornet nests before the new queens (up to 300!) disperse to hibernate over the winter is all the more urgent. There is also the chance of catching queens, building up fat reserves, by feeding on floral nectar or other sources of carbohydrates. Please be extra vigilant and watch out for potential sightings around the hive but also around nectar-rich flowers.

Put traps in your apiary with a sweet bait containing fruit and beer. **Don't put out traps if you are unable to check them at least once daily and release the bycatch.**

From Pete Kennedy: Our resident Science Correspondent

Varroa treatment and resistance

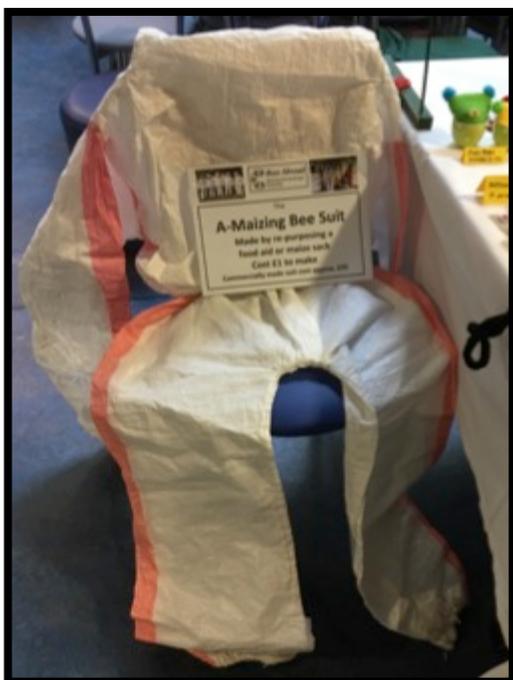
Always a great feeling when another researcher cites your work, so I can't help repay the favour by promoting their work. A group of Italian researchers working with a small UK research company studied the levels of resistance to a previously common varroa treatment, tau-fluvalinate (e.g. Apistan), in the Lombardy region in Italy. This treatment used to be one of the most commonly applied varroa treatments, due to its efficacy and ease-of-use, until the late 1990s, when reports of treatment failures owing to resistance became more widespread. Resistance was first detected in the Lombardy region in 1991 and led to this treatment being rarely used in recent years. Resistance to tau-fluvalinate is due to a mutation that prevents this varroa treatment from binding to the varroa's nervous system, hence making it less effective, but is also linked with the production of esterases that influence the rate at which tau-fluvalinate is broken down. Varroa mites were collected in 2017 & 2018 from 43 different locations in Lombardy and demonstrated that resistant mites were only present in low numbers (11% homozygous, 2% heterozygous). The majority (87%) of mites were susceptible. This is because there is an energetic cost in maintaining resistance in a population after a varroa treatment has not been used for some time, and susceptibility quickly returns. The results suggest that tau-fluvalinate (Apistan) could again be effective and be re-used within a rotation of varroa treatments. The rotations need to be emphasised as resistance to tau-fluvalinate can otherwise quickly return.

Panini et al. (2019). Pyrethroid resistance in Italian populations of the mite *Varroa destructor*: a focus on the Lombardy region. *Bulletin of Insectology* 72(2), 227-232. <http://www.bulletinofinsectology.org/pdfarticles/vol72-2019-227-232panini.pdf>

A Bit of a Do 2019

A Bit of A Do 2019 – the WCBKA and CBKA’s annual beekeepers’ convention was a real treat back in September. The format of the day had been altered from previous years so that each talk was accessible to every attendee and it might have been an illusion but it felt as though there was a bit more time to browse through the book & equipment stalls set up for the day.

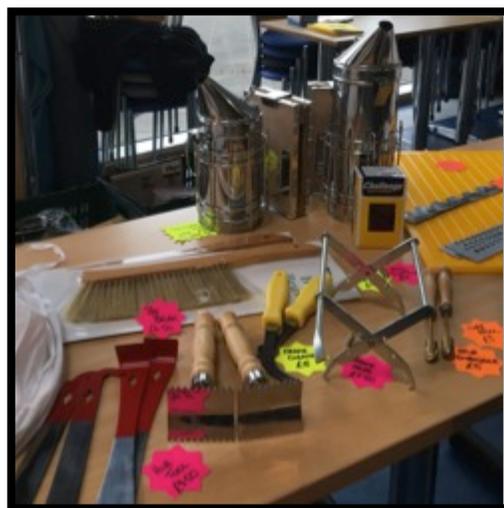
Northern Bee Books dazzled once again with their astonishing collection of historic and modern beekeeping tomes. BB Wear, Bee Hive Supplies and Beecraft were among the other stallholders as well as the charity Bees Abroad. The regional bee inspectors were also on hand to meet members and answer questions.



Tony Harris, a beekeeper in North Scotland, shared his very different experience of the honey harvest. He also gave us his very engaging analysis on swarming behaviour. Ben Woodcock from the Centre of Ecology & Hydrology delivered an articulate and thorough presentation on his research into pesticides. Fascinating and informative, Ben was clearly an expert in the field. There was a last minute change to the line-up of speakers, but Phil Green replaced Victoria Buswell in proceedings to give a colourful and anecdotal talk on the Asian hornet in Jersey.

The afternoon finished with a Question Time panel, where the audience had the opportunity to question the experts on the spot. All in all the day was well attended, informative and efficiently run. Can't wait for the next one in 2020!

Debby Wright



WCBKA Honey Show Rules 2019

The WCBKA Honey Show is such a fun event and gives members a chance to practice showing their wares ahead of the Royal Cornwall Show and the BBKA Honey Show. There are rules though, so make sure you read and understand them to give yourself the best chance of bagging an award! Aside from the competitions our honey show is also a great social and last chance to get together with each other before the new year!

1. Entries:

No exhibit may be entered in more than one class

Exhibitors are permitted to make a maximum of two entries in a class, but shall not take more than one award in that class

Ownership and preparation of all entries must be by the exhibitor

Classes may be amalgamated or cancelled at the discretion of the Show Secretary

The Show Secretary has the power to refuse an entry or exhibit without giving reason

2. Disqualifications:

All honey and wax must be the natural produce of bees owned by the exhibitor. If any one wishes to challenge an entry, a £1 non-refundable fee must be paid to the show secretary, who will investigate the allegation on the night

3. Labels:

Labels for the classes will be issued by the Show secretary at registration. Only these labels should be adhered to the jar or exhibit

Labels to jars and bottles to be affixed approx. 2cm between the label and base of the vessel

For other exhibits, the labels should be adhered to the display plate

4. Extracted honey:

Classes 1- 5: Jars of honey must be exhibited in clear 1lb (454g) squat glass jars with lacquered metal screw twist off lids and in pairs, both should match

Classes 8 – 12 (Novice): Single jars can be 1lb, 12oz. or 8oz.

Colour will be judged in accordance with the BBKA grading glasses (available on the night)

5. Cut comb:

Sections must be enclosed in white sections or plain commercial containers with window

6. Frame for extraction:

Displayed in bee proof protective cases, with the comb visible from both sides.

7. Mead:

Mead must be exhibited in clear colourless glass 75cl bottles with rounded not fluted shoulders. No labelling other than the show labels issued by the show secretary.

Bottle to be stoppered with a cork of white or clear plastic flange, removable by hand.

8. Food and drink (classes 19 - 24):

All exhibits must be made by the exhibitor. Exhibitors must conform to set recipes and size of container where specified. Exhibits may be sampled by the judge during the competition.

9. Retail Label for a honey jar (class 28):

The design needs to comply labelling regulations (Honey Regulations 2015).

This includes: the word HONEY which may be prefixed with the type of honey and/or area of origin.

The metric weight (figures should be at least 4mm high for jars 200g to 1kg weights). Your name and residential address, the country of origin, a 'best before' date and lot number

10. Awards:

In the event of a tie for a cup or prize awarded on a point basis, the award shall be made to the exhibitor who has secured the most first prizes, failing this first and second prizes and so on.

WCBKA Honey Show – Further Info

11. Protests:

All protests must be made to the Show Secretary before the end of the show, while exhibits are still available. All protests should be accompanied with a non-refundable £1 fee.

12. Show secretary:

The Show secretary is empowered to decide any question as to the interpretation of the foregoing rules and the show schedule and to retain all or any part of an exhibit upon which a protest has been raised. The Show Secretary will not be responsible for loss or damage sustained in any way by exhibitors either to their property or person.

Notes:

- Entry fee to be set at 50p per entry.
- A novice is classed as having kept bees for less than 3 years or having never exhibited at any honey show.
- Classes 8 - 12. Individual classes, unless numbers are too small as advised by the Show Secretary (in agreement with the Judge).
- Classes 8 - 12 should be judged as a show "master class" with the aim of encouraging participants, with constructive criticism.

The WCBKA Show Rules are based on the BBKA Show Rules (1994)

Awards:

- An award certificate for each 1st / 2nd / 3rd prize and highly commended (where appropriate).
- Rejarne Cup (most points in the honey classes 1 - 7)
- Honey Show cup for the most points in classes (1 - 18)
- Alf Gibbs Memorial Cup for overall best exhibit.
- Patricia Reeve Memorial Cup (Novice's cup) for classes (8 - 12)
- Beginner's Honey Award (book token) for the best honey from a first time honey exhibitor, classes 1 - 12.

Please find the Entry Form for this year's Honey Show attached with this edition of An Hes. Please

Honey Show 2019 Fruit Cake Recipe

Ingredients:

227g (8oz) mixed dried fruit (no cherries)
 142g (5oz) S/R flour
 85g (3oz) plain flour
 28g (1oz) ground almonds
 170g (6oz) butter
 113g (4oz) clear honey
 113g (4oz) brown sugar
 3 eggs
 Demerara sugar for sprinkling

Method:

Grease and line base of 18cm (7in) round tin. Cream together butter and sugar. Gradually add beaten eggs. Beat in the honey. Fold in mixed flours, ground almonds and fruit. Turn into prepared tin and sprinkle with a little demerara sugar. Bake at gas mark 4 or 350degrees F or 180degrees C for one and a quarter hours, until well risen and evenly brown!

My Bee Story by Alan Jones

Recently somebody asked me how I started keeping bees and when I told them, they said 'You ought to write that down', so, dear reader, get comfy and I hope you enjoy the ride.

In my early twenties I was very interested in self sufficiency and living off the land, but soon realized that living at home with my parents in a terraced house in Falmouth with a concrete postage stamp for a garden there wasn't a lot of scope for cows, pigs, sheep or even chickens, but bees were a different matter. You could keep bees on other peoples land with a few jars of honey for rent. Now in all the books I had read (mostly American) an average hive produced over 100 lbs of honey, so this should be a breeze!!! But how to become a beekeeper? Nobody I knew kept bees. My Dad canvassed the workforce at Falmouth Docks and found a man who said he had bees on his allotment. If they were alive in the Spring he put 'the boxes' on and them took them off again in the Autumn. Now I didn't know much, but I knew there was more to keeping bees than this.

As luck would have it, my girlfriend (now my wife) and I were invited to our friends' wedding and at the reception the bride said 'Come and meet my Uncle David, you'll like him'. David and I chatted about the building trade and football, but as we were talking he kept scratching his hands. He must have seen me looking and explained 'Sorry, I got stung yesterday and they always itch the next day'. I enquired whether he had been clearing stinging nettles and he replied 'No, I'm a beekeeper'. KERCHING!!!! I must have bored the poor man witless with my questions and in an effort to escape me and get back to his wife he said that he was going to look at some tomorrow and would I like to come along. And so I became the beekeepers' apprentice. Every Sunday morning we would look at the bees, weather permitting. Younger readers will be amazed to learn that if I wanted to check if the weather was suitable I had to walk a quarter of a mile to a phone box, put in my money, hope that David was in, and then walk a quarter of a mile home again. Texting, WhatsApp and Facetime were 20 years in the future.

That Summer I learnt how to light the smoker, handle bees, look for disease, control swarming and add supers for honey, all the time keeping a close eye on the time as we had roast Sunday lunches that we daren't be late for! In the Autumn I learnt about extracting, bottling, labeling and making up equipment for the next year. A couple of months into the following Summer David said 'I think you are ready for your own bees now. If you would like to do up that old WBC hive, the next time we get a swarm it will be yours'. That old hive was scraped, sanded, primed, undercoated and glossed and fitted with new frames and foundation in readiness.

One Sunday morning when David was dropping me back to my car his wife came out to tell us that a man at Mylor had rung to say he had a swarm in his orchard and would we remove it. David said 'Go and have your lunch and I will pick you up at the bottom of the hill and we can go and get them'. When we met again David said that he had spoken to the man and they were in an old apple tree, but not very high up, so he had brought some steps with him.

When we arrived at the orchard the bees were a lot higher than we had been led to believe, so, after a quick Health and Safety discussion and a written Risk Assessment Statement (Ha-Ha!!) it was decided that me, as the younger in our party, would use the steps to climb into the tree and get above the swarm. David would then reposition the steps under the swarm and stand on the top platform with his outstretched arms holding the skep above his head. On the command NOW I would stamp on the branch, the bees would drop into the skep and we would have them. What could possibly go wrong?

Either I was overly enthusiastic with my stamp, or the tree was in worse condition than we thought, but on the shout of "Now!", I stamped, the branch broke and the bees, branch and I fell through the tree, knocking David off the steps. We all met up on the ground. David sat up with his glasses at 45° to his face and wryly said 'Well, that didn't go as I planned!' Fortune favours the brave and the bees regrouped on the broken branch and we were able to put them in the skep and I returned that evening to take them to my girlfriend's aunt's house with a big garden and ran them into my own hive.

My indentures were complete and I had graduated from apprentice to beekeeper.

I have kept bees on and off for over 45 years, house moves permitting, and have seen a lot of changes. Probably the most significant and concerning is the way we are so global that invasive species can travel across oceans and continents with ease and threaten our bees and ultimately ourselves.

Sadly David passed away a few years ago, but I often think about him when I'm looking at my bees, especially when I've been a bit clumsy. I can hear him say 'For pity's sake, Alan, be more careful, you're like a cow with a musket!'. I will leave you to work this out for yourselves.

What's On?

Monday 18th November 2019 - Better Beekeeping Meeting

Pests & diseases / varroa monitoring / IPM

Monday 2nd December 2019 - Honey Show & Xmas Party

Show entries from 6pm. Entries close at 7pm! Show starts at 7.30pm

Wednesday 11th December 2019 – Embroider a Bee

A craft workshop at the Redwing Gallery in Penzance where you'll come away with a hand embroidered bee! Check their Facebook page for details.

Monday 6th January 2020 - Winter Meeting

Details TBC

Monday 20th January 2020 - Better Beekeeping Meeting

Details TBC

Monday 3rd February 2020 - Winter Meeting

3rd February: Grant McTaggart – “**How to make creamed and soft set honey**”. Grant's a Royal Cornwall Show winner for his soft set honey and has agreed to share with us how he makes it.

Monday 17th February 2020 - Better Beekeeping Meeting

Details TBC

Monday 2nd March 2020 - Winter Meeting

Natasha de Vere – “**Improving Forage for Bees**”. Natasha de Vere is from the National Botanic Garden of Wales and senior lecturer in Botany at the University of Aberystwyth. She has surveyed plants visited by honeybees (and other bees) nationally from samples submitted by beekeepers and is now working on green infrastructure to improve forage in the landscape for bees.

Monday 16th March 2020 - Better Beekeeping Meeting

Details TBC

Monday 6th April 2020 - Better Beekeeping Meeting

Details TBC

The WCBKA's **Winter Meetings** and **Better Beekeeping** sessions take place on Mondays at 7:30pm at Marazion Community Centre, Gwallon Lane, TR17 0HW

Tea & coffee are available and prizes for the raffle are welcomed