



Photo: Wheat fields around Shenmore by Bee Dale

September 2019

WVBKA Charity Registration Number: 517008



Association Honey Show

The Association Honey Show is on Sunday 22nd September so it's time to get spinning, polish your jars and look at the recipes again. You will find the details in Roger's recent email along with entry forms and a lunch menu.

Why not exhibit comb honey? The more entrants we have, the more fun and the less chance of having to share the trophy shield with other competitors!

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The Chairman introduces an American guest to the mysteries of UK beekeeping at Hampton Court.

Queen Colour of the Year 2019 is: GREEN

Hampton Court Bee Festival

Members of the committee dodged wind and rain to set up our tent for the show last Saturday. This also involved an interesting vehicle procession around the grounds of the estate, ostensibly to avoid wet areas of the lawns. These efforts were rewarded with sunshine and good meetings with fellow societies and stall holders. We had a number of interested visitors and a possible recruit or two. Although we didn't have a display hive this year, there was one at a neighbouring tent. However, this seemed to be as well attended by wasps as by people!

A trader adjacent to us had a large range of international honey for sale of various flavours including eucalyptus, avocado and chestnut, all available to taste. Again, humans and vespas enjoyed tasting together.



When the weather is good the grounds and castle provide an excellent venue for shows such as ours and while the event is still in its infancy, hopefully it will be better advertised and even more popular in the future.

Many thanks to all who helped our presentation and the setting up and taking down.

Don't forget, next month sees the Kington Show on Saturday 14th September.

Rob D

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DAVE'S BLOG

Notes for September

Well here we are again right at the beginning of what some would call the start of the New Year. I may be old-fashioned but I prefer to stick with the old adage that it is the end of the current season. However, in beekeeping circles we seem to change things around to suit ourselves. In my humble opinion, I think the season starts in the New Year when the queen commences laying and all is set fair for the current season.

Given that we are at the end of the current season, what can we do as beekeepers to help our bees through the winter period? Well, in a nutshell it's too late to start trying to raise queens, so what else can we do? If you have bees which are queenless you can unite them with a queenright colony, making sure that they don't carry any disease before doing so. Practically all beekeepers can do is look at the combs to check for any undesirables and feed well – that's about it.

Treatments or chemicals for the control of pests should, in my opinion, be left alone. We don't want to build up resistance to treatment of one kind or another, it's much better to allow the bees to find their natural resistance to these various pests. I hear you say that's all very well but the Ministry or advisory services or whatever you care to call them, have been giving advice to beekeepers for ages on various treatments. Keep an open mind before you carry any of these treatments out. Doctors in human medicine are finding various treatments are simply not working so if possible we don't want to go down the same road with our bees. Remember you are dealing with large corporations, many are

driven by results and profit not always to the benefit of the beekeeper. However, having said all the foregoing there is a place for treatments which is when you have done a proper diagnosis for this or that disease. What I'm saying here is don't routinely treat your bees for any disease unless you have made a proper diagnosis before you do so. You only have to look at the USA and other large beekeeping nations to find they have immense problems with disease. It's suggested this is largely due to the overuse of Terramycin which is widely used in agriculture to control various pests and when used correctly, it's a wonderful treatment for control of disease. In this country we have never used Terramycin as a prophylactic treatment for disease.

Healthy Bees

There is no doubt in my mind that healthy bees are directly linked to a good supply of natural flora. Now here is the rub, we have indirectly through our modern farming practices, destroyed large acreages of natural occurring herbs and flora for our bees to live on. These are the building blocks of good healthy bees along with a good weather pattern. Bees do not require interference from the beekeeper to tell them to go and forage, they do that naturally and have been doing so for millions of years. They can only forage on what man leaves behind, which over the last 70 odd years have been depleted quite heavily, just as we have seen in other parts of the world where we are destroying our rainforests.



However, it's not all doom and gloom. There have been various crops planted in recent years such as rape, which help our bees immensely and given half a chance, our bees will certainly make hay when the sun shines. We also see how various beekeepers do very well in certain locations which is mainly due to the forage in their area. So you see folks it is all linked to the natural cycle of things and forage, weather, temperature, moisture content etc. all play a part.

That's it folks, have a nice day.

Dave



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WVBKA Articles

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