



Royal Welsh 2017 by Tim Dale

August 2017

**WVBKA Charity Registration  
Number: 517008**

**Basic Assessment –  
Newsflash**

Three members of the association took the basic exam in July and all three passed. More details to follow in the next issue.

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**Kington Show**

This great one-day agricultural and country events show is on Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> September. WVBKA has an outside tent stand, right beside one of the major marquees so lots of people will stop to chat and see what we're doing. There are a few free passes (car parking and entrance) for volunteers willing to give some time to helping on our stand. If you are able to come, please let Rob Doran or David Williams know and we will send you a pass. It really is a good day out and there is plenty to see.

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**Diary Dates**

- August 11<sup>th</sup> Apiary meeting 6.30pm
- September 1<sup>st</sup> Apiary meeting
- September 6<sup>th</sup> Committee meeting
- September 9<sup>th</sup> Kington show
- September 22<sup>nd</sup> Apiary meeting
- October 8<sup>th</sup> Honey show

**Queen Colour of the Year**

2017 is: **YELLOW**

**Honey Show and Harvest  
Lunch October 8<sup>th</sup>**

This year we are going back to Poston Mill restaurant at Poston Mill Caravan Park, just outside Peterchurch. The judging will be open this year so that we can learn about the judging process and pick up some tips on how to improve our entries.

If your bees have been productive this year you only need to bring along two jars of honey to enter the show. We will be publishing the Honey Show schedule in the next few weeks with full details of the categories that can be entered. Start getting together your exhibits and put that lovely white-capped comb to one side. It doesn't have to be just honey; 'Bake Off' enthusiasts can have a go at the honey cake and other recipes. Don't forget no entries – no show.

Do remember that it's important to present your entry in the right containers and to read through the rules to avoid disappointment on the day.

Anyone in possession of a cup or trophy from last year's show then please return them to June Williams before this year's event.

Do make sure you give them a polish so they look good for the new holders. The Harvest Lunch form is attached to this newsletter.

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**NBU Warning**

In some regions of the UK, colonies are starting to show symptoms of high levels of Varroa mites, for example wing deformities and perforated cappings.

Therefore, it might be prudent to start monitoring colony mite populations and information on how to do this can be found on page 15 of the 'Managing Varroa' booklet. Also, the Varroa calculator can be used to help calculate your estimated mite population in your colonies

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/public/BeeDiseases/varroaCalculator.cfm>

If your colonies have a high amount of Varroa, i.e. 1000 mites after calculating it from the average drop, you may want to treat them with a registered Varroacide. Suitable treatments where brood is present would include:

- Apiguard
- Apilife Var
- Apistan\*
- Bayvarol\*
- Mite Away Quick Strips (MAQS)
- Thymovar

If you wish to use an oxalic acid based product then a brood less condition should be created first.

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Additionally, if you have honey for human consumption on the hives, remember that MAQs is currently the only registered product which can be used. When using any medicines it is important to remember to always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

*\*Mite resistance to these products have been recorded and so a resistance test (the Beltsville test) should be carried out before using the product.*

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### Another step on the path to true learning for the not quite novice beekeeper?

I am still making novel mistakes in looking after my bees and that probably means I'm still a beginner. My most recent dilemma was finding that, having dropped a swarm into the centre of a polynucleus (PN) on 20<sup>th</sup> May, I had forgotten to fill it with frames. The result is that the bees have filled the space between the two outer frames with three vanes of 'wild' comb attached to the roof of the brood box.

I was cautious of causing major interference in an obviously thriving colony but it would soon become overcrowded and the bees impossible to manage actively in their present accommodation. Either I had to move all to a new conventional hive, or provide additional space in the PN. But enlarging the space within the nuc would mean detaching the wild comb containing the entire brood.

I could also just do nothing and let the bees get on with their own plans, as I had no intention of drawing honey this season. So, what to do? Ask a friend, or ask several.

Pose any problem to a group of beekeepers and expect a lively stream of varying advice, mostly useful, sometimes contradictory.

Here are some of the suggestions (abbreviated) I received:

*"You need to be cruel to be kind, so slice off the unwanted comb and chuck it. The bees will make good at this time of year."*

*"Slice off the comb and suspend each piece with stainless wire loops from the top bar of empty brood*

### For sale – beekeeping equipment

I have decided (for a number of reasons) to give up beekeeping. I have three hives and a lot of equipment to sell at a low cost to someone who is starting out keeping bees – people were kind to me when I started. If you are interested then you can contact me by email: jack.ruby@waitrose.com or telephone 01544 267749

Chris Ruby

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*frames and replace these where they were or in a new brood box/hive."*

*"Slice off combs as above, but place them anyway in an upper brood box above a queen excluder (QE) and let the nurse bees bring on the developing bees away from fresh laying. When all are hatched, remove the combs. Remember to put frames in the vacated space beneath!"*

In explaining the problem to my non-beekeeping best friend, I realised the 'roof' of the PN was in fact the underside of a syrup feeder. All I had to do to enlarge the poly hive was remove the Perspex lid of the feeder and let the bees free into a brood box above with six fresh frames. The only downside I could see to this idea is that the bees might build extraneous comb into the wells on each side of the feeder, although I suppose this is unlikely in mid-July.

I obtained a new poly box and fitted this last week. Today I find they are busily drawing the foundation and laying uncapped stores in the centre of each frame with, so far, no sign of eggs.

My plan is to consolidate the colony later in the season when most of the young are hatched and the drones banished. Does this make sense? I must ask my friends, but I will try not to leave out vital bits of info in the story.

The other thing I've told myself is when I start making the same mistake twice (or more often) I will no longer be able to pretend I'm a novice.

Rob Doran

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# DAVE'S BLOG

## August notes

It has become apparent that some beekeepers are struggling with swarm control. With that in mind, we will be reinforcing our efforts at the association apiary to enable beekeepers to be more comfortable at dealing with this issue. In addition, we will be paying greater attention to the brood diseases and handling of bees as these are what beekeepers struggle with which is only natural. It takes many years to build confidence and be able to trust your judgement. Confidence comes in many ways, it is something which is acquired over time and it can't be taught in the classroom. We will be reinforcing our efforts to be more confident. Not all bees are the same, some are very docile, some require a little more diligence to keep them under control and others are downright nasty. It is the ability of the handler to read the signs and act according to their temperaments. This is a skill in its self, some bees don't like smoke, others will tolerate a little. In addition many beekeepers find the actual sound of a strong colony quite unnerving, this again is something which has to be overcome.



Sometimes it is better to stand back from the situation and think about how to overcome these problems and in most cases you will succeed. With a little diligence, confidence and practice you will in the end win through. Of course you will come across situations which are almost impossible. Perseverance will bring about success, you won't win all of the time, be prepared to accept that sometimes you will fail. That will make you all the more determined to come back stronger than ever.

## Shutting down for winter

We will assume it is the beginning of August. As most beekeepers know the drones get thrown out in the first week to 10 days providing they have a fertile laying queen. If they haven't then there is a tendency for the colony to hang on to its drones in readiness to fertilise any late queens or at least this is the theory. It has long been established that if a colony is queen right it will almost certainly throw the drones out in early August, they don't like carrying passengers. With that in mind, I would strongly recommend that any breeding of queens or indeed repairing colonies should be completed early to enable the queens to get mated, don't be fiddling about too late. If you have colonies which have failed to get mated, then unite them with a colony which is queen right. The paper method will in most cases suffice, don't forget the excess comb on the bottom of the frames or use an eke to accommodate.

*Dave*

### Honey extraction equipment for hire

The WVBKA has a honey extractor available for hire, as well as an electric uncapping knife.

A deposit of £50 plus a hiring fee of £10 is required for the extractor. For each subsequent hiring in the same season, a fee of £5 is chargeable. The knife is hired out at £10. Deposit for both the extractor and the knife is £50. To check if the equipment is available for hire, you can contact June on 01981 550320

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### Asian hornet trap and attractant

Veto-pharma manufactures a hornet trap and attractant. Further information can be found at <http://www.veto-pharma.com/products/trap-and-hornet-attractant/>

The trap is available from Thorne's at a cost of £5 which includes five sachets of hornet lure. They have a price tag of £6 attached to them so I guess that will be the price next year as they have to be sold at £5 this year because that is the current catalogue price.

*Jane Matthews*

## WVBKA Officers for 2017

### Chairman:

- Peter Woodward: [peter\\_woodward@tesco.net](mailto:peter_woodward@tesco.net)  
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### Vice Chairman:

- Rob Doran: [brandoran@btinternet.com](mailto:brandoran@btinternet.com)

### General & Honey Show Secretary:

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### Treasurer & Membership Secretary:

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### Librarian:

- Peter Woodward

### Association Apiary Management Team:

- David & Dave Williams

### Newsletter Editor:

- Tim & Belinda Dale: [beedale@outlook.com](mailto:beedale@outlook.com)

### Committee:

- Geoff Dutson
- Juliet Parker-Smith
- Duncan Penkey
- Andy Strangeway
- June Williams
- Suzanne Wenczek

### Catering Committee:

- Jane Matthews
- June Williams

### Mentoring Team:

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- Cliff Rose 01981 251844
- David Williams 07875 426089
- Peter Woodward 01981 240280

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- John Howarth 01981 550733

### Website Editor:

- Peter Woodward

### Honorary Auditor:

- Mike Price

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## MSWCC – The Bee Conference

The 89<sup>th</sup> Midland & South Western Counties Convention of Beekeepers Conference “Better Bees”, will be held at The Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 6JS from Friday 15<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2017. For more information visit:

<http://www.mswcc.org.uk/>

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## Honey extraction training

If anyone wants to get some hands on training then please let me know and we will try and link you up with one of the more experienced members when they are doing some extracting.

Peter Woodward 01981 240280

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## Publishing note

In order to save on the cost of ink, the images contained in the printed version of this newsletter will be in greyscale

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## Autumn planning for your bees

It will soon be time for thinking about preparing the bees for winter. It sounds early but making plans gets the brain in gear. Once you have taken off the honey crop you need to start Varroa treatments, if they are necessary. It might be worth doing a mite drop count to see what sort of challenge your bees have. You also need to be thinking about feeding for the winter, sugar or syrup, the choice is yours but make sure you get some ordered and are ready to go. Where are the feeders? Make sure they are at hand, get them out of the back of the cupboard and get them cleaned.

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