



Image: Cider apple orchard... by Tim Dale

September 2018

WVBKA Charity Registration Number: 517008



40th Anniversary of the WVBKA

As posted on the Association's website calendar, this year's Honey Show is on Sunday 30th September at Poston Mill. Timings for the show are as follows :

- 2pm staging
- 3pm judging by Dinah Sweet
- 4pm prize-giving with tea and raffle
- followed by an early evening buffet and presentation to celebrate Dave Williams' career as founder Chairman of the Association.

Look out for entry forms and meal bookings by email from June soon.

Come along to this festival occasion. Partners welcome.

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Upcoming diary dates 2018

- September 8th Kington Show
- September 14th Apiary Meeting
- September 30th Honey Show and Harvest Lunch
- October 27th Visit to Gwatkins Cider
- November 3rd Wax workshop

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Queen Colour of the Year

2018 is: **RED**

Hampton Court Bee Festival

Surrounded by vast lawns with a stunning woodland backdrop and the River Lugg flowing past, we spent a very enjoyable two days promoting the work of WVBKA and beekeeping in general, to the visitors of Hampton Court.

In celebration of World Honey Bee Day, Hampton Court staged a weekend filled with everything bees! Observation hives, including our own, traditional skep making, demonstrations and



talks from Bees for Development – the public were treated to a plethora of bee activities. There were lots of bee related produce which was presented beautifully by local makers: [Seggin Bees](#) products were really diverse from soap to fudge and new to me was 'Bees Wax Food Wrap'.

Mr Shane Llewelyn-Jones of the [Bee Welsh Honey Company](#) had won both a First Prize and Special Award at the Royal Welsh Show this year.



[Beehive Bits](#) proved very popular with beekeepers as they have lots of very reasonable priced metal and plastic components for Bee Hives made in Britain.

Dave and June were on hand to impart their considerable knowledge which they have been doing for the last forty years – impressive or what!

Sue Q

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Honey Show schedule

Attached to this newsletter you will have the schedule for this year's show. Times of events are shown on the front page; please note that these are different to previous years as this is an afternoon session. The rest of the schedule describes the classes that can be entered. In the cooking section there are recipes for the various cakes and other goodies, but no instructions – as per 'Bake Off'.

In the honey section we have included the black jar honey that we started last year, this is a 1lb jar of honey which should be obscured and the judge will assess this on a taste only basis.

Please observe the various rules regarding presentation of honey and other prizes.

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Autumn management from the NBU

As we approach the autumn season, you may be planning what to do in order to successfully over winter your colonies. Remember the start of the 2018 beekeeping year begins now and anything you do or do not do to your colonies will have repercussions on their ability to overwinter successfully, and on their subsequent performance in the following year. To help you out, we've put together a checklist of tasks to carry out before you 'put your bees to bed' for winter.

Good quality stocks of bees

Colonies which have poorly performed during the season e.g. the queen has had a bad laying pattern, or any colonies which are headed by queens older than say two years should ideally be replaced by a good quality and newly mated queen. This will set the colony in good stead for next year as young queens are more prolific and produce a strong population of honey bees necessary for the colony to successfully overwinter. Younger queens are also unlikely to be superseded in the spring at a time when the colony is more vulnerable and if the older queen is killed, it is unlikely that a replacement queen will be available to keep the colony going.



If, in the following year you wish to use any of the older queens for breeding purposes and want to graft from her young larvae, then removing her from the main colony and over-wintering her in a nuc will increase the likelihood of her surviving into the following spring.

Pest and disease checks and medicine treatments

There will always be variation in when beekeepers need to treat for Varroa but it is especially important to monitor mite populations going into autumn. If the levels are high and warrant treatment, only registered products should be applied by using the label instructions. Failure to treat promptly could risk infection with Varroa transmitted viruses in the developing brood. This brood would be the bees which will carry the colony through winter and if infected, will be unable to do so.

Remember to do a full inspection of the colonies for the presence of pests and diseases; so for foul brood carefully examine each comb. Checks also for the presence of exotic threats such as the small hive beetle should be done, and details of how to do this can be found in the NBU leaflets. Early recognition is absolutely key to successful pest and disease control.

If you are not already doing so, don't forget to also monitor for the Asian hornet. As we approach autumn, you are likely to also see them foraging on Ivy or other nectar producing food sources as well as hawking in front of hives in apiaries.

Adequate feeding

As a rule of thumb, a full size colony should have about 25kg+ of honey stores to get through the winter and into the first part of our unpredictable springs. Therefore, many beekeepers will feed around 25kg of thick sugar syrup (1kg of sugar to 630ml of water) between August and September. This amount of feed would usually last a colony 5 – 6 months during the winter, however, with changeable weather, food stores should be monitored after the New Year and if they look like they are running short, sugar candy of some type can be fed. Don't forget colonies also need adequate pollen provisions and will need two full sized deep frames of pollen to see them over winter. If this is not present, then a suitable pollen substitute should be fed, readily obtainable from the bee equipment suppliers.

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Notes for September

September is a month when most beekeepers will be packing their bees up for the winter period. This involves many different tasks, feeding, checking that they are queen-right, protecting the entrances for winter, tying down and generally tidying up and setting them up for winter. Many beekeepers forget that they are wild insects which we have over time, to some extent domesticated for our own use.

Bees have evolved over many million years and to a large degree they haven't changed. There is a fossilised bee in Cardiff University which is claimed to be much the same as the bee we have today. Man has for many years tried to influence the direction bees should take. I am very much against this; my view is that we should not interfere with nature and that we should allow bees to evolve naturally.

Now let me say right at the start that I'm not against helping bees to overcome various problems which we know they'd suffer from. However, we should not be embarking on trying to change things 'unnaturally'. Leave them alone and generally they will survive. Bees are not meant to be constantly interfered with. Largely they are static in the odd tree here and there without any disturbance. They have a natural instinct to look after themselves – indeed the diseases come and go. This is where the wax moth will naturally play a big part in the clean-up process of any diseased combs. Science and understanding is one thing, interference with their natural ability to cope is quite another.

Even during my lifetime, in the early part of my career in beekeeping, Acarine mite was seen to be the scourge of every beekeeper, formerly known as the Isle of Wight disease. If my bees are anything to go by they have naturally learnt to deal with this and are not affected as much as they were 50 or 60 years ago. I can well remember the various treatments that were around to combat this problem. Years ago it was commonplace to see the Bee Louse or Brauli as it was called, now you very rarely see them so you see my friends, beekeeping is changing and not necessarily for the worse as some people make out.

I heard a beekeeper say 'what about the hygiene?' Bees have a natural instinct to look after themselves and should be left completely alone in that regard, they have an inbuilt system to cope. They have a natural antibiotic which is produced to keep their hive in a good condition which again has evolved over the years. Largely bees will live in hives for years without any interference, we don't need to keep changing combs, sterilising hives etc to keep the bees going. If you do that you will be making a mistake.

Beekeepers tend to think that you must have a complete set of new combs within the colony every year, this is quite unnecessary. Keeping your brood nests in good order so that you can manage your bees more efficiently is one thing, but actually changing the combs is quite another. If you look at a set of old combs there are indeed numerous beneficial things within the comb which many beekeepers overlook. There is what we call 'pickled pollen' which the bees consume to rear brood and we all know how important it is for their development. We also know that bees will avidly draw comb at certain times of the year which is mainly when there is a very good 'income' for them to collect and the bees are in abundance. Don't make things overcomplicated; just allow the bees to do what they do naturally.

Keeping your bees strong and active is one thing, too much interference is quite another. Maintaining a good virile queen within your colonies will go quite a long way to keeping them in good order. This can be achieved in numerous ways which is exactly what the bees are trying to do when they swarm, or should I say reproduce. Utilise those queen cells! It isn't that complicated. Don't keep too many bees in one place. If you exhaust the natural flora they won't be as healthy, we all know from other livestock that overstocking is a bad thing.

In the main, I produce these notes from memory and by using things which flood into my mind from time to time. I still maintain the most important thing is to enjoy your beekeeping. Enjoy the company of others with the same interest and we can all learn from one another. Be flexible in your approach and don't be afraid to try new ideas, this is how progress is made.

Dave

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Wax demonstration – 3rd November

Val Vivian-Griffiths will be giving a workshop on wax and wax products in Moccas village hall. More details will follow in next month's newsletter but make sure you put this in your diary.

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Visit to Gwatkins Cider

October 27th at 2.00pm

We have arranged a visit to Gwatkin's Cider to have a talk, tour and tasting on everything you need to know about cider and its production. There will be plenty of cider available following the tasting to take home and enjoy.



All members of WVBKA are invited to what should be an interesting and enjoyable afternoon. Please plan to arrive before 2.00pm so that we can start the tour on time. On arrival, turn down into the yard and park up.

The address is:

Moorhampton Park Farm, Abbey Dore, HR2 0AL.

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Honey Show Trophies

Please will cup and trophy holders from 2017 return their awards to June as soon as possible or alternatively return them to a committee member.

Thank you and I hope to see as many of you as possible at our special celebration.

June Williams