

NEWSLETTER 35

AUTUMN 2012

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Here are a few photographs showing what bees will do when they occupy a hive that has been left out in the open without proper frame spacing and foundation in the frames. This colony was rescued from Glanamman in Carmarthenshire, by Brian Jones your Hon. Sec. The hive had to be returned to the owner which meant cutting out the combs shaking off the bees, and mounting the comb in special split frames with wires each side to keep them rigid. The colony has built up well during 2012 and hopefully will survive the coming winter. Notice how the bees kept a natural bee space between their combs.



Cut out the comb, then shake off the bees.

Mount the comb carefully in the split folding frames.



In their new home, a national hive with extra frames and new foundation. Surplus comb in the bucket for rendering later. Topped off with a feed of syrup in case the weather turns bad in the next few days. And I didn't get stung once.

NEWS FROM THE EDITOR
 This will be the last newsletter that I will produce for the near future. Maureen Macleod and Steve Cox will be sending them out in future. I hope you have enjoyed the last 35 issues over the past few years. If you missed any they can be read on our website under downloads — newsletters.
 I will still be sending out any news that I receive by email to all members with email facilities. Some of this news will then be added to future newsletters.
 Apologies for lack of newsletters for the early part of this year. Brian Jones.

THE PROBLEM OF KEEPING BEES IN APIDEAS AND OTHER SMALL QUEEN MATING HIVES
 In the past I have had poor results when filling apideas ready for introducing queens. Most of my bees returned to their original hives. So last year I made up a few national frames with dividers that would take three plastic apidea frames with fresh foundation. These were introduced to a strong colony and left over winter. When required for filling up the apideas all that was necessary was to remove the frame and place the three smaller frames in the apidea.



As you can see the queen in the old hive has laid up well with plenty of sealed brood. Do remember not to introduce the queen from the main hive together with the small frames. Leave the Apideas in a cool shady place away from the old hive and introduce your newly hatched queen in a cage with a candy plug. It worked well even though the weather was so bad this year for getting queens mated. This takes a bit of preparation and forethought but is well worth while.
 I now have drawn frames ready for next year which I am sure nurse bees will accept much better than fresh foundation.

**COMB WORKSHOP
HELD AT THE ASSOCIATION APIARY ON SUNDAY MAY 7TH 2012**



LEFT Francis (Frank) Gellatly regional bee officer and local bee inspector for East Carmarthen and Mid Ceredigion inspects sample of American Foul Brood. Closely watched by Christopher Phillips joint acting apiary manager for Carmarthenshire Beekeepers Association.

RIGHT Ceri Morgan bee inspector for Pembrokeshire and East Ceredigion discusses some finer points of bee diseases with James (Jimmy the bees) Horne. Note the use of disposable aprons and plastic gloves to prevent any contamination.



LEFT Adrian Bowen bee inspector for Gower and West Carmarthenshire showing samples of bees with Nosema and Acarine. Watching intently are Sandra Eckford, Catherine Lodwick and Bill Bradley.

RIGHT General view of the samples table. It was a one off opportunity to see close up samples of EFB AFB, Varroa, Chalk Brood, Drone layers, Sac Brood, Chilled brood Etc. Hopefully as beekeepers we shall never see some of the problems in our own colonies. We extend our thanks to the Bee Inspectorate for such an educational afternoon.



Honey Harvest 2012

By Cathy Tansley

I thought I would write and share my honey harvest findings with you all.....

In 2011 I had two hives which produced enough honey, not only for the bees for the winter but also for me to take off a honey harvest. The hives are some 25metres apart, one is down near the river the other half way up a hill. I deliberately kept the frames separate, spinning off the honey from each hive and putting in separate buckets. To my amazement the honey was totally different from each hive.

The hive down by the river, produced honey that set really quickly, but the texture was smooth and it went quite hard. It was also quite light in colour and the flavour was lightly floral.

The hive from half way up the hill – which actually produced the most honey, produced honey that set more slowly but it also remained a soft and buttery. The texture was slightly more granular. It was the same colour and the flavour, although floral was completely different from the riverside honey. It also appeared to be sweeter and more generic honey tasting.

I decided that in 2012 I would do the same again. I now have 4 hives – one still down by the river, the one half way up the hill, one higher up the hill but in the corner of our garden and another (a swarm caught this year) behind a hazel boundary that is higher still. Yes I know it makes life difficult bee keeping when all my hives are up hill, but I live in the bottom of a valley and needs must!

As we know it wasn't such a good year for bees or honey – my colony that did so well with honey last year (half way up the hill), had a queen death in May, then problems raising a new queen, then problems introducing a new (expensive) queen and in the end I united that colony with an artificial swarm that had worked and they are now doing well – but of course they only produced enough honey for themselves this year. I had similar problems with the hive down by the river, whereby they swarmed late and then decided to go into honey producing mode and did not produce a new queen – I did get some honey from this one, but I have also lost the colony. The hive up the top of the hill in the corner of the garden, swarmed early, but produced a new queen and then quite a bit of honey, which again I have managed to take some for myself and the swarm of this year has produced enough honey to survive the winter.

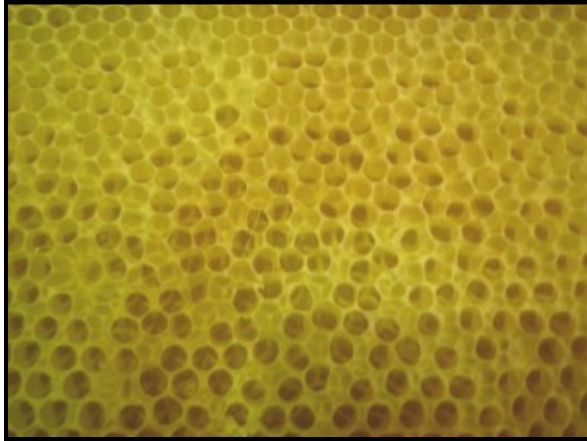
So, two hives produced honey – the river honey was different again from that produced last year. It is lighter still in colour and has set quite hard with a fine texture, but the flavour is totally different; florally, but with no generic honey taste and very sweet.

The second hive – from the corner of the garden, but higher up the hill produced a honey which quite amazed me. It has a much more honeyed colour; it is setting slowly but still has a smooth texture. The flavour is the part which I admire the most. There are undertones of woodiness – there are sycamore and hazel close by – but the honey does not taste “off” or “musty”, just delicious. Again there is a floral flavour about it, but the honey is no way as sweet as that produced by the river bees.

But when was ever honey made with one bee in a hive? Thomas Hood , 'The Last Man'

The bee that hath honey in her mouth, hath a sting in her tail. John Lyly, 'Euphues'

Quotes from Bees and Mankind by John B Free. Published by George Allen & Unwin



Not bees on LSD but a sample of comb with worker foundation where the bees decided they needed drone cells and consequently did not get a nice even pattern.

Colonies can have anything up to 2000 drones in a strong stock at the peak of the season.

Queens will mate with up to twenty drones on their mating flights.

Rear drones from your best colonies.

September meeting at the apiary when Brian demonstrated the honey extraction process. From clearing the honey supers on the hives Right and below showing the use of a heated uncapping knife and stainless steel uncapping tray. Then use of a manual extractor followed by testing using a refractometer, straining, ripening and bottling the crop.

Picture bottom right shows the use of the uncapping fork.



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

**Monday December 3rd 7.30 p.m.
at The New Stags Head Carmarthen.**

The new DVD on Honey. Harvesting, Marketing, Preparation for showing and making Mead.

Monday 7th January 2013 Annual General Meeting 7.30 p.m.

at The New Stags Head Carmarthen Come along and meet the club officials. Have your say. Air your grievances or sing your praises. Give us your suggestions for running the association.

Monday 4th February 2013 Association Meeting and Honey Show
7.30 p.m. at The New Stags Head Carmarthen for 2012 honey etc. Better late than never. A chance to make some exhibits during the dark winter evenings.

SCHEDULE FOR THE HONEY SHOW

By request from members this is a honey show just for fun. Everyone will be a judge. Give each entry a mark out of TEN Then work out who came first, second or third in each class.

Judge the honey on presentation, clarity taste etc. Any container will be allowed. But honey jars look better.

Wines can be Red or White sweet or dry. Mead can also be sweet or dry.

Please hand in your judging sheet as soon as possible for the adjudicators to add up the marks.

Please only enter one exhibit in each class.

Certificates for 1st, 2nd, 3rd and Highly Recommended. Some cups for certain classes also the odd prize for special effort made with some exhibits..

There will also be a collection of foreign honey for you to taste. If you have any left over from holidays or find something unusual in the supermarket bring it along.

Class 11 LB JAR OF LIQUID HONEY DARK

Class 21 LB JAR OF LIQUID HONEY MEDIUM

Class 31 LB JAR OF LIQUID HONEY LIGHT

Class 41 LB JAR OF CREAMED HONEY

Class 5.....1 LB JAR OF GRANULATED HONEY

Class 6.....A CONTAINER OF CUT COMB

Class 7.....BEGINNERS HONEY CLASS (For those that have not entered a honey show previously)

Class 8.....HONEY CAKE AS RECIPE BELOW (Note this a new recipe on next page)

Class 9A BLOCK OF WAX. ANY SIZE (8oz is the usual standard)

Class 10.....FRAME SUITABLE FOR EXTRACTION

Class 11.....ANY ITEM FROM BEESWAX (Craft item such as a candle etc.)

Class 12.....BOTTLE WINE RED, WHITE OR BOTTLE OF MEAD OR BEER
(Clear bottles with easily removed stoppers.)

Class 13.....PHOTOGRAPH BLACK AND WHITE OR COLOUR (Beekeeping Theme)

Class 14.....CRAFT ITEM A MODEL, A TOY, ETC, (Beekeeping Theme)

Class 15.....ARTWORK A PAINTING, DRAWING, ETC. (Beekeeping Theme)

Class 16.....BLIND TASTING (Jars will be covered and judging will be on taste only)

HONEY CAKE BBC JAMES MARTIN'S RECIPE FOR A RICH, MOIST HONEY CAKE.

INGREDIENTS

170g/6oz clear honey
140g/5oz butter
85g/3oz light muscovado sugar
2 eggs beaten
200g/ 7oz self raising flour sieved
water

FOR THE ICING

55g/2oz icing sugar
1 teaspoon clear honey



Preheat oven to 180C/350F/Gas 3 and butter and line the bottom of a 7in/18cm cake tin. Measure the honey, butter and sugar into a large pan. Add a tablespoon of water and heat gently until melted.

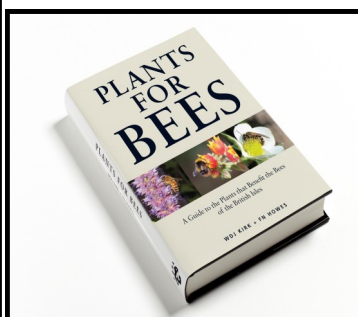
Remove from the heat and mix in the eggs and flour.

Spoon into the cake tin and bake for 40-45 minutes until the cake is springy to the touch and shrinking slightly from the sides of the tin.

Cool slightly in the tin before turning out onto a wire rack.

While the cake is still warm, make the icing by mixing the sugar and honey together with 2-3 teaspoons of hot water. Trickle over the cake in whatever design takes your fancy.

NEW BOOKS



PLANTS FOR BEES

This book is being published by the International Bee Research Association (IBRA) and has been compiled by a team of experts led by Dr William Kirk, Senior Lecturer in Ecology and Entomology at Keele University and Vice-Chairman of IBRA. We believe that this publication will make an extremely valuable contribution to current information and will help people to support bees in their gardens, thereby slowing and hopefully eventually stopping the decline of bees. £25 IBRA



BEEKEEPING A NOVICES GUIDE

This is a picture lead book for the Novice Bee Keeper. It takes the beginner through their first two years of keeping bees. Explaining the hive, how it works, and the honey bee. The equipment you will need and where best to place your hive. It also covers how to get your first bees, doing inspections through to wintering your bees. Finally covering how to extract honey and selling it. The book also has a glossary of bee keeping terms and a useful list of website links. £16.99 AMAZON

HONEY-BEES FOUND TO HAVE BITE THAT STUNS



Honey-bees are known for their sting, but scientists have now discovered they can also bite. Bees resort to biting when faced with pests, such as parasitic mites, and wax moth larvae, they secrete a chemical in their bite that subdues them and makes them easier for the bees to remove from the hive. Tests suggest the chemical could also have a role in human medicine, as a local anaesthetic.

Research is underway with Vita Europe under the directorship of Dr Max Watkins and some other foreign scientists. Image above from their website. www.vita-europe.com

OTHER NEWS

BBKA 2012 Honey survey highlights 72% drop in average yield to just 8lbs per hive.

GOOD OLD STAN Stan Brown of Cumberland, Maine, is nearly 93 years old, one of America's oldest registered beekeepers. Brown, who turned 93 on October 13, has kept honeybees on the same one-quarter mile of road since 1931. Semi-retired, he maintains 55 hives and produces around 1900 pounds of honey a year.

BEES AND DIESEL Possible links between diesel fumes and collapsing honey bee colonies are being investigated by scientists. A University of Southampton study will investigate whether tiny particles from diesel engines could be affecting bees' brains and their navigation.

HONEY AND MRSA Honey gathered from around Wales could hold the key to fighting hospital infections like MRSA. Scientists from Cardiff University have teamed up with the National Botanic Gardens to test samples gathered from bee hives across the country.

BLUE AND GREEN HONEY Beekeepers in north eastern France have been alarmed to find their bees producing honey in unnatural shades of green and blue. The beekeepers believe the source of the problem is a biogas plant close to Ribeauville in Alsace. It is thought the bees have been eating the sugary waste from M&Ms, small chocolates in brightly-coloured shells.

WANTED Carmarthenshire Beekeepers Association are looking for a new representative to attend Welsh Beekeepers Association meetings. Can you help? Come along to the AGM on 7th January.

Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of The Carmarthenshire Beekeepers Association and their Committee. Whilst every effort is taken in compiling the content to ensure they are correct and accurate the association assumes no responsibility for any effect from errors or omissions.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Carmarthenshire Beekeepers Association website is
www.carmarthenshirebeekeepers.org.uk

Welsh Beekeepers Association is www.wbka.com

Food and Environment Research Agency / Bee Research Unit
www.beebase.org or www.nationalbeeunit.com

Your regional BeeOfficer Francis Gellatly Tel 01558 650588
or email francis.gellatly@fera.gsi.gov.uk