



Quarterly Newsletter - November 2013

Forthcoming dates.

November 7th - Annual Quiz, The Bull Pen Cwmoernant Farm

December 2nd - Bumble Bees, A Talk by Andrew Martin. Stags Head, Carmarthen.

January 6th 2014. Annual General Meeting. Stags Head Carmarthen

February 3rd 2014 - Association Meeting Stags head, Carmarthen.

March 3rd 2014. - Association Meeting Stags Head, Carmarthen.

If you wish to verify that a meeting is taking place please call the Secretary on 01267 267 318

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An Appeal from our treasurer. Bill Bradley to anyone coming along to the quiz on Thursday

The local community garden in Brechfa is on the list for a cash share of the big Carmarthen Journal payout. The coupons are on page 8 so if anyone has a copy of last weeks and also this week's copy of the journal I would greatly appreciate you cutting them out and giving to me.

FOR SALE

Gillian Birdsall has decided to sell one of her New National Hives. Never been used. Except as a Swarm Catcher. It hasRoof, 4 supers (flat pack), 14x12 brood box, Open Mesh Floor, Floor Stand
It is going for £150.00 - Contact her on 07900804420

EDITORIAL

First off my apologies for the lateness of this newsletter. The same old problem of too much to do and too little time to do it.

Anyway, I hope you will receive this letter before the annual quiz on Thursday 7th of November and that you will be able to come along. It will be held in the Bull Pen at the farm. Please bring some food if you can as we will be catering for us and our guests from East Carmarthen Beekeepers club. As with the barn dance, if everyone with a surname beginning with the letters A to M brings a savoury and everyone else brings a sweet dish we should get an even spread of food. You should also bring drinks with you. Tea and coffee will be provided.

Our December meeting will have a guest speaker in the form of one of our members who is giving a talk on Bumble bees. This will take place at the stags head. Andrew has given this talk to his local gardening club and was involved in research into these creatures during his working life. All welcome.

If you or anyone you know has a talk they can give on any subject you think the club members will be interested in please contact the editor and we will try to fit you in.

Computer equipment and projectors are available if needed. We currently have two dates available this season for indoor talks and they are the February and March meetings at the stags head.

If you have any practical skills you wish to demonstrate to the club or even the wider crafting community please also get in touch.

Coming next year, the current committee (assuming they get re-elected) have some ideas in the pipeline for more activities within the club. There is almost certainly going to be a garden party next year and we would also like to arrange a visit to places of interest so if you have any ideas please let us know.

As apiary manager I would just like to take this opportunity to thank the following people :

Andrew Martin, John Pilgrim, Bill Bradley, Les and Sandra Eckford, Quentin MacGarvie and Mike Jones for their help with feeding sugar syrup to the hives in the club apiary over the past month or so. This should see us and the hives in good stead for their survival through the winter.

We are just waiting for a good day to go and remove the feeders and have a final check around the hives before we leave them to it until the spring.

the only other thing that will need doing later on will be to move the final hive up from the lower apiary to the upper.

Steve Cox.
Editor.

October Among The Bees In The Carmarthen Association Area

What a wonderful summer we have had this year, after a very late start with bad weather until almost the end of June, many hives were in a poor state or had died out. Then suddenly all the wonky ones began to recover and by the time the clover began to flower in July it was all systems 'GO' and the nectar began to flow. And the FLOW as it is called went on with a myriad of flowers ending at the end of September as the Himalayan Balsam faded away.

Supers were full there were bees in abundance and it was now time to remove the honey, all beautifully capped and waiting for the extractor. Most hives produced 35 to 50 lbs of honey, and if you travel about and visit older beekeepers you will see their ripening tanks standing in kitchen or conservatory waiting for buckets or jars. In that tank for those who have never used one, the air bubbles rise to the top along with any stray wax, and any grit etc will drop to the bottom, the honey will ripen in the week or so as it sits there, it will improve in flavour, and is not so likely to ferment later on.

BUT although this is what should happen and did for the best of beekeepers, there were others who had little or no honey at all. WHY? They must now ask themselves a series of questions on where their management has gone wrong. Some people lost hives over last winter, why? And 'NO' colony collapse disorder is not an answer, just an excuse. It's the management that's wrong. So why? Begin by asking yourself; are they in the right place? Would they do better in another part of the garden, have they got their back to the wind, they need to face south east, do they get at least some sunshine or are they boiling to death in the middle of a field with no shade, or is it just draughty where they are. Winter is a time to move bees to a better site, not in a damp place or underneath dripping trees.

Then what is going on inside the hive. Do you consider their Psyche! Oh yes they do have one, all social creatures have one, for bees it's called the hive mind, do you tune into it, do you over meddle with them, although they are very tolerant of that. What is now coming to the fore is the over use of chemicals, too many Varroa treatments, all chemicals in one form or another, preventing this that and the other disease with additions to the feed. All fine in theory but no good if it kills the hive, depression is a factor, have you considered that?

Lastly there is forage, have you lost your forage? Did you once have wild flower meadows round you, and now they are gone though farming activities, extra ploughing, introduced stock grazing all the herbage away. Every aspect of your management must be considered. What about other beekeepers near you have they got honey? The last bumper crop such as we have had this year was in 2006, anyone who has started beekeeping since then and has not done well this year has a lot to learn.

Report on the Honey Show and Barn Dance

The Barn dance was fancy dress with a medieval theme and several members got into the spirit of things by turning up in costume. The pictures below and on the following page show some of them.

We had the same band who played at the last dance we held, much fun was had by all doing some of the square dances they lead us in. They also dusted off the 'waggle dance' that they had devised for us the last time.



Top Left is our secretary, not as you think some sort of bear but a friar in an early form of beekeepers suit. There was also a wicker face mask. Top right is Steve Cox as a Wizard the grimace on my face is trying to keep the wig from slipping. Bottom left Lorna and Bill Bradley as Henry the eighth and one of his many wives. Bottom Right is Ceridwen Bowering as a red dragon.

As is usual with the clubs honey show it was judged by everyone and then the results were collated by Bill and Lorna.

The winners of each class were announced at the end of the show. But the prizes and the certificates themselves were presented at the first Stags head meeting on October 7th. When the second and in some categories third prize certificates were also awarded.



Top left, Another knight, top right a look at the band. Bottom left a junior dragon. Bottom right another general scene from the dancing.

The committee would particularly like to congratulate Sharon Richards who won two classes and a cup on her first attempt at the competition, her photo of a bee suit hanging on the line after being washed was a particular favourite amongst the judges.

The winners of the various categories in the honey show were as follows.

- Class One. Jar of dark honey - Brian Jones
- Class Two. Jar of medium honey - Chris Phillips
- Class Three. Jar of light honey - Chris Phillips. - Brian Davies Cup
- Class Four. Jar of creamed honey - Brian Jones
- Class Five. Jar of granulated honey - Steve Cox - The Waverly Cup
- Class Six. No entries
- Class Seven. Beginners honey - Sharon Richards
- Class Eight. Honey cake - Andrew and Ceridwen Bowering - The Moseley Cup
- Class Nine. Block of wax - Chris Phillips
- Class Ten. Frame for extraction - Brian Jones
- Class Eleven. Item from bees wax- Brian Jones - Round Cup
- Class Twelve. Bottle of wine/mead/beer - Joint winners Brian Jones & Chris Phillips - Rose Bowl
- Class Thirteen. Photograph - Sharon Richards - Coleman Porter Cup
- Class Fourteen. Craft item - Brian Jones - Small Rose Bowl
- Class Fifteen. No entries
- Class Sixteen. Blind tasting - Steve Cox.



The final set of pictures. Top left is a better look at Ceridwen's dragon costume. Bottom left is a general view of the dancing. The lady with the red hair was part of the team the band brought with them to help setup the equipment. The picture to the right shows our Chairman as George (of 'and the dragon' fame).

The committee, have some suggestions as to what form next years event will take. We would dearly love to have an accredited honey judge doing the honours but we don't currently have anyone available. If you know of anyone who may be able to help us out please contact the secretary after the AGM.

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Notes on the Annual General Meeting

On the sixth of January 2014 at the New Stags Head in Carmarthen we will be holding our Annual General meeting, this is your opportunity to have a say in the running of your club and raise any matters you feel need to be looked at by the committee.

Notice of the meeting should be circulated nearer the time by our secretary but one matter that must be resolved is that Bill Bradley our current treasurer has decided to call it a day so there will be the need for someone else to take this important role on. If you wish to volunteer for this job you will need to be familiar with Excel spreadsheets and also have internet access. No accounting qualifications are necessary although you may need to pass a credit check with our bankers to become a signatory on the clubs bank accounts.