

## North Bucks Beekeepers' Association

Affiliated to BBKA and Buckinghamshire BKA

Newsletter: September 2009

**August** Where did it go? September looks to be running out of control *already* so we'll crack on! The visit to **Buzz Works** in Hitchin was fabulous. Robin Dartington and his team have performed miracles. The area is divided into sections: gardens are packed with bee/insect friendly plants, including vegetables so that people can see that anything is possible on the horticultural front. There is a colourful apiary with an extracting room and storage area; a pretty chalet housing a classroom, library, bee related items, a towering observation hive and a window from which to observe the apiary. An open sided outside area provides a station for talks and demonstrations. There are picnic benches in parts of the gardens. Christine Grey provided a delicious picnic at one of these, with honey cake, of course! **Many thanks to Robin and Christine for such a splendid and informative afternoon.**



Ken Gorman has extracted honey from our apiary. He has bottled it, labelled it, tamper proofed it and best before date marked it. A big thank you for all you do on our behalf, Ken. The jars are resplendent with our very own NBBKA labels, designed especially for us by Ian Williams.

Several pieces of equipment have already been purchased thanks to the Grassroots Funding Scheme and are in service at the Cosgrove apiary.

We have moved two hives from the Bradwell Abbey apiary site. They had been knocked over and a large branch was found nearby.

NBBKA was featured in *Groundworks*, the newsletter of the **Windmill Hill Gardens and Allotment Association**. There appears to be an upsurge in the number of allotment holders who wish to keep bees. For your information **WHGAA** sells all gardening requisites at a very reasonable price and membership is a couple of pounds a year. [www.whgaa.org](http://www.whgaa.org)

Long serving members will be sad to learn that fellow member, Alison Deering of Haversham passed away in early August.

Ken retires from being the Treasurer on 31<sup>st</sup>. Andrew Eelbeck has kindly agreed to take over. Many thanks to Ken for keeping tabs on everything over the years and thanks to Andrew for stepping in.

## September

Beginners' meetings continue. Beginners will be able to assist in the application of Apiguard and with feeding sugar syrup to the bees. Contact Chris and Ed for times and days.

From Friday 4<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> there is to be a festival celebrating insects at the **Royal Festival Hall** and its environs. It sounds fun. Of the many attractions there will be a bee cab -a London taxi dressed as a bee with a working beehive housed inside; praying mantis kungfu; chrysalis making workshop; Rothamsted Research will present information on mosquitos and you can meet urban beekeepers. The **Queen Elizabeth Hall** will be converted into a huge hive. There are talks on *Termite Technology* about how termites are useful to architects and engineers; a forensic entomology team present *Insect Detectives*.

Soundman, Chris Watson, who has worked on many of David Attenborough's programmes is using insect sounds to produce a concert of insect music, entitled *Cross Pollination*. There will also be foods to sample and an insect id tent on Queen's Walk. For more information: [www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk).

The **RFH** has its very own rooftop beehives. On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> at 12 midday you can meet the Honourable Company of Hive Workers who look after the bees.

**The NBBKA Annual Honey Show** takes place at Wyevale Garden Centre on 26<sup>th</sup>. The schedule is at the end of this Newsletter. This year it is only on one day. Do endeavour to enter the classes, as Martin Buckle is the judge and he gives excellent tips on how to improve one's entries.

**Forage** Not so much around at the moment. There are still sunflowers, colchicum(Autumn crocus), hyssop and various helianthus in flower. My bees are bringing in a pale creamy-grey pollen which is possibly field thistle. Coming out now is sedum and hardy fuschia. Hopefully golden rod and Michaelmas daisies won't be far behind.



**Buzz Words** Did you know.....

- Tesco are selling a cheese with lemon rind and honey? Very tasty too.
- If you are a messy honey extracting person, put a nylon shower curtain on your floor. At the end of extracting simply put the shower curtain in the washing machine

**For Sale** A retired member of NBBKA, Colin Denley, has "an old, faded but sound" WBC outer for sale. It has the door section, two lifts and a roof. It just needs a coat of preserver to restore it. He is open to offers, so call him on 01908 676480

**Don't forget** the **Bees Abroad** adventure to see the **Honey Hunters of Nepal** from 22<sup>nd</sup> November – 6<sup>th</sup> December.

[info@beesabroad.org.uk](mailto:info@beesabroad.org.uk) or [www.beesabroad.org.uk](http://www.beesabroad.org.uk)

**Wasps** are causing problems as usual. I had read that they don't like lavender so planted a hedge of it around my apiary. Several plants died and I still had wasp problems!

There are several types of wasp trap. If you make a trap using a cut up and inverted plastic bottle you can bait it with jammy liquids. Tip from Chris Jay: use a mixture of jam, honey and vinegar. Apparently the vinegar prevents honey bees from being attracted to the mix.

In my experience the glass wasp traps baited with jammy liquids also ensnare lovely butterflies and moths, not so good.

There are two commercial traps which you may like to consider:

The Waspinator resembles a wasp nest. The theory is that wasps are territorial and will avoid an area where they see another nest.

Agrisense produce a plastic wasp catcher with a special wasp attractant. This is doing good service in my garden and we have invested in some for the NBBKA apiaries. It can be purchased from Killgerm Chemicals 01924 268400



**Queenie's Kitchen** this month has to be the **recipes** for the **Honey Show 26<sup>th</sup> September**.

Remember, it has to be your own honey in the cakes and fudge. Please make sure your entry fits the description so that quality cookery is not disqualified.

If you wish to convert units(approx):- 1oz = 26g; 7"= 175mm; 1/4 pint is half an ordinary coffee mug full or use a beer glass.

**Honey Fruit Cake:**Ingredients: 8oz self raising flour, 4oz sultanas, 4oz butter, 8oz honey, 4oz currants, 2 eggs size 3, pinch of nutmeg and salt. A little milk if required.

Method: Cream butter and honey together, beat the eggs well and add alternately with sifted flour and salt. Add fruit etc., Beat well and lightly. Bake in a well buttered 7" round tin (between 6" and 8"), 2 to 3 hours in a moderate oven.

**Plain Honey Cake:** Ingredients: 5oz butter, 6oz clear honey, 1 tab water, 4oz soft brown sugar, 2 eggs, 7oz self raising flour.

Oven temperature 180 C or 350 F Or Gas Mark 4

Method: Place butter, sugar, honey and water into a saucepan and heat until the fat has melted, stirring all the time. When fat is melted remove pan from heat and allow contents to cool to blood temperature. Gradually beat in the eggs. Add sieved flour and mix until smooth. Do not overmix. Pour mixture into a greased and lined 7" cake tin and bake for 1 hour or until risen and firm to the touch.

**Honey Fudge:**Ingredients: 1lb granulated sugar, 1/4 pint fresh milk, 2oz butter, up to 3oz honey.

Method: Put all the ingredients into a heavy-based pan.

Bring to the boil, stirring all the time. Cover and boil for 2 minutes. Uncover and boil gently for about 15 minutes until 'soft ball' stage is reached, at 115C(240F), still stirring all the time. A little dropped into cold water will form a soft ball.

Stand the pan on a cold surface for 5 minutes. Beat the mixture until it starts to thicken, then pour it quickly into a ready buttered tin. Mark out into squares as it cools and cut when cold.

Eight pieces to be shown on a plate.

**Apiary Notes from Andrew Beer** I take over these notes from Ken Gorman, to whom we all owe much gratitude, with awe – but I will do my best.

I am a small beekeeper in the sense that I have six separate apiaries, none with more than six hives, so the problems I encounter may be similar in each apiary to those with only a few hives. A high priority for me is to keep my bees “happy”. They are on the edge of various villages, including Stewkeley, so they experience neither the plant variety richness of Milton Keynes nor dependence on just one or two crops.

September is the crucial month for ensuring your bees are strong next spring so:

1. If not already done, extract and return supers to bees for cleaning and then remove for storage. Try to do all movements at dusk to cut down the risk of robbing.
2. Final brood inspection: you should be checking that your bees are healthy (if you have any doubts at all ask an experienced beekeeper), have sufficient stores (40 lbs per colony), are queenright, cover at least 5 combs and have a general feeling of well-being, demonstrated, for example, by bringing in loads of pollen.
3. Sugar feeding – I mix 1 pint of water to 1 kg of sugar, heat to dissolve. Feeding should be completed by 30<sup>th</sup> September, earlier if possible. Clean up any spills!
4. Hives must be wholly secured against robbers, wasps and other bee predators. Use the narrow entrance blocks. For weak stocks be ready to close entrances to just one bee space.
5. Varroa: It is almost 100% certain that your bees have the mites in which case you must treat with **Apiguard** in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. Treatment should have started in August; remove pads by the end of October. **Apistan** and **Bayvarol** are regarded at present as ineffective. There are various approaches to treating varroa. This is what I have done for the last five years and it seems to work for me.
6. Hives must also be secured against adverse weather to come. Damp hives result in mouldy combs and stores, and dysentery amongst the bees and are a far more serious risk than prolonged cold weather. In particular, check roofs and ensure that floors have a flow of fresh air – say 9” at least – beneath them. You can achieve this using hive stands or what I do is to purloin milk crates from the local dairyman and obtain from the Bletchley branch of Travis Perkins 2” X 3” offcuts which are then placed over the crates with the hives placed on top. If you simply put your floor on house bricks you will almost certainly have a damp floor.
7. Don’t try to get weak but healthy stocks through the winter. If you do, you increase the chance of losing them. Far better to unite to a stronger stock by the “newspaper method” after first preferably deciding which queen you wish to retain (or you can leave the bees to decide) Be careful, however, if the bees you wish to unite are already queenless with laying workers, because the procedure is more complicated, but can be done.
8. Are you in the happy position of having too many strong colonies and are thinking of uniting to reduce numbers? Why not offer the surplus to one of our members wanting bees? I leave the bargaining to you and only suggest that no money changes hands until the surplus colony is safely through the winter because buying in the autumn is clearly riskier than buying in the spring.
9. You must enter the NB Honey Show. It is a wonderful thing for beginners to get amongst the prizes at their first attempt. In any event showing raises the standard of honey which we offer to the public, which must be a good thing.
10. A final warning about robbing. Until the weather gets colder, in late November, robbing will be a constant risk. If robbing starts during an inspection close down at once and come back later. Also keep robbers and other pests away from where any honey equipment is stored. Rats and mice will soon make a mess of stored combs. Avoid any damage to combs by putting queen excluders below and above piles of boxes of combs and seal the tops of boxes with cover boards.

Your bees will now be ready for their well earned rest!

**NORTH BUCKS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**  
**HONEY SHOW SCHEDULE 2009**  
**Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2009**  
**at Wyevale Garden Centre, Woburn Sands**  
Under BBKA Honey Show Rules.

Judging starts at 11 am on Saturday. Judge: Mr Martin Buckle of Newton Blossomville.

Entries may be staged up to 10.45 am on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September. They will stay on show all day. Exhibition dismantled, exhibits removed and cups presented at 5.00 pm.

Open to all members of the Association. All honey and wax to be produce of competitor's own bees.

**There is an entry fee of 20 pence per class with the exception of novice classes (nos. 23, 24 and 25) and the Gift Honey class (no. 8).** There is no prize money. Only one award allowed per entrant in any one class.

A novice is any person who has not previously won a **first** prize in a Show under National Honey Show, BBKA or similar rules. (Note: you may still enter novice classes if you came second)

Joint owners may make multiple entries but will only be allowed one placing in any one class.

**Lady Chesham Challenge Cup** – Highest overall points total in show

**Stoke Road Apiary Shield** – Second highest overall points total in show

**Clara Furness Award** - Highest points total for wax and mead, classes 12 to 15 and 19 to 21

**Albert Toms Shield** - highest points total in the open honey classes excluding any class for which a specific award is made. This year this shield is for classes 1 to 8

**BW Apiary Cup** - winner of class 9, six jars as for sale.

**Mini cup** - winner of class 16, fruit cake

**Arthur Foreman Cup** - highest total points in novice classes

**BBKA Blue Ribbon / certificate of merit** - best exhibit in the show

## **MEMBERS' CLASSES**

### **Honey**

- 1 Two matching 1lb jars of light honey
- 2 Two matching 1lb jars of medium honey
- 3 Two matching 1lb jars of dark honey
- 4 Two matching 1lb jars of crystallised honey of any type (incorporates naturally crystallised, soft set and creamed honey)
- 5 Two matching jars of honey not as in classes 1 to 4. (eg. chunk, ling, jar variations, etc.)
- 6 One piece cut comb, gross weight 200-255g (7-9oz), in container with transparent lid
- 7 One standard comb of honey showing the work of the bees. In bee-proof show case (note: combs may have crystallised honey in them without penalty)
- 8 Gift, One 1lb jar of honey of any type. (Donated after the show to Willen Hospice)
- 9 Six matching 1lb jars of honey presented labelled as for legal sale under current rules
- 10 One section of honey, round or square
- 11 One 1lb jar of honey, the jar painted black

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**Wax**

- 12 One cake of beeswax, 200g to 255g (7 to 9 oz approx)
- 13 NOT USED THIS YEAR
- 14 Six matching cakes of beeswax. (total weight within 160 to 180g)
- 15 Three matching beeswax candles made by any method, displayed erect, ready to burn

**Cake**

- 16 One honey fruit cake, as per recipe provided
  - 17 One plain honey cake, as per recipe provided
- Cakes on paper plates, in bags, both provided by the show secretary on the day*

**Fudge**

- 18 Honey fudge as per recipe provided, eight square pieces on a plate

**Mead**

- 19 One bottle dry mead
  - 20 One bottle sweet mead
  - 21 One bottle Honey Wine, label stating main ingredients apart from honey
- Classes 19-21 in clear punted bottles with white plastic/cork stoppers*

**Crafts**

- 22 One item made or produced by the exhibitor, relevant to beekeeping either by its uses or subject, or by being made using beehive produce. Could include, for example, cookery or preserves, skeps, inventions, paintings, cosmetics, needlework, woodwork, photography, or even a sales display. Excludes items covered by classes 1-21.  
*Please let us know in advance if your craft entry needs a lot of space, hanging up, or a special display*

**NOVICE CLASSES (see definition above)**

- 23 Two 1lb jars of clear honey, of any colour but matching
- 24 Two 1lb jars of crystallised honey, of any type but matching
- 25 One cake of beeswax, between 110g and 170g (4 to 6 oz.)

A simple list of the numbers of classes you wish to enter should be posted (using the entry form below), 'phoned or emailed to the **Show Secretary:**

**Nicola Smith, 2 Manor Cottages, Lillingstone Lovell, Buckingham, MK18 5BG**  
Phone: 01280 860102 Email: [nsmith@waitrose.com](mailto:nsmith@waitrose.com)

Last-minute entries accepted on the day if time allows, but don't be too late.

**MAKE THIS YET ANOTHER GOOD SHOW ! HAVE FUN - ENTER ALL YOU CAN !**

**Please volunteer to help with stewarding, answering questions and selling produce. Any show competitor may place honey with the sales table for sale during the show. 10% to NBBKA funds.**

*Please cut along this line*

**ENTRY FORM**

NAME.....  
ADDRESS.....  
.....  
.....

Please return entry form to:  
Nicola Smith, 2 Manor Cottages  
Lillingstone Lovell  
Buckingham, MK18 5BG

**Classes to be entered (please circle numbers)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
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