



West Suffolk Beekeepers' Association

NEWSLETTER September 2019

WSBKA Officers and Committee for 2019/20

President	Philip Draycott	01440 820328	p.draycott@btinternet.com
Chairman	Kevin Thorn	07557 418418	kevinthorn@me.com
Secretary	Carol Williamson	01449 736362	wsbka@yahoo.co.uk
Treasurer	Mark Moore	07969548163	marklamore@googlemail.com
Membership Sec.	Tim Slaven	07795 211693	tim.slaven@btinternet.com
Newsletter Editor	Roger Merry	07890 169437	rogermerry6@gmail.com
Committee	Gordon Chapman-Hatchett, Jane Corcoran, Mike Graystone		
Apiary Manager	01359 269652 mg4mike@btinternet.com , Sylvia Pettitt, Mike Shave, Alan Wren, Zac Blackmore		

The opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Editor, nor of the Association

Notes from the Editor

Hello, and welcome to the September edition of the WSBKA Newsletter. I hope that you enjoy it. If you have any suggestions about what might be added to improve it, or have contributions to offer for the next edition, please let me know at least two weeks before the end of November. Some words of advice from both experienced beekeepers and stories by new beekeepers would be welcome. I have already mentioned to Committee members that I would like to have a series of pen portraits and stories from them and will be asking someone to do one for the December issue. Philip Draycott has started the ball rolling in his article below.

What a strange season. It went from cold, wet and windy in May/June to insufferably hot at times In July and back again to wet at the end of July. Stores in the hive had been very low, we then had the first major flow later that month and we are now on the second harvest and getting down to autumn treatment and feeding. However, some beekeepers report that their brood boxes are stuffed full of honey and don't need feeding at the moment, for fear of leaving no space for rearing of winter bees.

In August, there was a field of insect pollinator plants close to my apiary and it turned out to be predominantly borage. It was interesting to hear the continual loud hum of honeybees, solitary bees and bumblebees and see them flitting through the beautiful jungle of flowers (Plate 1).



Plate 1. Honeybee hovering above Borage

Sedums were also very attractive to honey bees and bumblebees at this time of year (Plates 2 and 3).





Plates 2 & 3 A honeybee and bumblebees on sedums

I hope that you all had a good honey harvest and that your colonies still have a laying queen and go through the winter.

Chairman's Report

I hope everyone has had a great season and is getting prepared for the winter. I am a little behind this year and am still taking honey off. Hopefully I will be finished in the next week or so.

It's time for annual treatments. This year I'm using Thymovar, a Thymol based treatment on my smaller colonies and MAQS on my full colonies. It is important to treat at this time of year as the winter bees are starting to emerge. Any that are parasitised by mites will have their lives shortened and this can lead to the colony failing before the next season's bees are born, usually in March.

It is also time to consider feeding and it is usual to feed 2 parts sugar to 1 part water in the Autumn. I'm currently feeding my nuclei as the summer flow is over, but for my full colonies I will leave the bees to bring in Ivy honey. This has worked for me for the last two years and has saved both time and money. Lots of beekeepers say that their bees cannot overwinter on Ivy but I have found they do well on it. It is usually all gone by the end of May.

The June gap was longer this year than any year since I started beekeeping and I had a few colonies that needed feeding urgently. I poured syrup into empty drawn comb and they mostly recovered quickly.

We had another fantastic Bee Safari on Saturday 13 July and I'm very grateful to Zac, Meg, Giles and Tony for hosting us, letting us see their bees and providing refreshments. It was also a great opportunity for members to catch up on the season's developments.

There have been a lot of wasps around again this year and whilst in the past I went to extraordinary methods to control them, I now let the bees defend themselves. I'm finding that even the smallest of colonies can defend itself and now believe that if a hive is being bothered by wasps, other issues are responsible ie. a poor queen, disease or something else. I have only lost a few mating hives and nuclei where the queen didn't mate.

There also seems to have been less disease around this year, backed up by the observations of other bee farmers. I've heard of very few cases of Chronic Bee Paralysis Syndrome and seen much less Sac Brood than normal.

I have been extremely busy this year with my queen rearing and it is the first time that I have sold queens.



I have been doing talks around the region mainly, about the Abberton Native Bee Project which I am involved with on my day off! One of the BKA's I presented to asked me to run an apiary-based training day for them, which I did in July. As I usually have queens at all stages in my home apiary, we were able to cover setting up starter colonies, assessing bees to select breeding queens, grafting, and setting up mating nuclei.

Plate 4. Teaching Queen Rearing

This is something that I plan to do more of next season.

My experience of queen mating this year has been very good with a few exceptions when we had patches of the usual poor British summer weather!

I hope to see many of you at our Honey Show at Pakenham Water Mill on Sunday 8 September (judging on Saturday 7 September) and hope to see the fruits of your and your bees' labour. It was really pleasing to see many new winners last year and I hope to see more this year.

WSBKA News

A last reminder from Sylvia Pettitt about the Honey Show

This is a last reminder to you all to enter the WSBKA Honey Show at Pakenham Water Mill on Saturday 8th September

You can bring your entries (see the schedule at the end of this Newsletter if you need one) along to the Mill on Friday afternoon at 14.30 - 17.00
OR on Saturday morning before 11.00.

Beginners - Do give the novice class a go and make a honey cake, or bring a photograph of beekeeping interest

The Pakenham Mill Festival on Sunday 8th is also a lovely day out, something for everyone and good food available from 11.00 until 16.00.

Our Facebook Page

The WSBKA is now on Facebook, thanks to James Dolby-Glover. Please have a look and make yourself known.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6378274/>

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00218839.2019.1572096>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6378274/>

Offered Articles

The following article was written by our President, **Philip Draycott**, one of the few of us that has the knowledge, with the help of early journals, to write this article. It is very appropriate that he writes this as he is standing down to make way for a new President at the end of the season. He has served the Society so well and for so long with his experience and wealth of beekeeping knowledge.

A Bit of History - Formation of the WSBKA

Many took up beekeeping during the Second World War, attracted by the honey, a source of sweetness during food rationing. Another reason for taking up the hobby was a government allocation of granulated sugar for feeding to bees. The amount was significant at 15 rising to 20 pounds per hive. No doubt some of it found its way into cakes, jams and other foods! Whatever its fate, beekeeping had a new lease of life during the 1940s and early 1950s when food was very short.

With the ending of the war and a somewhat more settled life for beekeepers, a like-minded gathering of 150 people met at The Angel Hotel, Bury St Edmunds one Saturday afternoon, 30 November 1946. It was reported there were some 2,400 beekeepers in Suffolk with over 12,000 colonies. East Suffolk already had a beekeepers' association so it did not take long to unanimously decide that the West Suffolk Beekeepers' Association should be formed with immediate effect.

A president, chairman, secretary, assistant secretary and treasurer were appointed plus a committee of eight. The membership fee was set at five shillings per annum (25 pence). After a couple of committee meetings, the Association began to function early in 1947, very much as now, with a series of talks at monthly intervals in winter and summer apiary meetings, but at members' homes.

Perhaps in 2021 we should mark our 75th Anniversary in some special way? Any ideas would be welcome?

Why I switched from Commercial to Standard National Hives

Commercial hives are around 40% bigger than standard national hives with around 70,000 cells in the brood box, whereas National hives accommodate around 50,000. Whilst many beekeepers are switching to bigger hives to give more space to their bees, I have gone in the opposite direction.

Apart from my natural inclination not to follow the herd there are many reasons for this, the main one being the flexibility it gives me in managing my hives.

I use a single chamber brood box, as double brood or brood and a half are twice the work and with over 100 colonies to manage that would not work for me. I do however have an additional brood box above a queen excluder, as a first honey super. The reasons for doing this are several fold:

Firstly, it gives me beautiful drawn comb and my extractor can handle brood frames so I can extract the honey easily.



This comb is very valuable and when given to colonies or nuclei they can expand more rapidly and don't 'chew it up' or draw it irregularly as they can do in the brood box. It can also be used for comb change and can be stored without wax moth damage, as it has not had brood in it.

Secondly, it gives me somewhere that I can put brood frames in strong colonies. I often do this on strong hives and make up nuclei later.

Plate 5. A frame of drawn comb

This can be done without finding the queen, simply shake off the bees and place the frame above the excluder (if I see the queen I avoid shaking her). When I return a week later the brood is covered in bees and all brood is now sealed (except for some 5/6 day old larvae) and I can remove it quickly without finding the queen. This means that when I make up the nucleus it is already queen-less, making it more likely to accept the queen that I will offer. Nine of these frames give me an instant starter colony from which to raise queens. Thirdly, I have equipment on site should I want to use a Demaree for swarm control, or to raise a few queens. It just needs two supers in between, which my colonies usually have.

Having National hives also future proofs my beekeeping. The boxes are lighter and have better handle holds than any other type. My apiary sites have good vehicular access so I do not need to move honey supers far.

Honey production is important to me and in our annual survey we found that hive type had no bearing on honey crop – this has been my experience too. It takes a frame of stores to make a frame of brood. A smaller box means that the bees may form a smaller colony, but they also use less resource in multiplying bees and instead store honey. It may be that bigger colonies perform better in good years with excellent weather, but in our changeable climate there are likely to be fewer of these.

This system works for me and makes my beekeeping easier. It won't work for everyone and depends on what you want from your beekeeping and the equipment available e.g. an extractor that can handle brood frames.

Kevin Thorn

Other items of interest

Apimondia 2020

Jane Corcoran is going to Apimondia in Montreal next year and thought perhaps other members may be interested.



Listen to this

Carol was listening to Radio 4's On Your Farm, about taking bees on to the heather in Eastern Scotland, the UK's biggest bee farmer - 4000 hives. She said that it's worth a listen - [BBC Radio 4 - On Your Farm, Follow the Bees](#) .

BBC Radio 4 - On Your Farm, Follow the Bees

Join Scotland's bee convoy as hundreds of hives are moved to Royal Deeside.

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m00083d7

Honey Show 2019

For those who are considering entry the Schedule of the WSBKA Honey Show is below

Schedule of the West Suffolk BKA Honey Show 2019

*To be held at
Pakenham Water Mill, Pakenham
Nr Bury St Edmunds, IP31 2NB*

*On
Saturday 7th September 2019
Honey Judge: Fiona Dickson
Confectionary Judge: Andrew Pettigrew
Show Secretary: Sylvia Pettitt
Jonsyl, Ousden
Suffolk, CB8 8TW
Tel: 01638 500378 // 07798941533
sylvia Pettitt@live.co.uk*

TROPHIES

The “Buckland” Memorial Challenge Bowl will be awarded for one year to the Suffolk BKA member gaining most points in Classes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 at the Suffolk County Show and the equivalent classes at the Stowmarket and West Suffolk Shows. The winner and runner-up receive a Plated Spoon. The points awarded for the trophy will be according to rule 9.

The “Aubin” Challenge Cup for the exhibitor gaining the most points in Classes 1-9, 13-15, 20-22.

The “Small Beekeeper” Challenge Cup presented by Mr. H. C. Aubin for the exhibitor owning not more than 5 colonies, who gains most points in Classes 1-9, 13-15, 20-22.

The “Cayley” Challenge Cup presented by Mrs N. M. Cayley in memory of her late husband, Cmdr. W.A.S. Cayley, for the exhibitor gaining most points in the liquid honey classes 1, 2, 3, 14 and 21.

A Cake Basket presented by the late Mr. and Mrs F. Padmore for the exhibitor gaining most points in Classes 16, 17 and 30.

The “Padmore” Trophy presented by the WSBKA in memory of the late Francis Padmore, for the best wax in show.

The NHS Blue Ribbon may be awarded for the best exhibit in the show subject to there being over 100 entries. (This confers free entry to the National Honey Show)

For West Suffolk Members Only

The “Ernest Josling” Salver presented in memory of the Colonel by members of the WSBKA, for the exhibitor gaining the most points in the Honeycomb Classes 6, 7, 8 and 9.

The “Joyce White” Mazer presented by members of the WSBKA, in acknowledgement of Joyce’s immense contribution to local beekeeping, for the exhibitor gaining the most points in Mead Classes 18 and 19.

The “Caswell” Candlestick presented in memory of Mr Harry Caswell, for the best exhibit in the Novice Class.

RULES

Entries should be made on the official entry form and reach the SHOW SECRETARY before 25th August 2019 if you wish to receive labels by post before the show. General rules of the National Honey Show will apply unless amended, as below.

1. Honey and Wax must be the bona fide property of the exhibitor and made by their own bees.

2. *All honey jars must be of the standard 1lb squat pattern with standard unpainted metal caps with exception of classes 14, 15, 20, 23 and 24.*
3. *Anti tamper labels are not a requirement in the ready for sale classes.*
4. *Shallow frames of comb honey must be staged in 'Bee Proof' glazed cases. Cut comb and sections exhibited in standard containers. Honey should not have crystallised.*
5. *Mead must be shown in plain, clear glass bottles of round section (70cl. Approx.) without marks, fluting or decoration. Plain flanged uncoloured corks or stoppers should be used.*
6. *Photographs must have been taken by the exhibitor.*
7. *Exhibits must be staged by 11:00am on Saturday 7th September. Exhibits can be removed from 4.00pm Sunday 8th September. (Except by prior arrangement.)*
8. *The Challenge Cups will be awarded as previously stated. Cups to be held for one year only and to be returned before the next show. In the event of a tie, the Cup will be held for an equal period by the winners.*
9. *Points for the Cups will be awarded as follows: FIRST - 4 points, SECOND - 3 points, THIRD - 2 points, VERY HIGHLY COMMENDED - 1 point. Exhibitors may make more than one entry per class but will only be eligible for one prize. A second award in any class will be eligible for 1 point as for VHC.*
10. *The Judge is empowered to withhold any award if the exhibits are not of sufficient merit.*
11. *The Judge's decision is final on all matters.*
12. *The Committee will not be responsible for any loss or damage to any exhibits or article on display or otherwise.*
13. *A Novice is an entrant who has never won a FIRST prize in any class at a honey show.*

RECIPES

Class 16 Honey Drizzle Cake

4oz Butter/Margarine	1 Tbsp Soft Brown Sugar
3 heaped Tbsp Honey	6oz S R Flour(sieved)
Pinch of salt	2 Large Eggs
Runny Honey to drizzle	
8" sponge or cake tin	

Baking parchment or cake tin liner Heat oven to 180 C

Method: Cream together butter, brown sugar & honey. Add eggs one at a time with a little of the flour & mix well. Add remaining flour and mix or pulse if using mixer. Line tin and pour in cake mix. Place tin in centre of oven and reduce heat to 160 C and cook for approx. 40-50 mins or firm to touch. Drizzle runny honey over cake immediately after removing from oven and smooth it over the cake with back of a dessert spoon

Class 17 Honey Crunch Biscuits – 6 biscuits required

50g/2oz. Butter

50g/2oz. Plain Flour

50g/2oz. Granulated sugar

75g/3oz. Rolled oats


1 Tablespoon honey

¼ Teaspoon Bicarbonate of Soda

Method: Melt butter and honey together, take off heat and add bicarbonate of soda. In a bowl put flour, oats and sugar. Mix in the liquid mixture and allow to cool slightly. Put knobs of mixture on a baking tray and flatten slightly. Bake at 170-180°C / 325-350°F / Gas Mark 4 for approximately 20 minutes or until firm and golden. There is enough mixture to make 8 biscuits. Select best 6 for showing.

SCHEDULE

- Class 1 Two 454g (1lb) jars of LIGHT honey.*
- Class 2 Two 454g (1lb) jars of MEDIUM honey.*
- Class 3 Two 454g (1lb) jars of DARK honey.*
- Class 4 Two 454g (1lb) jars of NATURALLY CRYSTALLISED honey.*
- Class 5 Two 454g (1lb) jars of SOFT SET honey.*
- Class 6 Two 454g (1lb) jars of CHUNK honey.*
- Class 7 One SECTION.*
- Class 8 Two container's of CUT COMB.*
- Class 9 One SHALLOW FRAME of honey suitable for extraction.*
- Class 10 One CAKE of BEESWAX 227g (8oz) approx.*
- Class 11 One CAKE of BEESWAX 454g (1lb) approx.*
- Class 12 Three 27g (1oz) BEESWAX blocks.*
- Class 13 Three 454g (1lb) jars of DIFFERENT honey.*
- Class 14 Six jars of matching LIQUID honey, labelled ready for sale. Jars must be uniform in size and shape.*

- Class 15 Six jars of matching SET or CREAMED honey, labelled ready for sale. Jars must be uniform in size and shape.*
- Class 16 HONEY CAKE made to given recipe.*
- Class 17 HONEY BISCUITS six of, made to given recipe.*
- Class 18 One bottle of DRY mead.*
- Class 19 One bottle of SWEET mead.*
- Class 20 TASTE ONLY. One jar of any honey, liquid or set; any colour; any quantity but not less than 225g.*
- To be judged on flavour only.*
- Note: This class may be split into liquid & granulated at the discretion of the Judge.*
- Class 21 GIFT CLASS 454g (1lb) jar of liquid honey any colour. LABEL TO BE SUPPLIED*
- Class 22 GIFT CLASS 454g (1lb) jar of soft set or granulated honey. LABEL TO BE SUPPLIED*
- Class 23 NOVICE CLASS Two matching jars of liquid honey. Jars must be uniform in size and shape.*
- Class 24 NOVICE CLASS Two matching jars of soft set or naturally crystallised honey. Jars must be uniform in size and shape.*
- Class 25 Any item of which honey is an ingredient, recipe to be shown.*
- Class 26 Any item of which beeswax is an ingredient, except candles.*
- Class 27 Two matching BEESWAX CANDLES, made by any method and any size. Will not be lit.*
- Class 28 CHILDREN'S CLASS. Drawing depicting Beekeeping, size not more than 30cm x 21cm. Ages to be given. May be split into age groups.*
- Class 29 Photograph/s of Beekeeping interest.*
- Class 30 HONEY CAKE, plain or fancy, honey as the main sweetener. Recipe to be given by entrant.*
- Class 31 Things of interest that relate to beekeeping or honey that have been made by beekeeper*
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Send to Sylvia Pettitt, Jonsyl, Ousden, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 8TW or
email: sylviapettitt@live.co.uk

[illegible]

Please Turn Over

I have read and agree to abide by the regulations in the Schedule

Name (Caps)_____ Address_____

Signature_____

Date_____