



# Montgomeryshire Beekeepers Association

## The BeeHolder

Summer 2019



### Teaching the waggle dance

Conscientious bee keepers give their bees waggle dance lessons to ensure an abundant honey harvest

# Editorial

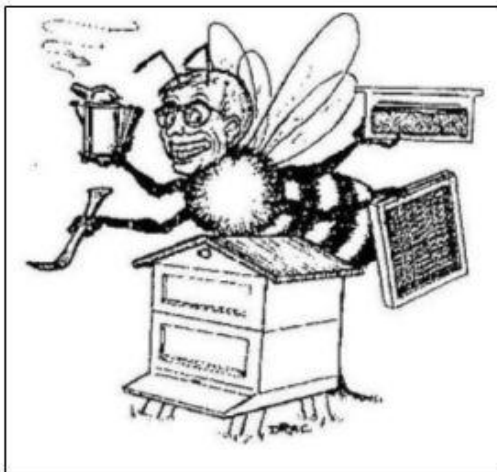
The mix of lovely summery weather, mistimed April showers and the occasional freak monsoon conspire to make this years beekeeping as confusing as ever. But some members have reported taking off honey already, so that is an improvement on recent times.

Many thanks to MBKA Secretary for the photos front and back on this issue. She was called in to teach some basic waggle dance moves to an oversized (but friendly) bee at Tatton Park flower show. I imagine that if it managed to find suitably large flowers, a bee that size will have already produced in excess of two tons of honey this season (or tonnes if it is a metric bee).

Another highlight this issue - again thanks for your article, Jill - is the story about several members coming together to help rescue Noel's bees. See page 10 for the full story.

The plan for BeeHolder production for the next twelve months is published on page 4 together with the dates I need to have copy by. Hopefully this will act as a guide for you readers and as a stimulus for me to publish regularly.

As always, I have an open request for any stories, pictures or contributions of any kind which you would like to share with the members at large. If anybody wants to try their hand at a cartoon, poem or small paper sculpture(?) that would be welcome too. Just get in touch with me and we can make it happen (details page 15).



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## MBKA BeeHolder Publishing schedule 2019/20

Issue	Issue Date	Copy Deadline
Summer 2019	1 August 2019	18 July
Autumn 2019	7 October 2019	23 September
Winter 2019	6 January 2020	21 December
Spring 2020	6 April 2020	23 March
Summer 2020	6 July 2020	22 June
Autumn 2020	5 October 2020	21 September
Winter 2020	4 January 2021	21 December

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# Recent Events

## 8<sup>th</sup> June - Bee Health & Comb Workshop

Experts from the National Bee Unit gave helpful and interesting advice on bee health. The examples of diseased comb clearly illustrate the signs to look for when going through your hive and made it a most useful experience.

## 21<sup>st</sup> July - Open Hives and hornet trap workshop

A good crowd of us descended on Bont Dolgadfan on Sunday 21st July for an open hive event hosted by our social media officer Liz. Liz is a new bee-keeper so her apiary was immaculate as is her record-keeping. (This made some of us realise we had become a little lax!)

As she just has one colony at the moment, a few people inspected the hive, led by Rachel, our training officer, while the rest of us made an Asian Hornet Monitoring Trap. These are



Would be hornet trappers



Let there bee cake

better than traps which kill insects, as once identified, the hornet can be released by a team of bee-inspectors and enable them to find the nest. So rather than killing one or two insects, the whole nest can be destroyed.

Pete our MBKA chair supervised us as, Blue Peter style, we grappled with bits of wire, plastic bottles etc while having a good laugh too!

And then to tea and cakes- always the highlight of an open hive event! Andy made an amazing bee-hive cake (see picture) which was much admired before being quickly scoffed by us all.

Thanks to Liz for her hospitality and also to everyone who came and made it such a fun afternoon. There are more photographs on the web site.

## **Forthcoming Events**

We have a mix of shows and events this summer, followed by the evening meetings with guest speakers in the autumn. If you are going to any of the shows mentioned and can spare half an hour or more to help on the MBKA stand, do get in touch with Ann (see page 15). It is refreshing to talk to the public about bees and realise that most are interested in and sympathetic to beekeeping.

Because apiary training days are subject to the weather they are difficult to schedule far in advance. A day each in August and in September are planned, dealing with matters appropriate to the time of year. Latest info will be on the website/facebook or, if you don't do either of those things, check with Roger (see page 15).

If you are interested in hosting an Open Hives event, do talk to someone on committee as it is a good opportunity for people to come and see your bees and hopefully give you some helpful tips appropriate to your apiary.

### **9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> August - Shrewsbury flower show**

There is a big honey section at this show, and we have been invited to submit entries for judging.

Quarry Park, Shrewsbury

### **10<sup>th</sup> August - Llangurig Show**

MBKA will be having a stand at Llangurig this year. This is a fun show to visit, so if you're attending do drop by our stand.

Show Ground, Llangurig

### **17<sup>th</sup> August - Montgomery Show**

Montgomery Carnival starts from the show ground at 12 noon, followed by the show itself from 1pm till 5pm. MBKA will be there stimulating public interest in bees.

### **24<sup>th</sup> August - Berriew Show**

This is the Summer bank holiday Saturday. Berriew show is a popular agricultural, horticultural and craft show, and well worth a visit.

Upper Rectory Field, Berriew

### **7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> September - Newtown Food Festival**

MBKA's third year at Newtown Food Festival, which is getting bigger, better and busier each year. Do come along and support us!

## **21<sup>st</sup> September - Bishops Castle Michaelmas Fair**

In spite of our poor location last year we're back again. Hopefully we'll be nearer the heart of the action. The Bishops Castle Michaelmas Fair is spread through the whole town and a big event by local standards. As well as street food, dance, sideshows, theatre and Panic Circus, they have several parades including steam engines of various types.

## **25<sup>th</sup> September - Meeting, speaker TBC**

The room is booked but the meeting isn't definite yet.

Plas Dolerw, Newtown

## **23<sup>rd</sup> October - Paul and Pauline Aslin**

How they set up their bee product business. They will be bringing some of their products so an opportunity to do some early Xmas shopping.

Plas Dolerw, Newtown

## **27<sup>th</sup> November - Lynfa**

Lynfa will give us a talk entitled "Honey bee communication".

Plas Dolerw, Newtown

## **22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 - MBKA Honey Show**

The plan is to have classes for honey, mead, wax etc, but we are open to suggestions. An opportunity to share the fruits of your labour (or your bees' labour!)

Plas Dolerw, Newtown

## **16<sup>th</sup> February 2020 - AGM and annual meal**

The Royal Oak has the Powis Suite at the rear of the hotel which is used for wedding receptions and can hold up to 120 people. Part of this room is a large alcove for the Annual General Meeting which will hold about 50 people theatre style. The AGM will be from eleven am until noon, then we will move into the main part of the room for lunch, starting at half past twelve (this gives people time to buy a drink, go to the loo etc). There is some parking in the hotel but also a big public car park very close by. Guests and partners who don't want to sit in on the AGM can sit in the bar or sitting room and buy themselves a drink or coffee.

The Royal Oak, Welshpool

## **25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 - Lynfa**

Lynfa will give us a talk entitled “Spring Management”. This has nothing to do with car suspension or clock winding, but everything to do with getting your bees off to the best possible start next season.

### **Anatomy of the British National Hive**

Most bee keepers start with the British national hive. It is worth going back to basics and taking a closer look at the various components of a hive. All hives consist of the same working parts. Basically the hive is not one box but several all stacked up to form a flexible tower structure. It is made up of:

- Floor
- Brood box
- Queen Excluder
- Super
- Inner Cover/Crown Board
- Roof

The floor is usually put on a stand to give easier access to the hive and also helps reduce dampness. It allows for ventilation up through the mesh floor. This floor board also provides the hive entrance. Above this sits the main brood body which is set aside for the queen to lay in and is the heart of the hive.

As the colony expands through the season, the queen and workers need more space, so we add half depth boxes known as supers. This is where the main honey crop will be stored. They are smaller because honey is heavy and these make it easier to lift (two supers can be used together to make an equivalent brood body and hold brood frames if required). We don't want larvae in our honey frames, so we restrict the queen to the brood box by placing a queen excluder between that chamber and the supers. This is a horizontal frame with spaces big enough for the workers to get through, but not the much queen. On top of the upper most super we place a crown board to act as an inner roof, and it usually has holes in it on which we can place a feeder when needed. It also doubles up as what is called a “clearer board” by inserting Porter bee escapes in the holes. These allow bees to leave the supers but stop them from returning. On top goes the roof. What holds this tower together? Gravity... and the sticky stuff bees collect from plants called propolis.

Reproduced courtesy of Derbyshire BKA via eBees

# Montybees to the rescue!

Some of us had an interesting experience at the end of July!

Roger, our apiary manager, had received a plea for help from Noel, who was a past member of Montgomeryshire BKA. Noel had been given just 3 weeks' notice to move his bees from a field he had been renting for 15 years. He had 17 hives, including a top bar hive, and an awful lot of equipment. Noel has had health problems for a while, not helped by falling and cracking some ribs, so wasn't in a good state to lift heavy hives. He had been offered a new location for his bees, situated about 6 miles from their current home in <deleted>, to an existing apiary which he manages.



I sent out a “Help!” email message to all our members and got about 16 volunteers offering their services. Most of them were brand new beekeepers and had only had their own bees for a few weeks. Little did they know what they were letting themselves in for!

We arranged to do the deed on the weekend of 27th and 28th July, as Noel and his bees had to be off the site by 4th August. We divided up the task into preparing the hives on the Friday evening (removing heavy honey supers, strapping the hives securely, and inserting sponges into

the hive entrances), and moving the hives early on Saturday morning.

Friday evening found us flapping about in a swarm of angry bees! We managed to get the hives ready for transporting but it was quite a disconcerting experience for our new beekeepers (and not so new!) to be amongst so many bees. Noel went back to the site when it was getting dark, to block the entrances.

Another group of volunteers arrived at 8am the next morning and loaded hives and equipment on to Noel's trailer. Several trips later, 12 hives had been moved. Noel removed the entrance blocks temporarily from the hives that had not been moved, returning late that evening to block them up again ready for the next morning.



Another group gave up their Sunday lie-in and were ready for action at 8am at Noel's (now very sad and depleted-looking) apiary. We managed to transport the last few hives and the rest of the equipment to the new site by 11.30am. Noel's hives join another 9 hives already on the site, which he looks after: 26 hives! We calculated, assuming about 50 - 60,000 bees per hive, that between us, we'd transported about a million bees over the weekend!

Noel was overwhelmed by the generosity of everyone who gave up some time to help, especially as most of the helpers were novices. Thank you!

## And a message from Noel

I want to express my sincere thanks to Jill for arranging things so well, and my gratitude to the members of Monty bees, who so generously gave up their time to help me move my apiary lock, stock and barrel from its previous home in <deleted> to its new home at Roy's former apiary. Thanks also to Pauline for allowing me to move them there. I'm so impressed with the way the club and its members pulled together to help a fellow beekeeper in a pickle and I want to be a part of such a grand bunch of folks. So I've renewed my membership and I look forward to meeting you all again at future club events.

Yours sincerely, Noel

## Swarm Season

MBKA offer Montgomeryshire a swarm collection service, and this is a day on the life of a swarm collector. The swarm liaison on duty was Rachel, who had been called to a beautifully sunny spot in Montgomery. A small 'caste' swarm had settled in the back garden of Catherine & Phillip (who have kindly sent these pictures). Rachel swiftly did some pruning and deftly got the Virgin Queen straight into the nuc box - all left in situ, giving the bees time to climb aboard until being collected later in the evening. Thank you to Catherine & Phillip for taking the time to call us - much appreciated.



If you are interested in being part of our team of swarm collectors for next season, do contact somebody on committee during the off season.

# Asian Hornet Update

Jersey, sadly, has become a strong hold for the Asian Hornet. The majority of sightings are reported by the general public, rather than beekeepers. This photo shows the Queen (centre) and workers. Notice the very clear SINGLE YELLOW BAND at the bottom of the torso. The European Hornet has multiple yellow bands.



So far this year in Jersey there have been found sixty-one queens, including eleven nests. This is compared to all of 2018 when just nine queens (including six nests) were spotted. Credit for these figures to Jersey beekeeper John de <leted>.



Hornets' nest

This photo shows an Asian hornet nest - quite a small one - discovered this year in Jersey. On the nearby island of Guernsey hornets were first sighted in 2017, and the first nest discovered this year. They are raising awareness with Wild West style posters.

The strategy adopted on Guernsey aims to keep the population of Asian

hornets as low as possible. The first step is a comprehensive island wide programme to trap queen Asian hornets as they emerge from hibernation in the spring - so called the "Spring Queening" project. Trapping these queens before they have the opportunity to raise their young and build huge nests will be the main priority. A large nest can hold 5,000 hornets which will cause significant harm to our native insect populations, and could pose a public health risk if the nest were to be accidentally disturbed. Householders and landowners will be asked to volunteer to put up and monitor a trap on their land. The same systematic method of trapping will be rolled out across Alderney, Herm and Sark.



## Bees invade pitch

On 28 June 2019 the Cricket World Cup game between Sri Lanka and South Africa at the Chester-le-Street ground in County Durham was stopped by bees for several minutes.



Cricket players, slightly more inert than usual, during their encounter with a swarm of bees.

In the 48th over of the game, a swarm of bees invaded the pitch, causing several players and the umpires to dive to the ground in a sort of controlled panic. Video of the encounter is available on YouTube, the BBC web site and various other places on the internet.

South Africa went on to win the match by nine wickets, an over and two jars of set honey\*.

It was certainly a rare occasion to see bees in a cricket stadium, but this was not the first time. In 2008, a match between India and Australia was halted for over an hour after a swarm bees came onto the field. Similar scenes occurred during a Test match between India and England in Delhi.

\* I am not very sure of the rules of cricket, but I think this is about right.



## Recipe Corner - Honey & Turmeric

According to 'Benefits Of Honey', this combination is “an invaluable natural remedy for a myriad of ailments and diseases including indigestion, cold, flu, asthma, hypertension, high blood pressure, high blood sugar, arthritis, diabetes, heart diseases, depression and anxiety, inflammation of wounds and burns, eczema, psoriasis and acne, and ageing (protects the liver and kidneys)”. So, here's how to prepare it!



1. Steep half a teaspoon to one teaspoon of turmeric in a mug of hot boiled water for about 15 minutes.
2. Mix one to two teaspoons of honey into the turmeric drink after it has cooled down to some extent.
3. Enjoy this virus-fighting and anti-inflammatory beverage!

### Caution/warning

1. Do not take turmeric if you suffer from gallbladder disease as it can cause muscle contractions of the gallbladder.
2. Turmeric is a blood thinning agent. Avoid it if you are taking any blood-thinning medications such as warfarin or aspirin.
3. Avoid turmeric if you are pregnant or trying to conceive as it can cause uterine contractions.

## Apiary Update

All the nucs asked for by new beekeepers have been supplied from the apiary and other (local) beekeepers. Some of the new members have needed follow-up support.

The apiary has 10 colonies, all queened and looking good for winter. The amount of honey that may be harvested is unknown as June's awful weather will have affected production. In fact, some colonies needed feeding.

It has been suggested that the annual kit cleaning at the apiary could be made into one of the apiary training events. Roger is happy to hold a "closing down hives" session which could also be a social event.

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## BBwear offer

BBwear still offers our members 20% off all garments in their clothing range and 50% off BB10 and BB11 Gloves and Spats. Free gloves are NOT included with the full suits when purchased with association discount.

To see the range of products, their web site is <http://www.bbwear.co.uk/>.



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... more from the waggle dance floor

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