

Gwent Beekeepers Association Newsletter

Founded 1918

Charity No. 1014600

www.gbka.co.uk

September 2011

Forthcoming Events

- Thursday 8th September
7.30 Goytre Village Hall
AN INSPECTORATE VIEW OF THE SEASON - Frank Gellatly
our Regional Bee Inspector
- Fri - Sun 9th - 11th Sept
Royal Agricultural College
Cirencester
MIDLAND & SOUTH WESTERN COUNTIES CONVENTION
This is the 83rd gathering of 'regional' beekeepers. Speakers, Honey Show, Training, etc.. Details at www.mswcc.org.uk or 01608 674429
- Saturday 10th September
USK SHOW. We'll have a stand as usual - pop in and say hello!
- Sunday 11th September
2.15 pm Cefn Tilla
APIARY MEETING Cefn Tilla (as 14th August) **Directions:** From Usk head for the A449 and take the road towards Llangwm. Turn left for Cefn Tilla, cross over the A449, and when the lane bends sharp right continue straight on into Cefn Tilla. When you reach the mansion keep right past some outhouses, then between high hedges to the parking area. All are welcome at the Apiary days. Kit will be supplied if you don't have your own.
- Monday 10th October
7 for 7.30 pm
The Hardwick
ANNUAL DINNER - Set 3-course menu for £22. Partners welcome. Book with Gill Chirside 01873 880625. Send payment (cheques to 'GBKA' or cash) to Gill with choice of each course, by 25th Sept. Menu at www.gbka.co.uk/document_lib/newsletters/Hardwickmenu.pdf (Address in ad. on P2) (NB Soup is made with vegetable stock, coffee OR tea)

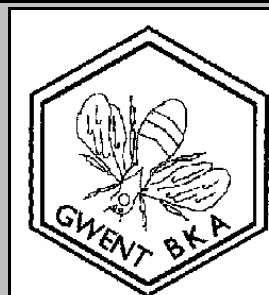
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The Beekeeping Year is nearly over.....By now you should have:

- 1) Extracted any honey from your hives - what started as a good year for those with rape nearby deteriorated in May, but July saw good crops from clover and bramble for some.
 - 2) Put the wet comb back on for the bees to clean off.
 - 3) Decided on your Varroa treatment for this winter, and if appropriate, inserted the first Apiguard (or ApilifeVar) treatment. I've tried ApilifeVar this year - see page 2 for my report.
 - 4) Checked the hive for winter stores and established whether feeding is necessary or not. Aim for 40lb (i.e 5 brood frames at 5lb each and 6 super frames at 2.5lb each, or equivalent)
 - 5) Added entrance blocks to reduce robbing (recommended before (2)).
-unless, of course, your hives are on the heather.
- 6) Removed the queen excluder, so that the cluster can move around the stores unimpeded if we get another winter like the last 2.
- Keith

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To contact a committee member, please click on www.gbka.co.uk/document_lib/pdf/Contacts.pdf

EVER HAD ONE OF THESE LETTERS/eMAILS?

**THIS IS AN AUTOMATED
EMAIL SENT TO YOU BY
THE NATIONAL BEE UNIT
(NBU)**

Dear Mr Keith Allen.

This email has been sent out as part of a 'disease alert' service to beekeepers, implemented by the National Bee Unit (NBU). At the end of each day, beekeepers will be notified if they have an apiary that is within 5KM of a new disease outbreak.

Please be advised that today 10/08/2011, the following disease has been confirmed within 5KM of one or more of your apiaries:

Disease Diagnosed: European Foulbrood (EFB)

Your Apiaries At Risk: Home

Janet, Willie and I received notification of an outbreak of EFB near us, as above. 20 years ago the offending hives would have been burnt, and possibly ours too, based on a visual check. Nowadays the Seasonal Bee Inspector has a chemical test, and there are various options for treating the disease, if found. My email above went on to point me at information, including photos, on the NBU website: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/downloadDocument.cfm?id=7> and gave me contact details for both Adrian Morris the new SBI, and Frank Gellatly, the Regional Bee Inspector. So I printed the description and photos, and checked my hives - all OK - although I await Adrian's confirmation.

- Keith

API LIFE VAR

This is an alternative to Apiguard for treating your hives for Varroa. As Newsletter Editor I thought I should try it and report my findings:

- 1) At just over £3/pack or £6/hive it is considerably more expensive than Apiguard, although essentially the same content - Thymol.
- 2) Each pack contains 2 'charcoal biscuits'. The idea is to break these into 4 and insert the pieces in the hive spread above the brood.
- 3) No eke is required - they fit in the bee space - I just put them on the queen excluder.
- 4) The biscuits are fragile, and the pack is strong. Use scissors to open it. Several of my packs were already crumbs on arrival - Wynne Jones postal packaging was just a cereal box!
- 5) A new biscuit has to be inserted every 7 days for 4 weeks!

I shan't be using Apilife Var again!

- Keith

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LAND at NANTYDERRY

On August 15th I forwarded to all members of the GBKA an eMail from Eric Long. He had not only found a suitable piece of land for the Association to BUY for a new teaching apiary, but he also proposed a way of raising the finance. The land had a 'guide price' of £15,000, and the available cash GBKA had was around £8,000. There would be additional costs in the conveyancing, preparing the land, building a shed etc. thus Eric sought a further £10,000.

Passing over those that replied to me rather than Eric - all replies were forwarded - so far 32 members have expressed willingness to provide a £250 loan to GBKA, repaid over 10 years at 2.5% pa interest. Some members offered to take more than 1 share, so that the full £10,000 is available.

The first hour of the committee meeting on 23rd August was spent considering the proposal. All but one of the committee were present, and Catherine Clark, new member and lawyer (who recently organised the cheap 12oz jars for us all) attended to advise.

The discussion was in 2 parts:

First was the suitability of the land. Location is good, on the borders of Monmouthshire and Torfaen, in agricultural land but with woodland nearby. There was some concern about its position however, at the side of a road, and thus a potential target for hive rustling, litter dumping, even gypsy encampments. It would be necessary to allow the hedges to grow up, and plant some fast-growing trees, thus it would not be usable for at least 2 years. Meanwhile we would have the Ochram site as already agreed. The plot is bigger than we need so some income might be possible from letting part. There was a small problem in terms of the legal title, and it was agreed that GBKA would not bid unless this had been resolved. A vote on suitability was carried 10 for, 5 against.

The financial discussion was less clear-cut. Eric proposed we could bid up to £16,500, allowing £1000 for fees and little for infrastructure. This failed to find a seconder. John Holden proposed we bid to £15,000, which Eric seconded, however this was defeated in a vote. Eventually a maximum figure of £12,000 was agreed, which would leave £6000 for fees and infrastructure.

Several committee members attended the auction, on the 24th, with Catherine to bid. **The land actually went for £29,000.** However it was a useful exercise, and we'll be better prepared next time!

ALL MEMBERS should bear in mind that these loans would need to be repaid. Currently, with around 200 members that means the membership fee would have to rise by an average of £6 per annum, possibly proportioned between members and associates, and probably starting at, say £3 in the first year. If the membership level changes, so must the fee to service the loans.

If you'd like to join the 32, or want more information on his proposals, contact Eric on caeffynnon@tiscali.co.uk. We also need to do some work on possible grants - any volunteers?

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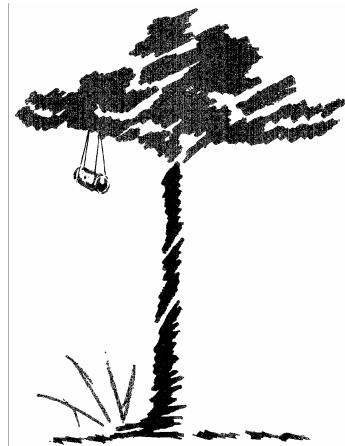
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IBRA Job Vacancy

The part-time position of Bookshop Manager has recently become available at the International Bee Research Association offices in Cardiff. Ideally they are looking for someone with some retail background but obviously an interest and knowledge of bee books would be advantageous! (I have full details - Keith) The closing date is 31st August!

Comb Storage

When you have extracted your honey or removed boxes of combs from your colonies, remember to store them away safely and protect them from vermin and wax moth. Beekeepers are ingenious with new ideas but either stacking the boxes and taping around the seams or storing the supers in sealed plastic bags does work and as wax is more valuable pound for pound than honey, the extra time is a useful investment for next year. Much cheaper than Certan! (from the newsletter of N Staffs BKA, courtesy of eBees)

WBC HIVE for sale (no bees)

I have an OLD hive consisting of roof, floor, 5 lifts (inc 1 with porch), 2 brood boxes, 3 supers, 2 quilts, 1 queen excluder. ie almost enough for 2 hives! It needs some tlc, hence selling now so you have the winter to fix it up. £20 - Keith

CCD (Colony Collapse Disorder)

A vast amount has been written about Colony Collapse Disorder, although recent reports from the U.S. seem to indicate that the problem is not as serious as it was; indeed there are reports of colonies looking in very good condition now. If it is all over – at least for the time being – then what have we learnt from the huge amount of research that has been conducted at truly vast expense. Perhaps this post from the Internet list BEE-L is particularly relevant:

“The CCD team found in the few samples they took up to 17 pesticides/sample with five per sample the average 43 different pesticides were identified. At least 14 were systemic and seventeen different pesticides were found in pollen.

“Bob you keep quoting Kim's column in BC and conveniently omitting the line that says they "found high levels of pesticides in beeswax with pyrethroids dominant. But the loads were amazing. Fluvalinate [that is from Apistan P.E.](with a half life of 5 yrs) was found from 4640-53800 ppb, the two breakdown products from coumophos from 8-18,600 ppb. There were more but these were the biggies”

“WOW take 5 seconds to digest those numbersWOW is all I can say.

“I don't know about you Bob but I think most people would read that to be that the vast majority of the contamination found in the combs was caused by BEEKEEPERS!”

From Peter Edwards, Stratford-Upon-Avon BKA June 2011 Newsletter, Courtesy of eBees

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