

Swansea & District Beekeepers Gwenynwyr Abertawe a'r Cylch

www.swanseabeekeepers.org.uk



Promoting the Conference at the recent WBKA Spring Convention

A group of us went up to the WBKA Spring Convention the other week to publicize our forthcoming Conference and happened to meet some of our speakers there. One was Dr. Natasha de Vere, who was brave enough to have her photo taken with us. (See article on page 6).

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Forthcoming Events

Informal meetings are held on **2nd & 4th Tuesdays** of every month at the **Con Club, Church Street, Gowerton**, from 7.00 pm onwards. All are welcome. We look forward to seeing you there.

May

Tuesday 10th 7.15 p.m. Talk by Robert Jones ~ “Locally adapted bees, Native bees or Gower bees.”

Saturday / Sunday 21st & 22nd RWAS Spring Festival. Llanelwedd, LD2 3SY. Bee Tent outing

Bank Holiday Monday 30th South Wales Dog & Family Fun Day, Fonmon Castle, CF62 3ZN. Bee Tent Outing.

June

Tuesday 14th Con Club. Society Panel Discussion ~ “How are your bees?” from 7.15 p.m.

Saturday / Sunday 18th & 19th Welsh Game Fair, Pembrey Country Park, SA16 0EJ. Bee Tent outing.

July

Weekend 8th ~ 10th Bridgend County Show. Bridgend College, Pencoed Campus CF35 5LG. Bee Tent outing.

Tuesday 12th Society speaker, To be advised

AUGUST

Sunday 7th The Gower Show. Penrice Castle

Wednesday 10th Vale of Glamorgan Show, Bee Tent outing

It's Time for Supers

Although the weather has been unusual this year, brood numbers are building up and you should be adding a super to each hive in anticipation of a spring crop. Give the bees some drawn comb, if available, but also some foundation for them to work on.

Security Micro Chipping your Hives

At the WBKA Spring Convention I noticed that Beespoke Beehives, who manufacture fine quality hives in Wales, were selling hives micro-chipped as a deterrent against hive theft. We already knew one of the partners, Mike Cooper, who we see regularly at the Gower Show, where he stewards (and his honey wins prizes), so I got into conversation with them.

I am extremely interested in micro chipping my existing hives, so enquired about the process and cost of the chips. It turns out that the chips are the same as those used to chip dogs and cats. They are 2 mm in diameter and about 12 mm long. The process is simple. Drill a small hole in the hive, usually the brood chamber, put the chip in, seal the hole and put a sticker on the hive indicating that it is micro chipped.

The chip is then registered on the Immobilise.com national database which is the UK police's own database. This will have details of the home address of the owner.

As regards cost, it would be dependent, of course, on how many micro chips the Society ordered. The range they offer is as follows:

1 to 3 chips	£12.50 each
4 to 9 chips	£11.50 each
10 chips	£10.50 each
50 chips	£8.50 each

The chips would all be individually packed and have 2 appropriate self-adhesive barcode labels showing the chip number with them. There will be a brief 'How to' guide for both the chipping and registration process.

If there is sufficient interest among members, the Society will arrange to bulk-buy the chips and a reader as well. A basic microchip reader costs £60. If you are interested, please get in touch with me, David Salkilld, at d.salkilld1936@btinternet.com or 01792 205822 and let me know how many chips you would require.

A Fascinating Talk at the Con Club

On Tuesday 12th April we had a fascinating talk at the Con Club, given by **Robert Gray of Netring Ltd.** entitled **The effect of extremely low frequencies on the environment and how bees use them to navigate.** With him were two beekeeping friends, John Bellarby from Carmarthenshire and Chris Cardew who is now with Swansea University. They have successfully used his technology but more of that later.

First we heard about his background and his family's firm which specialises in business back office software and about some of their other projects.

Concerning extreme low frequencies, Rob's premise is that these are inherent in all things and that other frequencies can creep in to interfere with and corrupt them. He claims that low frequencies aid navigation and that an apiary, indeed an individual hive, can be corrupted by damaging interference frequencies. There is particular interest in those frequencies between 0.005Hz and 99.995Hz.

He indicated that his company use organic chemicals as oscillators to generate control frequencies. These control frequencies can then be trapped and stored in a silicone medium. These media are applied to hives or apiaries where they are used to override, change or block out any damaging frequency interferences.

Rob further claims that the silicone medium can be used to accept and store the "unique extremely low frequency fingerprint of any person, animal, insect or substance". Naturally, the process they use is highly confidential so he could not go into technicalities.

By measuring frequencies in a colony it is possible to determine if unnatural frequencies are present. These could be from a wind turbine, phone mast or some other source. Then he generates opposing frequencies and applies them via a silicone pad on the hive.

Practical experience.

The techniques used by Rob's company can be used to deal with aggressive bees and also to move hives without heeding the old "three feet ~ three mile" rule. John Bellarby had what he described as 'Killer Bees'. No one could safely get within 100 metres of them.

They would smother his bee suit and veil with stings. Within three weeks of Rob's low frequency treatment, they were as calm as kittens. I should add that John has a wind turbine in his vicinity.

He also wanted to move his hive by about 20 metres. Again, with Rob's equipment, the move was successfully done without loss of more than a small handful of bees.

Chris Cardew's experience with aggressive bees paralleled that of John. His bees calmed down and are now extremely docile.

We have to remember that this is all hearsay, there is no scientific proof but, at the same time, it can't easily be dismissed. After his talk, Rob took questions and kindly left three kits with the Society for moving hives and some also for dealing with difficult colonies. These will be tried by members and results reported back in a future newsletters.

For further information on the subject we suggest you have a look at Rob's web site www.beecontroller.com where you will find an extremely detailed explanation of his work.

David Salkilld.

What the Papers Say

Several newspapers report that researchers at the University of Stirling have found that bumble bees have the instinct to buzz pollen loose and they build this skill up over time. The bees attach themselves to the pollen-producing anthers of the flower and vibrate their muscles to shake the pollen loose. Apparently carpenter bees, but not honey bees, also use this technique.

When Bees Were Bees by Tom Davies.

The April 1931 edition of "Gleanings in Bee Culture" reported on an experiment using window glass in the bottom board of the hives, by a Mr. John E. Yarnell, of San Diego County, California.

Mr. Yarnell's theory was that allowing some light into the brood chamber from below would help to stimulate the queen a bit more in laying, thus strengthening the colony numbers, also giving the queen more room.

The side effect of Mr. Yarnell's hopes were that supersedure of the old queen would overlap to make it unnecessary to re-queen colonies in future.

Apparently some experimenting had been going on in Russia with windows in the sides of the hives but no results had been forthcoming.

Mr. Yarnell believed that more experimenting should be done and that he would continue, but in the May edition of 1931 came a letter from a Mr. Merrit E. Oplinger, of Walkerton, Indiana, saying that he had carried out some tests along these lines but had found no improvements with the use of glass and had given up testing. In his opinion, plenty of stores gave the best results.

More next time Tom.

The Annual Teifside Bee & Bee Equipment Auction

Will be held on Saturday 14th May 2016
at Coed-y-Bryn Village Hall, Coed-y-Bryn, SA44 5LQ
(just outside Newcastle Emlyn)
Viewing from 10.30 Auction begins 13.00
Refreshments Available

*If you have items to sell, or need further information please contact Quaerina on 01559 371770
email quaerina@btinternet.com, or check out the TBKA website at www.tbka.org.uk*

The Bee Conference 14th, 15th and 16th October

At the WBKA Spring Convention at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Showground Llanelwydd, on 2nd April, a team of us went up to spread information to the Welsh beekeeping community about our October Conference. We had a stand there next to Beehive Bits with Sherriff and Bee Craft across the aisle from us. We gave out flyers and talked to people so that they are aware of our October Conference and understand what a great weekend it will be.



To help raise funds we sold raffle tickets to anyone who came remotely near our table, not many managed to get past without buying one!

As it happened, some of people who will be speaking at our Conference were visiting the Spring Convention, so we were able to have a chat with them as well.

Regarding the raffle, we will shortly be asking all Swansea & District members to sell a book or two of tickets for us. There are some great prizes on offer starting with a Two-night Winter Warmer break at the King Arthur Hotel, Reynoldston. Other great prizes include a £100 Thorne voucher and a £50 Maisemore voucher. Wow! And there are lots of other prizes too, the smallest, though perhaps the most unusual, is a microchip to identify your hive, (see the article on page 2).

The Conference team is getting information together to put on the MSWCC website and we expect to have it up and running within a few weeks. It will have the Programme, Conference information, Booking Form and other data about the event. In future newsletters we will update you as and when information becomes available.

“More About Bees” by Tom Davies

It's April 10th and although a nice bit of sun is shining, a brisk chilly wind is keeping bumblebees and honeybees from flying, although there are masses of forage around.

It seems to be very slow in really warming up: my dahlias are barely shooting compared with years gone by, my tomatoes and other seedlings are slow too, and I have had to make sure they are covered up at nights with fleece to avoid losing them.

The conditions we have had over the winter must have had a bad effect on colony numbers, making it necessary for extra visits to check on food stores. I always found that cold dryish weather meant less problems overall, while damp and warmer weather usually gave trouble by early spring.

Although spring flowers are around in plenty just now, the one flower that makes me feel that spring is really on the way is the gorse plant. I took a trip into the city a week ago on a bus and saw plenty of it on the way, a good supplier of pollen if bees are near to some of it.

Beekeepers are not the only people having troubles at the moment. Apparently the ash trees are under threat from a boring beetle and a fungus, which between them, could be as big a danger as the elm tree scourge which came about some 25 to 30 years ago.

More next time, Tom.