

Swansea & District Beekeepers Gwenynwyr Abertawe a'r Cylch

www.swanseabeekeepers.org.uk

The Gower Show Penrice Castle Estate, Sunday 7th August.

Enclosed with this edition (or use the link if you have received this by email) is the [Honey Schedule](#) for this year's Gower Show. Again this year, the show will be a **Blue Ribbon** event, with the best exhibit in show gaining the award, which is jointly given by the National Honey Show and the British Beekeepers' Association.

There are 26 classes on the schedule, from honey through wax, meads, cakes, preserves, photographs and home-made beekeeping equipment. In fact, something for everybody, so do please have a go at entering exhibits in the show.

The entry forms should be returned to Gill Lyons no later than the Thursday before the show, all rules and instructions are on the schedule. Perhaps the most important thing is reading the rules thoroughly. If there is anything you don't understand, just give Gill a call and she will get an answer to you. And by the way, prize winners get some decent prize money too, anything from £2 for a third prize up to £25 for the best Observation Hive, Class 1.

Volunteers for Stewarding

Jill Lyons needs volunteers for stewarding on show day. All stewards will receive a free entry pass into the showground and will be expected to be on duty as stewards for half of the day. Two shifts are being set up; the first from 9.00 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. The second shift from 1.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. to give an overlap at the lunchtime hand-over.

Set Up. Volunteers are also needed on the **Friday** from about 10.30 a.m. to start setting up the marquee and again on **Saturday** to finish off and stage the exhibits. Judging for most exhibits will start at 3.00 p.m. on Saturday except for the observation hives which will be judged on Sunday morning, as we don't want to distress the bees by leaving them overnight in the marquee.

On Show Day. Volunteers as mentioned above, are needed to steward the marquee and the Bee Tent. This will entail manning the observation hives, stewarding the exhibits, talking to the public, manning the Bee Tent, selling honey, rolling candles etc.

A timetable rota will be set up to let stewards know when they are on duty. The rest of the day can be spent enjoying the activities of the show. Prizes and the silver cup will be presented at about 4.30 p.m.

Preparation of show exhibits. At our July meeting there will be a talk on how to prepare exhibits including honey, wax, preserves, observation hives, cakes etc. Come along to the Con Club on 12th July and find out how it is done. See Forthcoming Events on page 4.

Issue No. 110 July ~ August 2016

Editor: D. Salkilld

Summer Ball

As a fund-raiser for our forthcoming MSWCC Bee Conference, and good fun into the bargain, Mike Grinter has arranged for a Summer Ball to be held at the Pontardawe Golf Club on Saturday 20th August with a three course meal and disco. Tickets cost £20 each and are available from Mike. (07872 960 088) Come along and enjoy yourselves and support Mike's effort.

Pontardawe Golf Club presents £20
Swansea & District Beekeepers' Society
Summer Ball
on
Saturday 20th August
7 P.M. until late
Three Course Meal & Disco
Dress Code: Smart Casual



The Bee Conference 14th, 15th and 16th October King Arthur Hotel

The [website](#) is now up and running though some final details have yet to be put on it. Make sure to have a look because there are some very good lectures to be heard and, on Saturday, some interesting hands-on workshops to attend.

People are already booking their places and we have bookings from Hertfordshire, Derbyshire, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Swansea!! This is an opportunity to hear some up-to-the-minute lectures and talk beekeeping with a wide range of people. Please note that you MUST book for the Conference.

Raffle: As always, this sort of event costs money and to help pay for the speakers etc. we are holding a raffle to raise funds. The prizes are good ones starting with a two night stay at the King Arthur Hotel, a £100 Thorne Voucher, a £50 Maisemore voucher, a Poly Nuc hive from Payne's Southdown Bee Farms, a Brunel microscope and others.

The tickets are £1 each and we intend sending 2 books, of 5 tickets each, to all of our members, asking that you sell them to friends and family. If a non-beekeeper happens to win a piece of beekeeping equipment or voucher, we would give them the equivalent in cash. If you need more tickets, please get in touch with Dave Salkilld. Note: the money and ticket stubs must be handed in by the last day of August.

What the Papers Say

In one of its science columns, May 2016, the Daily Telegraph had an article on research, which among other topics, mentioned bee nest boxes. The BUGS project at Sheffield University had tested different types of nests on sale to the public and found that the bamboo type nest boxes for solitary bees (and other insects) work very well. However, their research showed that none of the bumblebee nest boxes were used. The astonishing thing is that these boxes are still being bought by the general public. There must be a lot of disappointed people out there.

Ed: So, just how do you attract bumblebees into a nest box? The answer is simple. Just put some old mouse nest materials into it. If you don't have any handy, then get some from any pet store which sells mice., though they might look at you a bit strangely!!

You see, in the wild, bumblebees tend to nest in old mouse holes or holes in walls where birds have previously nested. One theory is that a mouse hole, or a pre-used bird box, is exactly the right size for a bumblebee nest, thus the queen bumblebee instinctively searches for such a place.

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In late May, the Daily Mail had an article, complete with photo, of a swarm spread over a lady's car. It had landed while she was shopping and was collected by some local beekeepers. However, the queen's pheromones, which must have been strong, remained on the vehicle because a couple of hundred bees decided to follow the car as the lady drove home. She had to call the beekeepers again to collect them. It begs the question, just how fast can honey bees fly.

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In April, the Daily Telegraph had an interesting article entitled "We really need to let bees be bees". Its premise was that natural bee habitats are in hollowed out trees in woodland, surrounded by their best source of forage, i.e. trees.

It goes on to mention traditional "tree hives" in eastern Europe, where beekeepers would carve out cavities high up in living trees, a practice thought to have died out in the early 20th century but recently rediscovered in the southern Urals in Russia where more than 700 hives are still managed.

In UK, to combat the loss of forest habitats, some people are producing log-like wooden cylinders and positioning them high up on trees. However, these are quite heavy and a lighter alternative is also being made. It is a twelve sided cylinder with an internal cylinder, separated with packed insulating straw which weighs considerably less than a solid wooden one.

Carving cavities high up in living trees is somewhat precarious but one has recently been done in an ash tree on Pertwood Farm, Wiltshire, a site chosen for its organic status and the profusion of wildflower meadows that surround it. This should allow a colony to live undisturbed in a situation as near to their natural state as possible.

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Several papers have reported a project being run by scientists from Queen Mary University of London, where 500 bees have been tagged with numbered discs and the public asked to photograph them if they spot them. It is hoped that data from the photographs will help build a pattern of preferred forage and locations. More tagged bees will be released over the coming weeks. The project co-ordinator, Dr. Clint Perry, said "We hope the London pollinator project will encourage the public to plant flowers in our urban spaces that help supply the right nectar and pollen resources for our threatened urban bees".

*Ed: My thanks to all who have sent me items of interest for this edition. Please keep them coming.*

## **AFB found near Swansea**

The Bee Inspectors have reported finding a case of AFB in an area to the north of Swansea and have alerted beekeepers whose colonies are within a five kilometres radius of the site. This find reinforces the need to be vigilant at all times and, if something seems wrong with your bees, get some advice from the Bee Inspectors or from the Society.

## **When Bees Were Bees** by Tom Davies.

In "Gleanings in Bee Culture" for May 1931 I have found an article sent in to the magazine from a Mr. A. H. Bowen, of Cheltenham, England, dealing with operating out-apiaries in the Vale of Evesham.

Spring and early summer management, with the aim of operating to get as many colonies as possible in good shape by early June, started around April 17<sup>th</sup> with slow feeders on each hive with syrup at the rate of half a pint of water to each pound of sugar, at a later date increasing the water to a pint per pound of sugar.

As the weather warmed up, examinations were made, any weak colonies were united, floorboards cleaned, quilts used instead of cover boards, under each roof a piece of card tacked on to record details of operations.

Before being closed up, Mr. Bowen stressed that a sharp lookout for disease which, if present, showed up when gooseberry blooms (E.F.B. or A.F.B. perhaps?), and in addition, two split balls of naphthalene were dropped into each brood chamber to deter moths.

The quilts used were made of canvas, passage sticks used in winter together with candy as needed, the brood chambers built up, a second brood chamber was put on and this without an excluder to encourage brood rearing in time for the main honey flow.

More from the same article next time Tom.

## **Botanical Gardens, Singleton Park**

Earlier this year, Julian wrote a letter in support of a grant application for a Wildflower Garden to be set up adjacent the botanical gardens in Singleton Park. The Secretary of the "Friends of the Botanical Gardens", Jane Terrett, has sent a letter thanking us for our support and is delighted to inform us that a grant of £50,000 has been received from the Cory Environmental Trust, adding that our letter was included with the application. The letter in full will be included as an attachment to the email edition of this newsletter. She states that these funds will enable their members to get the work started and asks that we pass on her thanks to our members.

## **Forthcoming Events**

**Informal meetings** are held on **2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **JULY**

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> Talk at the Con Club, Gowerton, on preparing exhibits for showing quality products of the hive. Honey, wax, etc.

## **AUGUST**

Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> – [Gower Show](#) at Penrice Castle Park, Reynoldston, Gower. This is our biggest event as we have a large marquee which will contain a Blue Ribbon honey show, beekeeping displays, honey sales and the Bee Tent. We will need help on **Friday 5<sup>th</sup>** and **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>** to set up the show benches and Bee Tent.

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> – [Vale of Glamorgan Agricultural Show](#) at Fonmon Castle Park. This again is a one day event where we set up early on the same day.

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> – Swansea & District Summer Ball, 7.00 p.m. at the [Pontardawe Golf Club](#). See Mike Grinter for tickets (£20 each). See pages 2 and 3. Come along and enjoy yourselves.

## **SEPTEMBER**

Programme to be advised.

## **OCTOBER**

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> – [MSWCC Bee Conference](#), held at the King Arthur Hotel, Reynoldston, Gower. The [programme](#) and [booking form](#) are included with this newsletter. (links provided for those receiving this by email). Please note that you must book to attend this event.

### **Contact Numbers**

|                                  |                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Chairman: Nicola Oulton</b>   | <b>01792 88 58 47</b><br><a href="mailto:nikoulton@yahoo.co.uk">nikoulton@yahoo.co.uk</a>        |
| <b>Secretary: Julian Caruana</b> | <b>07985 328 910</b><br><a href="mailto:sdbks.secretary@gmail.com">sdbks.secretary@gmail.com</a> |
| <b>Treasurer: John Gale</b>      | <b>07855 451 781</b>                                                                             |

### **“More About Bees” by Tom Davies**

Our June weather so far has been very mixed, I can't remember when we last had a mixture of warm days yet cool nights, but on the good side it has had a good effect on the amount of forage around. Masses of weeds and white clover are coming into their own at the moment.

My bee garden has come on nicely and my dahlias are flowering now. I had thought that they would be late coming into flower but they have caught up a bit.

I have a grandson living in New Zealand who got married to a girl from Taiwan (Ya-hi), and they were having a second ceremony in Taiwan at the end of February / early March this year, so my daughter Jane Nurse, grandson Chris and granddaughter Catrin went out to Taiwan to attend the ceremony.

While out there, they took a trip to the centre of Taiwan, visiting a lake (Sun Moon Lake) and there happened to be a kind of fête going on, including a beekeeper who was encouraging people to hold a frame of bees to show how gentle his bees were. Catrin volunteered and was quite willing to have her photo taken holding them. She said the bees were very gentle. I have since given her a book on keeping bees, while it is not practicable for her to keep them at this time, perhaps in more convenient times she will take up the craft.

More next time, Tom.

*Ed: I have a photo of Catrin holding the frame of bees on my phone but can't for the life of me transfer it to this computer. The technology baffles me. I'll try to get someone to help me do it for the next issue.*