

# Swansea & District Beekeepers Newsletter Gwenynwyr Abertawe a'r Cylch

Issue No. 128 July ~ August 2019

Editor: D. Salkilld



## **A bee with two-tone pollen loads!**

My thanks to Claire Miller for this unusual photo.

Claire writes "I attach a couple of photos which may be of interest to members. It's something I have never seen before - a bee with matching, two-tone pollen loads!"

*Ed: I have never seen this either. I just hope it shows up well on the black and white paper version of the newsletter. It's very clear on the coloured email edition.*

## **"More About Bees" by Tom Davies**

**J**une 13<sup>th</sup> already. The time seems to go quicker as you get older, and with the bout of weird weather at the moment, the garden seems to be waiting for the real summer to turn up!

I think that if I was still keeping bees, I would make sure that each colony would have a supply of drawn super comb available, as there is a lot of clover coming out just now, and should we get a good spell of sunny weather, with all the moisture in the ground at the present time, apiaries are going to be like fairgrounds.

Plenty of bumble bees about, and lately I have seen some honey bees on a few borage plants here, so they are still around. Wasps are fairly numerous this year as well, so maybe the drastic effects of varroa are being levelled off, as it were.

With the equipment available these days, any newcomer to the craft can feel quite safe at an apiary meeting. When I first started there was not a good range to choose from. People used to turn up in old jackets, warehouse coats, with a hat and veil combined. These would not always keep bees out, and when windy, bees would find a way in. Exciting times then!

More next time, Tom.

### **The Gower Show Schedules.**

Enclosed with this newsletter is the Honey Show Schedule for the Gower Show. For those of you getting the email version, the schedule has been sent as an attachment. It is also available on the Gower Show website.

Please note that there are two additions to this year's schedule:

**Class 15;** Novice class, Pair of Beeswax Candles. Note this class is for anyone who has not previously won a prize for beeswax candles at any honey show.

**Class 24;** Honey Snickerdoodle Biscuits, baked to the given recipe.

**Also, in Class 8,** there has been a change of name from Creamed Honey to Soft-Set Honey. I understand that this is to keep our schedule in line with the description used at major honey shows, though the honey is basically the same. Last year, the Judge pointed out that some entries in that class were not properly set. Soft Set Honey, or Creamed Honey, as we used to know it, must be set, not liquid on top.

**Marquee Preparation.** As is our usual practice, the layout inside the marquee will be started on Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> August, including erecting the tables, setting out the sales area, erecting bee tent, etc. Your help will be much appreciated. This will be continued in the morning on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>, and the marquee will be ready to receive show entries from about noon.

Judging is scheduled to start at 2 p.m. so all of the entries must be staged by 1.30 at the latest.

### **Bee Friendly Status.**

On a weekend break at St. David's recently, we were given a copy of 'Coast to Coast', the local tourist magazine which had an article about the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park being awarded Bee Friendly Status by the Welsh Government.

Though not in our area, I thought it of enough interest to mention here. It seems that the park authorities have changed the management on many of their grassland sites, swapping regular mowing for haymeadow-style management where grasses and wild flowers have been allowed to grow, then cut and baled at the end of the summer. They report the results as 'stunning' with many insects and pollinators being seen, including bumble bees, butterflies, beetles and hoverflies.

Visitors can explore these large meadows, walking on mown paths.

In a somewhat lesser way, I have been spreading dandelion and clover seeds on one of my lawns and have been careful not to cut it while they are in flower. The daisies seem to look after themselves!

D. S.

## Forthcoming Events

### July

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup>** Talk at The New Lodge Social Club, Gorseinon, 7.00 p.m.  
“The Society’s Apiary in Llys Nini” by Mike Grinter.

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> Bee Tent outing** at Llys Nini Dog Show, morning set-up for an 11.00 a.m. start.

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup>** Tuesday before the Gower Show. Gathering at the New Lodge to hand in entry forms and for stewards to get their showground passes.

### August

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup>** The Gower Show, held at Penrice Castle Grounds, Gower. **Bee Tent Outing.** Note that your help will be welcome in setting up the marquee on the previous Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday morning 3<sup>rd</sup>. Judging is on the Saturday afternoon. The Gower Honey Show is a “**Blue Ribbon**” honey show. The Blue Ribbon is designed as the premier award at honey shows round the country and can only be awarded by a qualified National Honey Show Judge.

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> Bee Tent Outing** at the Vale of Glamorgan Show.

### September

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> Bee Tent Outing** at the Heart of the Valley Show, Pontardawe.

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>** Talk at The New Lodge Social Club, Gorseinon, 7.00 p.m. by Lucy Winters about new research on Pollinators conducted at the National Botanic Garden of Wales and giving advice on creating a wildflower area including perennials.

### October

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup>** Talk at The New Lodge Social Club, Gorseinon, 7.00 p.m. “Hygiene” by Stephen Davies

### November

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup>** The Society Honey Show at The New Lodge Social Club, Gorseinon, 7.00 p.m.

### December

**Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>** The Society Christmas Dinner at the Rake & Riddle. Details to be advised later.

**Bee Tent Outings.** In his email of 19<sup>th</sup> June, concerning the upcoming Bee Tent outings, Martin Davies writes:

“This year we have again been invited to attend the **Llys Nini Dog Show** event on **14<sup>th</sup> July**. Last year, we were represented by a small group with an observation hive. This year we would like to set up the full bee experience so if anyone is interested in helping out, then please let me know, particularly if you are a dog lover. Details are on the Llys Nini website. One great advantage is that we don’t have to tow the trailer or the bees, as they are already there!

On **August 4<sup>th</sup>** we will be at the **Gower Show** with the Honey Tent. This is our local show and we always need a lot of help in setting up and on the day. Plus it is an opportunity for you to enter some of the categories and win an award. There are a few new classes this year aimed at novices so there is something for everyone, whether it’s honey, wax or an idea you have had to make beekeeping easier. Come along and be part of the fun.

On **August 7<sup>th</sup>** we will be at the **Vale of Glamorgan Show**. This mid-week event is another prestigious show and last year we won Best Stand in Show, awarded because of our enthusiasm and the popularity of the tent. Set-up is on the day and last year was the most attended on our calendar.

Of course, all of the above shows are also an opportunity to sell your wares! Honey is always a good seller and candles, polish, soap and other hive-based products also prove popular.

If you can help out at any of the above, please let myself or Gill Lyons know and we will add you to the schedule. The more people we have the easier and more enjoyable the day is. And remember, even if you are a beginner and don't have any bees you still know a lot more than most of the public, who will be visiting and there are plenty of things to help out with.

Best wishes, Martin.”

### **More on Bee Boles.**

Following on from the article on bee boles that I wrote in Newsletter No. 122 last year, I recently took this photo of a bee bole at Gainsborough Old Hall, Lincolnshire.

Unusually, there were four of them built into the fabric of the east wing, just below the ground floor windows.

Normally I would have expected to see them in the wall of a fruit garden so this was rather unique.

The house, a medieval manor house, was built by Sir Thomas Burgh in the year 1460 and it is probable that the bee boles were built at that time.

Judging by the size of the alcoves, the skeps would have been small ones but were in easy reach for access by the beekeeper. They were located on an East-facing wall so would have been warmed by the morning sun.



**Tudor Bee Bole**

Over the years, the vast estate has been sold off and nowadays the Hall is located in the middle of an urban area. It is probable that when the Hall was first built, other boles would have been located in their walled gardens but these gardens have long since disappeared. Exhibited inside the property are examples of straw skeps.

### **Seasonal Bee Inspectors**

It is with some sadness that I have to report that Ade Bowen has stepped down from his post of Seasonal Bee Inspector. Ade is a member of our Society and has been our local S.B.I. since 2009. It has been just great to have had his help and advice over these years and I for one, will miss his popping 'round to inspect my colonies.

During his time as an inspector he has seen more colonies than most of us hobbyist beekeepers see in a lifetime. He told me that last year alone, he inspected over 500 colonies.

Luckily for us, in that time he has found very little EFB and AFB in our area, though some small amounts have been found in other parts of Wales.

Regarding his replacement, I had a chat with the Regional Bee Inspector, Frank Gellatly, about who would be filling the position and he told me that they would cover with existing personnel for the remainder of this season and hope to get authorisation to fill the post next year.

So, as a temporary measure, our area will be covered by Maggie Gill, whose contact details are:

Phone 07979 119373

[margaret.gill@apha.gov.uk](mailto:margaret.gill@apha.gov.uk)

Our best wishes go with Ade who will continue to keep his own colonies both at home and in out apiaries.

### **“When Bees Were Bees”** by Tom Davies

In the last issue (No. 127) our editor, David Salkilld, mentioned the attractions of observation hives and quoted them as being in use since about 1810 or thereabouts.

On the subject of observation hives, I found in the October 1932 issue “Gleanings in Bee Culture”, an item sent in to the magazine by a Florence A. Greenwood of Victoria, British Columbia, reporting on conditions in British Columbia at that time.

The July and August rainfall in 1932 had been the worst for thirty years or so, and the poor season was expected up to the latter part of August, when the weather improved and gave new life to the clover and fireweed plants. By September 5<sup>th</sup> the bees were working all day long to remedy the situation with the promise of at least a fair season.

What has this to do with observation hives? Apparently a three year trial had been going on using glass brood-chambers, and increasingly being used to check on bees even in the colder weather, by sliding shutters to cover or uncover as required, even to observe the winter cluster.

The glass hive

had been invented by a Mr. W. T. Sheppard, a provincial apiarist, who had since retired, and would hopefully go on to assist in the craft of beekeeping.

More next time, Tom.

### **Contact Numbers**

**Chairman: Paul Lyons**

**sd\_bks@btinternet.com**

**Secretary: Contact**

**sdbks.secretary@gmail.com**

**Treasurer: John Gale**

**07855 451 781**

*Ed: Looking at back numbers of the Newsletter to check when Ade started in his S.B.I. job, I found this little snippet, which is as relevant today as it was 10 years ago.*

### **And Finally**

If you are considering an entry in the Gower Show, do take time to read the rules thoroughly, they are straight-forward and explain details about entering. And remember, you can sell some of your hive products to the public, who are always looking for good local honey, wax, candles, etc.

In the next issue: An article on Black Queen Cell Virus.

The next newsletter is due out on 1<sup>st</sup> September. Please let me have your articles / items by **21<sup>st</sup> August**. Thanks.