

Swansea & District Beekeepers Newsletter Gwenynwyr Abertawe a'r Cylch

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Editor: D. Salkilld

My apologies for the lateness of this abridged version of the newsletter, due entirely to my moving to a new house at the end of February and still not being able to find 'stuff', as our granddaughters call just about everything.

In particular, the paper edition of this issue will not go out so I have asked Martin to email this edition to everyone. Once again my apologies and I hope all will be back on track for the next edition in May.

In the meanwhile, corona virus has taken a toll on social events up and down the country and our Society events and outings are no exception. The Society will follow government advice on this matter so keep an eye on the emails for further information on meetings.

David Salkilld

Forthcoming Events

As reported by Martin on email, there have been cancellations to our programme of events and this remains fluid for the foreseeable future. We expect there will be further cancellations. Information on each event will be sent out when it is known.

So far, the Beekeeping Classes have been suspended and may be reconvened in the autumn. The RWAS and WBKA conventions have both been cancelled. April's meeting at the New Lodge Social Club has been cancelled.

**The following events are subject to change,
dependant on current advice.**

May

Tuesday 12th Talk at The New Lodge Social Club, Gorseinon, 7.00 p.m. "Swarming" by Stephen Davies.

June

Tuesday 9th Talk at The New Lodge Social Club, Gorseinon, 7.00 p.m. "Preparation for the Gower Show" Buffet supper.

July

Tuesday 14th Programme to be advised.

Tuesday 28th Pre-Gower Show meeting.

Friday 31st At the Gower Show Ground ~ set up Marquee.

August

Saturday 1st Stage show entries for judging which commences at 13.30 p.m.

Sunday 2nd Gower Show Day, Penrice Castle Grounds, Gower.

September

Tuesday 8th Programme to be advised.

October

Tuesday 13th Programme to be advised.

November

Tuesday 10th Society Honey Show and buffet.

8.

December

Saturday 5th Christmas Dinner, details to be advised.

Swarming App, “BeeSwarm.uk”

After the A.G.M. on February 5th we were given a talk by one of our members, Charlie Dunnill, on his swarming App, “BeeSwarm.uk”. In a few words, its aim is to simplify swarm reporting and reduce the workload of Association Secretaries who receive swarm notifications from the public and send them out to members, with follow-ups after someone has collected the swarm.

This App allows beekeepers to receive and manage swarm notifications from individual postcodes of their choice and not be snowed under with emails on all the swarms reported to the Society. To join in, it is necessary to sign up, subscribe to the App and register the postcodes that you are interested in.

In his email of 12th March, Martin put in a lot more detail and said that the site seems simple to navigate. I suggest that you have another look at that email. D.S.

“When Bees Were Bees” by Tom Davies

These days if you want to mark a queen you have a choice of paint or marking pen. When I had bees, a system called Eckart Numbering Kit was available, consisting of five coloured cards in which there were little numbered discs, from 1 to 99, in each of the colours, plus a tiny bottle of glue to stick the disc on the thorax of the queen.

From the May 1930 issue of “Gleanings in Bee Culture”, a letter to the magazine from a Mr. J. A. Green, of Grand Junction, Colorado, U.S.A. questioned whether marking queens would be of any help to larger honey producers.

At that time there was no set colour for marking, everyone was doing their own thing, so in the spring of 1928 Mr. Green decided to combine wing clipping and marking of three hundred queens.

A marking material in common use at that time was called Duco, a quick drying pyroxyline lacquer, and Mr. Green chose a rich red, added a warning that too much lacquer could result in it running down into the joint of the thorax and abdomen, causing a lot of discomfort to the queen.

To apply the lacquer, Mr. Green had a one-dram homeopathic corked vial with about a quarter of an inch of lacquer in it. Pressed into the cork he had a kind of toothpick with a flat area on one end. The vial was kept in a shirt or jacket pocket ready for use.

There is more to come on this story, and will continue in the next article.

Tom.

Gilbert White on Bees Not Responding to Noise.

For hundreds of years people have been interested in the science of bees, for example, Gilbert White, of Selbourne in Hampshire, who lived from 1720 to 1793 and wrote the well known book 'The Natural History and Antiquities of Selbourne' in 1789.

He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, a pioneering English naturalist, ecologist and ornithologist who kept bees and studied them. In a letter to his friend, Daines Barrington, he wrote:

"It does not appear from experiment that bees are in any way capable of being affected by sounds: for I have often tried my own with a large speaking-trumpet held close to their hives, and with such an exertion of voice as would have hailed a ship at a distance of a mile, and still these insects pursued their various employments, undisturbed and without showing the least sensibility or resentment."

D. S.

"More About Bees" by Tom Davies

I hope nobody has had hives blown over with the savage winds lately. I went out to fill up the peanut bird feeder a couple of days ago and a gust of wind almost blew me over.

Just about ready to start my gardening season, and have got seed trays ready for the start. The greenhouse is almost ready, just needs a little cleaning up a bit.

Nothing much flying around here at the moment. Even when we have had some nice sunny spells, there has been a steady chilly breeze keeping temperatures down. I have a few daffs, snowdrops and crocuses in flower, but nothing flying on the times I have been looking at them.

On the bright side though, my garden is fairly tidy. Last season I saved three types of bean seeds, runner bean Moonlight, climbing French bean Cobra and a dwarf French bean The Prince.

Given a reasonable season, all the beans named will give me a tidy crop. In very hot and dry periods the runner beans will go to seed very quickly, the French bean Cobra is a remarkable bean, lasting a good while before they age and, I like them diced, gently simmered or steamed, then onto a plate with a good dollop of onion sauce, plus a sprinkling of grated cheese, with or without something in the way of meat. On that I hope for a good honey season!

Tom.

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The next newsletter is due out on 1st May Please let me have your articles / items by **20th April**. Thanks.