

Swansea and District Beekeepers Newsletter



Gwenynwyr Abertawe a'r Cylch Cylchlythyr

Issue No: 147 Sept - Oct 2022



NB. This newsletter contains pictures of wounds

August 2022

Hello and welcome to the 147th edition.

Croeso i'r cylchlythyr hyn, rhif 147fed

The recent weather has been outstanding for bees and hopefully they will all bring in a decent crop of honey.

This time of year is busy for all beekeepers...not wanting to state the obvious as its time for extraction and thinking of winding down for winter.

In this issue

- Bees in the news
- The Shows
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- Food hygiene information
- Healing honey
- 'When bees were bees' Mr Tom Davies
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- Next newsletter

Good news recently from the Apiary Team, the newly relocated Apiary at Llys Nini is now ready for use.

Please see the email from Martin below, sent out Mon 22 August 2022 regarding the times

Dear member,

It has taken a while, but the society apiary site will now be open to members. The apiary team will be meeting at Llys Nini every Tuesday at 10.00am to go through the society colonies and do some housekeeping at the site. This will continue until the end of September, weather permitting. If any members are going to visit please park in the main car park area, by our trailer, and one of us will meet you there and take you to the new site.

Please bring wellies and your own bee suit, if you have one, as we have a limited quantity of suits there.

If you could let me know beforehand that you will be coming that would help me to sort out how we manage the sessions. If you need a suit, please let me know what size and I will sort one of from our stock.

Cheers

Martin

Bees in the news: -

BEE RESEARCH GETS A BIG BOOST - Press Release: Beekeepers Put £90,000 Into Bee Health Research

12th August 2022



The health of honeybees is of increasing importance, so the CB Dennis British Beekeepers' Research Trust, Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd and The British Beekeepers Association are combining to fully fund a three-year research studentship into bee health. British Universities and Research Institutes are being invited to apply with a research proposal that would improve our understanding of bee health and contribute to the long-term benefit of bees.

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/news/press-release-beekeepers-put-90000-into-bee-health-research>

A piece of information of interest to me as I live in Ammanford, the Welsh Bee Journal, was published in Ammanford between 1923 & 1927. The British Beekeepers Association came into existence in 1874 as a London based association, producing the British Bee Journal which became Bee Craft in 1947. Wales has its own association, the Welsh Beekeepers Association, which produce its own magazine, *Gwenynwyr Cymru*. Sadly, there are no remaining offices relating to bee keeping in Ammanford to my knowledge.

Ref: Y Fel Ynys/ The Honey Isle (part 1) by Karl Showler, printed in the Welsh Beekeeper Oct 2017

News articles sent by Paul Lyons

In the Telegraph –

Whats the buzz about Honey by Xanthe Clay

This article discusses 'fake' honey. According to the Food Fraud Database, it's in the top three most faked foods in the world along with olive oil and milk.

It discusses the ways in which honey is faked. There are mainly two ways [1] adulterating the product with corn syrup, [2] blending with poor quality honey and other syrups with dye added to look like 'honey'.

It mentions a book by Hattie Ellis 'Spoonfuls of Honey', in which she states the best way to spot 'fake honey' is to open the jar and smell it. 'If you take the lid off and it smells like boiled sweets, you might as well have sugar syrup'!

<http://digitaleditions.telegraph.co.uk/data/1047/reader/reader.html?social#!preferred/0/package/1047/pub/1047/page/151/article/NaN>

Honey from on high

This article, also in the Telegraph, mentions an apiary set up on the rooftop of Ripon Cathedral. There are four beehives, cared for by volunteer beekeepers. They hope the honey will go on sale in the gift shop later this year.

<http://digitaleditions.telegraph.co.uk/data/1023/reader/reader.html?social#!preferred/0/package/1023/pub/1023/page/38/article/319054>

Royal Welsh Show 2022

Monday 18th July – Thursday 21st July 2022



This year saw the long-awaited resumption of the Royal Welsh Show. Entries to the Honey Section were somewhat down on pre-pandemic years and there were quite a few no-shows. Of the 361 expected entries there were probably somewhere around 250 actually delivered. No doubt partly due to the very hot weather.

Carmarthenshire beekeepers were once again well represented with 5 exhibitors, including 3 from SDBKS, Emyr Jenkins, Karen Squires and myself (as Tir Capel Apiary). The weather conditions played havoc with some entries, including Emyr's set honey, which re-liquified due to the heat, not surprising given the mid-30's temperatures during the 4 day event, and some of the mead/Melomel/metheglin corks popped at regular intervals, much to the amusement of the attending stewards.

Awards were distributed widely across the various classes with winners from Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion, Powys and Herefordshire. Karen once again won Best in Show for her frame for extraction (2nd RWAS in succession) and we also did well with Melomel and metheglin along with 3rd prize for our honey.

Cardiff and Vale BKA won the Association prize for best composite display and, as they were the only entry, the gauntlet has been thrown down by my Cardiff friend Paul Yates, for us (SDBKS) to enter a display next year and show them how to do it properly 😊

Unsurprisingly Deborah Smith from Hereford took the bulk of the Best in Show Awards. Deborah is a very experienced judge and has adjudicated at the Gower Show for us previously. She took 4 out of 6 Best in Show awards and 6 out of 8 Gold Medals out of her 40 plus entries, which included an excellent display of honey and hive products for a shop window. Definitely one to beat at future shows.

The show itself was down on visitors compared to pre-pandemic times. Visitors on the Tuesday and Wednesday being particularly absent with the very high temperatures. Even Thursday was seemingly quiet, though the quiet was broken firstly by the Royal Horse Artillery display, complete with 25 pounders firing, and secondly by a Hawker Hurricane doing several fly-pasts in the afternoon. All in a very enjoyable and productive event and I look forward to returning there next year.

Martin Davies



Gower Show 2022 Sunday 31st July 2022 Penrice Castle, Gower

After a 3-year absence the Gower Show finally returned to action and with our own Honey-Tent it was an opportunity for us to display the produce of our bees and the skills in producing hive products for display and sale. It was also the first outing of the Bee Experience Tent for 3 years

Thankfully, as the Gower Show provides us with a large marquee, we only had to erect the mesh tent section, and not the full ensemble. Scheduled a week earlier than usual this year, due to an Iron Man competition taking place in Gower over our normal August slot, it produced some tight timelines in order to get honey extracted and ready for showing and sale. As is the norm the Honey Tent was set up on the Friday, with staging of exhibits on the Saturday morning, in time for Judging later that day.

For each Gower Show our target is to achieve the coveted Blue-Ribbon status. This is awarded to qualifying shows with at least 100 entries throughout the various class's and must be judged by an accredited judge. Our judges of previous shows, Bernard and Shirley Diaper, finally managed to retire during the pandemic so this year we had new judges of Bill Fisher and Sue Carter, Bill having been Bernard's understudy during their visit a few years ago, and recommended by Bernard as a possible replacement. I had met them on their previous visit and seen them at the National Honey Show in Sandown Park during my visits there. They were both very friendly and professional and provided exhibitors with notes, particularly the Novice classes, commenting on their entries along with ways in which they can improve next time.

The show day itself didn't start too well! Some overnight rain and wind had caused problems around our Bee Experience area with the bee suits getting very damp and their hanging rail collapsing, needing some running repairs! Thankfully the warm weather on the day managed to dry them quickly enough that no visitors seemed to notice.



The Honey Tent is always a very popular place on show days and this time was no exception with a steady stream of visitors all day and the bee experience being fully booked by early afternoon.

As well as the exhibits there is the sales area and this also proved very popular, particularly as this year we were able to take card payments. This was very useful, especially for those that liked to buy but "didn't have any cash". Well done to Dale and her team for achieving the sale results on the day, with nearly £2,000 of honey and hive products sold.

With the show day over and everything dismantled and packed away we left late into the evening weary but happy that we have managed to deliver another great event.

As for the results, full results will be published shortly, however, the overall prize of the Dorothea Daniel-Jenkins Challenge Cup for highest number of points was won by Emyr Jenkins and the prestigious Blue-Ribbon Award was won by Karen Squires for a frame suitable for extraction. With 29 classes in total well done to anyone that entered, whether you won an award or not, and hopefully it will inspire you to continue or to enter something in next years show.



Emyr Jenkins receiving his award from Nicola Oulton



The Blue Ribbon award won by Karen Squires

Many thanks to all of those that either helped setting up, entering exhibits or helping on the day. It was brilliant to see so many entries and a good display from our novices (even if the novice honey class was won by a non-member!). And a Special thanks must go to Gill Lyons for making it all happen. The work that Gill does prior to the event and behind the scenes often goes unnoticed, but if it wasn't for her ongoing commitment and dedication to the Honey-Tent it wouldn't be the huge success that it is. Roll on 2023!

Martin Davies



Ian Beynon, winner of the Novice Honey Class



Vale of Glamorgan 2022 Wednesday August 10th, 2022, Penllyn, Cowbridge



No sooner do we have one show then more arrive in quick succession. Like the other shows, an absence of 3 years meant that the Vale Show was a welcome return for our bee experience tent activities.

This year it was relocated from its previous venue of Fonmon Castle, near Cardiff airport, to its original venue in the village of Penllyn, between Bridgend and Cowbridge, and was the first time the bee tent had been there during my 10-year involvement.

Setting up on the Tuesday was relatively straightforward, with only a couple of wrong turns down the narrow road from the A48 before we arrived at the show field! The field itself was well laid out and marked clearly, so simple to find our pitch and set everything up. The 4 of us, myself, Sue Lawrence, Paul Lyons and Ian Algie, managed to get everything completed within a few hours and, with the bees transported down that day as well, they were well watered, and we left the secured tent ready to return early the next morning.

Show day arrived bright and early, with Mike Grinter being brighter and earlier than anyone, arriving well before us and having to wait at the entrance gate, as I had his pass to get in! Minor timing issues resolved we completed the setup of the tent and awaited our first visitors.

The show opens at 9.30 but the first bookings were taken well before then as some of our fellow stall holders wanted to get in before the rush. Sadly, the rush never materialised as the morning turned into afternoon. The heatwave continued and as the temperature ticked over 30 degrees most of those brave souls visiting the show decided that getting kitted up in a bee suit wasn't their idea of fun, so visitor numbers dwindled, and the later afternoon sessions only had a couple of visitors in each. Indeed, the weather was such a problem that the bees, who had been lovely and calm all day, decided to swarm from the hive into the corner of the tent. Luckily Mike spotted the queen and was able to get her into the queen cage and back into the safety of the hive. The bees eventually noticed that she had returned to the hive and after 40 minutes of panic returned to keep her company! Mopping up the stragglers with our bee vac took another 15 minutes and by 6.30 we were all finished ready for the short drive back down the M4 to return the bees and trailer to home to Llys Nini.

Overall, a difficult day, mainly due to the weather. Honey and hive product sales were slow and considerably less than last time and with around 90 visitors and £40 in donations those figures were also a lot less than hoped for. Whether that was down to the weather or the current economic conditions I'm not sure but the small band of volunteers that helped on the day were all glad when it was time to go. Many thanks to Mike, Gill, Paul, Jonathan, Julia, Karen and especially Ian, for towing the trailer to and from the events this year.

Martin Davies

In view of the time of year.....

Food regulations and selling honey

Honey is a low-risk product but there still is a risk. If there is an issue with the product and you are contacted by the local council, if you haven't registered you could be prosecuted.

If you are a hobby beekeeper who sells honey on the doorstep the rules are relatively straightforward, but you still need to

- follow appropriate standards of cleanliness and hygiene when extracting honey for sale
- need to apply the rules for labelling honey.

All honey sold in the UK must give

- the name and address of the producer
- the country of origin
- the nett weight
- may need to indicate the type of honey.

All food businesses need to be registered with the local council before starting any food operations.

Swansea the web address is: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/5634/Register-your-food-business>

Carmarthen: <https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/business/environmental-health/food-and-hygiene/register-a-food-business/>

In the UK, **food handlers don't have to hold a food hygiene certificate to prepare or sell food.** You must however be able to demonstrate that you are competent and compliant with the food hygiene regulations, either via self-study or via supervision.

Basically, there are three ways you can demonstrate you are a competent food producer: -

[1] A food hygiene certificate is a document given to food handlers or anyone who completes a Food Safety & Hygiene training course that has been accredited. While food handlers aren't required to have a food hygiene certificate to prepare or sell food, most food businesses will prefer that they do.

[2] A Level 2 Food Safety and Hygiene for Catering course is the most appropriate certificate as it covers all basic food safety topics and ensures that you comply with food safety law = costs £10-£15 approximately

[3] Safer Food, Better Business (SFBB) packs are available from the Food Standards Agency for small businesses.

https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/sfbb-introduction-december-2019_1_0.pdf

There is also a more comprehensive system to manage the food hygiene and safety procedures in your food business. HACCP is a way of managing food safety hazards. It is a systematic approach for hazard identification, assessment of risk, control, and verification activities. An international regulatory standard for food businesses and manufacturing plants, serving the purpose of being compliant and offering safe food for the customers.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/hazard-analysis-and-critical-control-point-haccp>

As a registered producer, the creation of an appropriate Hazard Analysis Risk Assessment (HARA) and the follow-on Critical Control Points (CCP), together constitute a HACCP and is the best way to demonstrate that you have the relevant food safety awareness and knowledge to control your honey extraction and packing process to a required standard such that you can demonstrate and call upon a defence of all due diligence and all reasonable precautions under the terms of the Food Safety Act and meet the various HACCP requirements. Any food operation that sells or serves food must provide control of food safety. It does not matter if it is a cafe, restaurant, hotel, shop, retail food establishment, or home kitchen making food to sell to customers.

Mandy Williams

HONEY HEALING

As its honey time of year, and continuing from the article David wrote in the March-April 2022 issue, I have been looking into how honey 'heals'...

My background is nursing and podiatry, from which I have now retired but the knowledge and wanting to learn about the healing mechanism is still ticking over...somewhere! In both roles, I had to change and dress wounds in all areas of the body. When a relative suffered a dog bite that potentially could have turned very nasty. He was bitten on the hand and being an elderly man and an insulin-dependent diabetic, getting the wound to heal became a problem.

The injury occurred during the second week of November 2019. The pictures speak for themselves regarding the results. I was amazed.



The wound was initially treated with Iodine gauze but slow to heal and looked very sloughy. We decided to try the Activon Honey paste. Its available to purchase without the need for a doctor's prescription, a tube was ordered from that well known internet- based store, Amazon, for about £5.00. The wound was cleaned, dressing changed, and a small amount of Activon paste applied to the sterile gauze and the hand rebandaged. Every 2 days this was the procedure and we saw an improvement immediately. The wound looked cleaner, the exudate much less, and within a month it was healed.

So what and how did the wound heal so quickly, how does the honey work?



Manuka Honey is made from nectar gathered from *Leptospermum* plants (part of the tea-tree family) by bees in New Zealand. Honey is made up of fructose (40%), glucose (30%), water and minerals such as iron, calcium, potassium, and magnesium. Due to the high level of fructose, honey is sweeter than table sugar.

Activon states the honey paste protects the wound bed and provides the moist wound healing environment that is known to promote faster healing.

To be classified as medical grade, Activon Manuka honey goes through a sterilisation process which destroys any microbial spores to prevent wound contamination. The process of sterilising honey or pasteurization involves a process of heating the honey to 145° F (63° C) for 30 minutes. This destroys all microorganisms and microbial spores, also the high acidity and low pH of this honey paste makes it unsuitable for microbial growth. It also has a high sugar and low water content that draws water out of the bacterial cells via osmosis dehydrating them and preventing further growth of microbes. It also produces low levels of hydrogen peroxide at the wound site which acts as a wound cleanser, keeping it moist and clean.

The honey is filtered to remove any pollen or foreign bodies, but it still maintains the honey's healing powers. Pollen must be filtered out due to the risk of potentially setting up an allergic response, especially to a wound area.

How are we able to use honey or sugar on wounds? Diabetics need to control the level of glucose in their blood, so this isn't an obvious healing method to use. Granulated or table sugar is an ancient remedy for non-healing wounds. The sugar in this type is sucrose, but when eaten we need the enzyme sucrase to convert it into glucose. As sucrose is found in blood, it is only when eaten and then absorbed into the bloodstream that it is converted, therefore applying it to a wound isn't going to have the same effect.

The old remedies may be the best ways to heal wounds, it's cheaper more cost effective but there is a lot of research funded by pharmaceutical companies, especially with the problem of antibiotic resistance. Honey appears to be more effective than sugar in reducing bacterial contamination and promoting wound healing, and apparently slightly less painful than sugar during dressing changes.

Honey, therefore, may be the way of wound healing of the future.

Mandy Williams

When bees were bees' by Mr Tom Davies

For this article a little chit-chat about bee matters.

What effect on the craft will all that is going on in the world have, with regard to the cost of the wood for hives, plus the energy costs to make containers, extractors and the like.

It will certainly cost more, so perhaps more care in maintenance as well as storing supers, hive bodies, plus frames to avoid damage over the winter period.

Frames when bought in should be left in the boxes until needed to be used, and one thing to look out for is any frame that has a knot in the wood, near where the side bar is fixed, should not be used as either a brood frame or a super frame.

I got caught when I first started the craft, and had a few scares, and having to fix a broken lug with a hive inspection going on can be quite a lively time. I mention this as in the future we could see a reduction in the quality of the wood we are able to get for the craft.

With hives, I used to go round in late spring with a little knife to test how the wood near the floor, and should it be getting a little soft I would change it in early spring, refurbishing it as I could.

More next time, Tom

I'm writing this on the 26th July, and I have just come in from the garden. What a good effect that most welcome lot of rain we've had in the last couple of days.

My bee garden, which was just on the point of giving up, has now come alive and looking nice and green again, plenty of bumblebees, a few honeybees, hoverflies and others.

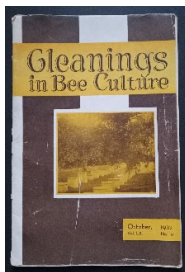
It was a pleasure to just watch the activity of the bees on the flowers, the rain seems to have spurred the flowers into producing nectar and pollen and bees are having a good time while it lasts.

The flowers in it this year are Tagetes, a good selection of Dahlias, agastaches, and I have a nice buddleia to attract butterflies and a good many michaelmas daisies for later in the season.

The bee garden in general is not looking all that well maintained, because I have not been well, But I am on the mend and able to do small jobs to prevent it getting out of control.

Earlier in the year, it looked as though I would not get much from the veg side but at the moment I am getting runner beans with also some climber French beans, some kale as well, which I will have to check on more often now as the cabbage whites are turning up.

Til next time, Tom



With many thanks to Mr. Davies for taking the time to hand-write his thoughts on beekeeping, and sending me a wonderful copy of the Bee Gleanings magazine from America giving an insight into bee keeping in the 1930's...it's a different world over there!

Diary dates - Social evenings 2nd Tuesday of month at New Lodge Club, Gorseinon.

September

- Heart of the Valley Show with Bee Tent Experience – to be confirmed
Saturday September 3rd, 2022, Pontardawe Community Sports and Recreation Ground

October

- **Tuesday October 4th at 7pm at The New Lodge Gorseinon.**
- Mr Ian Reader, Environmental Health Practitioner with Carmarthenshire County Council. He is going to talk to us about food hygiene, honey production and labelling, all in relation to beekeeping and honey.

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Webinars available on WBKA website - free and accessible to all via

<https://wbka.com/wbka-webinars>

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Our next newsletter is due 1st November 2022

Could you please forward any items for inclusion by October 15th, 2022, to
sdbks.editor@gmail.com

Diolch yn fawr/Thank you.