

# Welwyn Beekeepers Newsletter

## September 2018

### NEWS SUMMARY

.... We have a lot to tell you about....

We are looking forward to:

- Our annual honey tasting evening at the White Hart, 2 Prospect Place, Welwyn on Tuesday September 25
- Attending the Tewin Orchard Apple Day, Upper Green, Tewin Day on October 7
- Attending the Codicote Apple Day, Wyevale Garden Centre, Codicote on October 14

We have been busy with:

- Welcoming Stephen McPartland to our Knebworth Apiary
- Having been interviewed by BobFM Radio
- Attending the Festival of Wildlife at Panshanger Park on July 28 and the Knebworth Steam, Crafts & Country Life Fair at Knebworth House on August 11 & 12

Regular items:

- Thoughts from the Beekeeper – Peter Folge is discussing a) Honey labelling, b) Autumn treatment of the bees, c) the Bee Improvement Programme and d) a potential Q&A
- Around the Apiaries (will resume in spring)
- Training

[www.welwynbka.org](http://www.welwynbka.org)

### Next Social Event

## HONEY TASTING

At the White Hart, 2 Prospect Place  
Welwyn AL6 9EN

Tuesday, September 25  
7.30 for 8 pm

Please bring a jar of your own set  
and/or runny honey (not labelled)

An evening filled with the smell  
and taste of honey and time to catch  
up with other members.



## ASIAN HORNET WEEK SEPTEMBER 10–16

After a sighting of an Asian Hornet has been confirmed in the Fowey area of Cornwall on September 4, a reminder to everyone to be vigilant and keep your eyes open for the Asian Hornet. Spend some time watching your bees at the entrance to your hives and remember an Asian Hornet:

- is smaller than our native European Hornet species,
- has an almost entirely dark abdomen, except the 4<sup>th</sup> segment which is yellow,
- has bright yellow tips to the legs (native hornet dark) and an entirely brown or black thorax (native hornet more orange)



For further info download the Asian Hornet Watch app. Please report sightings with a photo and location details to [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk)

## CHRISTMAS DINNER

Tuesday  
December 11

After last year's success, we have decided to go back to the White Horse, 30 Mill Lane, Welwyn AL6 9ET. Book your place no later than September 30 with Lieva Nation [welwynbees@gmail.com](mailto:welwynbees@gmail.com) or by phone 07949 624 354

## Stephen McPartland's visit



Stephen McPartland MP visited the Knebworth Apiary on a very nice and warm day in mid-July. Members of the committee together with Nick Leech introduced Stephen to the art of beekeeping. The apiary was shown, hives were inspected, with the bees having been on best behaviour and not a word about Brexit was uttered. Nick proved to be an excellent teacher and Stephen took a hands-on approach as the picture on the right shows. A big thank you to



Stephen to taking time out of his busy schedule to come and visit us and for Nick to take the lead on the day.

## Events: Panshanger & Knebworth

Weather played a big part in the last two events we attended. The second day of the Panshanger event had to be cancelled because of the strong winds and the number of visitors were low at the Knebworth Steam, Crafts & Country Life Fair as it was a rather rainy weekend. A big thank you to all the members who helped out on those two events and persevered with the conditions.

## Interview with BobFM Radio

Lieva Nation and Mike Goodhew were answering questions regarding beekeeping. We are yet to find out whether the information provided was used/broadcast.

## Flow Hive



Whilst WBKA has not had the chance to put our flow hive super into action this year as the association colonies were too weak for too long to produce honey, one of our members, Don Williamson has had his own Flow Hive Super in action again this year. As the pictures show, he has also been very inventive and has made his own adaptations to make the lifting of the super a lot easier. If you would like to hear more about his experience with the Flow Hive Super or see it in action, you may contact Don on [don@donrobjim.com](mailto:don@donrobjim.com) or tel. 07850 814614.



## Thoughts from the Beekeeper

By Peter Folge

I would like to address the following issues:

### A) General Honey Labelling Advice

When labelling your honey, the following must be adhered to:

1. The word HONEY is required
2. The weight must be on the label. The weight must be metric (and it's optional to add it as imperial as well). The weight must be net, i.e. not including the glass jar and lid
3. The minimum height of figures on the label must be as follows: <50g 2mm; 50-200g, 3mm; 200g-1kg, 4mm; >1kg, 6mm
4. You can specify the area where the honey is produced, e.g. Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, English, Welwyn
5. You can specify the type of honey, e.g. heather, but the honey must be at least 75% of that type
6. If you are selling the honey, you must have your name and address on the label (tel. number is also useful). It does not need to be complete, but you should be able to be found from the information. (Google it!)

7. If you are selling the honey through a third party, you must have a lot number (though if your Best Before date specifies day, month and year then a lot number is not required)
8. You must have a Best Before date on the jar. 2-3 years from now seems to be pretty standard
9. You must have a country of origin on the jar, e.g. Produce of England. Just adding the country at the end of your address is not acceptable

For detailed information access the following downloads:

<http://www.talkingwithbees.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/honey-regulations-england-2015.pdf>

<http://www.talkingwithbees.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/BBKA-Selling-Honey-Advice.pdf>

I am aware that under the Honey Regulations 2015 under "Schedule 1 Compositional criteria" it clearly states that **honey must not have other ingredients added:**

- **No food ingredient has been added, including any food additive.**
- **No other additions have been made to the honey except for other honey.**

Now this is interesting as many producers, including large honey manufacturers are selling ginger or cinnamon flavoured honeys which is in effect breaking the Law and should we be reporting these to 'Trading Standards?' Also, some raw honeys contain wax cappings and pollen. Now firstly by adding wax, your net weight changes automatically and only a small percentage of pollen is allowed (I believe this to be not more than 2%), which allows for naturally occurring pollen and should not be added as an extra.

So please check your labels... 'google' your address, name or number and if you cannot be found on the map or contacted then your labelling needs to be updated. Also, at our last committee meeting jar sizes were discussed. The committee believe that at our events there are far too many sizes on display, and although the display may look good becomes confusing and needs to be simplified to 1 lb and ½ lb jars only. (Small jars do not help sales). This will be phased in gradually and we are expecting to only sell 1 lb and ½ lb jars from 2020 onwards. We understand that some beekeepers will now already hold stock in other sized jars as a result of the 2018 harvest which will need to be sold. We are expecting though, that everyone who is selling at events will be able to comply with this in 2 years' time.

## **B) Autumn Treatment of the Honey Bees**

Having inspected many beekeepers' colonies, on the whole there is presently very little brood in the hives due to little or no forage over August and early September and beekeepers are feeding heavily. We should ideally be seeing about 2-3 frames of brood per colony. With regards to treating for varroa you should have started in August and now be finished. If you have not done so already, due to there being little brood in the hive some beekeepers may find a one-off oxalic acid (Apibioxal) treatment will be effective. As temperatures are now cooler, one can consider doing a weekly treatment or Formic Acid 'MAQS'.

Next month Final Checks and Winter Preparations....

## **C) Bee Improvement Programme**

The first year of our Welwyn Bee Improvement Programme has, on the whole, been successful. All queens that started laying produced lovely calm bees. The original 2017 queens, like others, were slow to build up this spring and with their low swarming nature were reluctant to produce drone brood so we were unable to distribute drones to other beekeepers. Producing drones was one of the aims of the programme, however, it could possibly be an ongoing problem and it may be far easier to concentrate on raising new queens from our breeder queens and distribute these to our members. They in turn will produce Buckfast drones and if the beekeeper puts in a super frame into their brood nest in the spring time, these bees are likely to draw brace drone comb and the queen will lay these up and we can then allow some of these drones to emerge without causing a varroa build up. I leave one of these frames in all year and must admit it has not caused a varroa explosion.

## **D) Possible Question and Answers section in the Newsletter**

I am wondering whether members are interested in a Q&A section in the newsletter? If so, please contact Gabriela at [andyross7@btinternet.com](mailto:andyross7@btinternet.com) with questions you would like to have answered and we shall address one or two in each newsletter going forward.

## **Apiary Training**

Knebworth Golf Club Apiary is scheduled as follows:

Every Saturday 10.30 am  
(with the exception of second  
Saturday in the month)

This is for those new members that would like to gain some practical experience before deciding if beekeeping is for them, and those new members who would like some supportive practical training in their early stages of beekeeping. Sessions are continuing until the "bees are put to bed for the winter".

Every second Saturday  
each month 10.30 am

Members monthly training. Last Training Session for the year to be held on September 8, 2018.

*Please email Mike Goodhew at [training@welwynbka.org](mailto:training@welwynbka.org) should you have any questions/queries.*

## **Forthcoming EVENTS with WBKA involvement**

Sunday, October 7  
12.00 -4.30 pm

Tewin Orchard Apple Day, Upper Green, Tewin

Sunday, October 14  
11 am – 4 pm

Codicote Apple Day, Wyevale Garden Centre, Codicote