



# The Apiarist

..... High Weald Beekeepers' Newsletter

## Editor's Buzz....

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!** Welcome to the new style Apiarist newsletter, back after a brief absence. You may well have to excuse any mistakes or editing 'errors' whilst I find my feet again, having last been editor over 6 years ago! Please feel free to put forward any suggestions for articles, or if you would like to submit something, then I would be delighted to hear from you.

I am aiming to produce the Apiarist quarterly, but I may issue special editions if there is a call for it and there is sufficient content to produce.

The beekeeping season for 2019 is fast approaching and the HWBKA is preparing a series of talks to help you prepare for the season, whatever your beekeeping level. Dates and information are listed in this issue. Happy Beekeeping!

**Sam Bowles**

## Chairman's Chatter

Happy New Year one and all! 2018, now but a distant memory, was my first year as Chairman of the High Weald Beekeepers' Association and I'm relieved to report that I have not presided over too many calamities...so far. Despite my initial reservations about accepting such a role amongst such an august body as

our committee, I must say that it has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience. How could it be otherwise with such an agreeable, committed and knowledgeable collection of individuals who selflessly give of their time and energy in support of bees, beekeeping, and your association?

The Association goes from strength to strength with our membership now just shy of 200. Finances are strong so the main challenge for 2019 is to acquire a suitable site for a permanent apiary and training site for the use of the membership. We are currently following up a number of leads and fingers are crossed!

**Peter Coxon**

*Editors note: Full article -*

<https://hwbka.org.uk/category/chairmans-chatter/>

Find us on **FACEBOOK** (High Weald Beekeepers). We have a Facebook page for those of you into social media. We post various information found in the news and on the web. We may not agree with all of the information we post, but it makes for interesting reading!

## IN THIS ISSUE

### ARTICLES

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### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- 29<sup>th</sup> January – Pollination, Plants & Bees Talk, Cross in Hand Pub
- 28<sup>th</sup> Feb – Lotions & Potions Workshop, Uplands College
- 2<sup>nd</sup> March - SBKA AGM 2019
- 26<sup>th</sup> March. SBKA Asian Hornets Talk
- 3<sup>rd</sup> April – Swarm Prevention Talk, Cross in Hand Pub
- 18<sup>th</sup> May - SBKA Bee Market,
- Full Calendar & Details  
<http://hwbka.org.uk/events/2019-01/>

## HONEY SHOW 2018

The Honey Show was held in conjunction with the AGM on November 3<sup>rd</sup> at Blackboys School. It was one of best attended yet, with over 70 entries and a wide variety of Honey Styles, cakes and other goodies displayed.

Our lovely judges, Jean, Lynne, Stuart and Keith had a difficult task deciding on the prizes for the various classes. In some cases it was just 1 point/vote between the top 2!

The winner/placed members from classes at the National Honey Show had also brought along their honey for everyone to try. Members were also able to judge the Novice Honey class, tasting and casting their vote, as well as judging the best beekeeping "invention".

Andrew Moore again generously sponsored the ribbons for winners and Steve and Clare Adams also donated and organised a fantastic Raffle. Thank you to you all.

Tea, Cakes and biscuits were served and these went down very well! No one was left "unfed".

A very big thank you to everyone who helped on the day. It's a big team effort and it couldn't go ahead without the time and enthusiasm of these people. You know who you are.

Here's to 2019's Honey Show being bigger and better than ever.

## HONEY SHOW 2018 RESULTS

*Ribbons & Lynn Moore Cup kindly sponsored by Andrew Moore*

### **WINNER OF THE VERA BECVAR HONEY CUP**

**Helen Searle**

*(Presented to the overall winner of Classes 1, 2 & 3)*

## **WINNER OF THE LYNN MOORE MEMORIAL CUP**

**Steve Davies**

*(Presented to the High Weald member, not serving on the committee, who has contributed most to the benefit of the Club over the year)*

### **CLASS ONE - Clear Honey - Open**

1<sup>st</sup> – Helen Searle  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Bob Hayes  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Keith Obbard  
HC – Elizabeth Missen

### **CLASS TWO - Set Honey - Open**

1<sup>st</sup> – Steve Adams  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Helen Hadley  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Samantha Bowles

### **CLASS THREE - Cut Comb - Open**

1<sup>st</sup> – Helen Hadley  
1<sup>st</sup> – Edward Hutt

### **CLASS FOUR - Clear or Set Honey – Novice (Voted for by the attendees of Honey Show)**

1<sup>st</sup> – John Miller (10 votes)  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Andrew Moore (9 Votes)  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Andy Hayward (5 Votes)  
HC – Bryony Baker, Katherine Lawes, Daniel Hickey (4 Votes each)

### **CLASS FIVE & SIX – Cakes, Biscuits, Confectionery etc.**

1<sup>st</sup> – Maggie Hayes – Banana & Honey Muffins  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Lesley Francis – Date, Sultana, Honey & Walnut Cakes  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Helen Hadley – Honey Date Cake

### **CLASS SEVEN - Preserves & Mead**

1<sup>st</sup> – Helen Searle - Mead  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Amanda Savage – Quince, Crab Apple & Honey Jelly

### **CLASS EIGHT - Dipped Candle**

1<sup>st</sup> – Helen Searle

## **CLASS NINE - Moulded Candle**

1<sup>st</sup> – Chris Chandler  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Elizabeth Missen  
3<sup>rd</sup> – Chris Chandler

## **CLASS TEN - Any other Wax, Pollen or Propolis Product**

1<sup>st</sup> – Lesley Francis – Honey Bath Bombs  
2<sup>nd</sup> – David Chivers – Beeswax Furniture Polish

## **CLASS ELEVEN - Handmade Beekeeping item (Voted by the Attendees of the Honey Show)**

1<sup>st</sup> – Steve Davies - Swarm Collecting Bucket (13 Votes)  
2<sup>nd</sup> – Margaret Mawson – Entrance Block extension (12 Votes)



*Helen Searle receiving her trophy from HWBKA President, Brian Hopper.*

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY!**

**2019 HONEY SHOW AND AGM will be held on the 16<sup>th</sup> November.**

*Venue to be confirmed.*

**Sam Bowles**

**BEEKEEPING TASTER DAY will be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019**

..... and this year for the first time you can purchase and download a Gift Voucher from the website. So, if you know someone with a celebration coming up and are stuck for ideas, why not give them the gift of a wonderful day learning about bees in one of our members apiaries.

<http://hwbka.org.uk/event/beekeeping-taster-day-6/>

<http://hwbka.org.uk/education/training/day-taster-course/>

## A RWANDAN EXPERIENCE

### **One problem we do not have with our bees!**

On a recent visit to the western part of Rwanda (4 hours from the Capital Kigali) I was lucky enough to be able to visit the Gisovu Tea Plantation and the adjoining factory, where the tea is processed, dried and packed.

Gisovu is situated at an altitude of 7,500 feet above sea level and is close to the source of the River Nile (we *trekked through the forest to the source of the Nile too!*). The landscape is magical with the organic tea gardens spread all over the hills, and the visit to the private estate was one of the highlights of our trip.



During the past four years, Jason, the farm manager has brought many innovations to help and support people in this troubled land, which is still suffering from the effects of the Genocide. Workers at the plantation and factory are now supplied with housing, including a small plot of land, and encouraged to grow their own food. All the children receive an education and there are social clubs with various sports teams including an international cricket team! People work as many hours as they wish to fit around the needs of their families. Another real plus for the ladies is the provision of 'elephant' toilets out in the fields.

I was amazed to find that Jason is an enthusiastic beekeeper. He has approximately 100 hives, he is keen to train new beekeepers to help him run the apiary and

produce his Silverback Honey. When 'rookie' beekeepers are confident around the bees they are given a colony to take home, which then is used to supplement worker's income and diet. Honey is harvested four times a year, with each colony producing around 100 pounds (*yes – 400 pounds from one hive each year!*)



The hives are a mix of top bar (traditional) and nationals (modern), but made of anything that comes to hand, including old tea chests. The bees do not appear to have any problem with disease or pests, apart from one...

Unfortunately, Jason has one huge problem to overcome; he employs four full time security guards, working day and night to protect his hives – **from chimps!!**

The chimpanzees come from the nearby Nyungwe National Forest. They steal the hives, not just the honey but also the whole hive. They pick the boxes up, and then run as fast as they can away from the apiary, with all the bees streaming out behind them. There is no way of getting those hives back.

All the tea grown in this efficiently run tea plantation, ends up in packets of Taylors of Harrogate or Yorkshire Tea! To visit you need to conquer a challenging dirt track, which rises steeply for an hour and a half, the road is full of potholes and trenches - then you realise that this is the only way out for the tea. It is taken to Kigali, then across Uganda and Kenya to Mombasa by truck, and then

eventually is shipped all the way to Yorkshire!

**By Rose Marie Riley**

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## MEMBERS SUCCESS AT NATIONAL HONEY SHOW 2018

Everyone at the HWBKA was very proud of our various members (some of them from the Class of 2018!) who achieved great success at the National Honey Show in Surrey in October of 2018.



Particular mention must be given to Lesley Francis who won the Berry Cup and none other than Bill Turnbull of BBC Breakfast Show/Beekeeping fame, presented this to her. (*Pictured above*).

Malcolm Wilkie, Helen Hadley, John Miller and Jo and Rob Gore also won awards in various classes.

The full article on the successes, how to do it (and how not to!) can be found by clicking the following link. <http://hwbka.org.uk/high-weald-beekeeping-association-achieved-new-dizzying-heights-years-national-honey-show/>

## ASIAN HORNET UPDATE

As you know the threat of the Asian Hornet is very real. With a number of positive sightings in 2018 it is inevitable that these

'foreign' Hornets will become part of the battle for beekeepers UK wide. Unless we are extremely vigilant these will become commonplace and are a far more extreme threat than our native species.

The article below, by the BBKA, shows what they are doing to put forward a plan for action.

"BBKA Trustee Anne Rowberry has attended meetings and had discussions with Nigel Semmence, Contingency Planning & Science Officer, Bee health advice service at the National Bee Unit. [This document is the summary of the protocol that has been agreed.](#)

Further information will be posted on the website as it becomes available under Services\Asian Hornet\ Here is the link direct to the web page: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/asian-hornet-action-teams>

As you will read in the document, the BBKA needs all Area Associations to supply contact details to the office of their Asian Hornet Area Co-Ordinator(s) as soon as possible. We are in the process of creating a map on the website, similar to the swarm map, to facilitate members of the public being able to contact your co-ordinator.

We have also put on the website a document prepared by Nigel Semmence which gives an overview of Defra and other Organisations in relation to response on Asian Hornets.

There will be an opportunity at the upcoming ADM to discuss any queries or suggestions with Anne and other Trustees. Please let your ADM Delegate know this so that they can ask anything on your behalf. Further information will be sent out in due course but please keep checking the website for the latest information"

## [BEEHIVE TYPES No. 1](#) [PROS & CONS – WBC Hive](#)

I have kept bees for around 7-8 years now, mostly in WBCs of which I have seven, but I also have three 6-frame Polynukes. In addition, I had one National and I look after the Association Observation Hive. All my bees are on 14x12 frames.

Looking at the relative pros and cons of these hives, it is inevitably from my personal experience...and I must state before I start that I'm an unabashed WBC fan!

Firstly, to address some of the more frequent negative comments I've heard:

**WBCs are too small** They only have 10 brood frames versus 11 in a National (although you can in fact fit 11 in a WBC and 12 in Nationals, but it's less convenient as there's no room for a dummy board and you need a long J tool to get the frames out ...or a crowbar!)

So, this criticism could possibly be true; they are too small. Although even with a regular National Hive, quite often colonies end up as a brood and a half (i.e. a brood box and super used for brood) or a double brood box. With a Queen laying up to 2000 eggs a day in the summer, many folks consider the 45000 cells (see table right – you have to zoom-in)

available in a WBC brood box insufficient, but then a regular National has only ~10% more at 50,000.

The advent of 'Jumbo' Brood Boxes for WBCs made a big difference, providing as they do, 63,000 cells, similar to a

Langstroth and only ~10% less than a National with 14x12 frames. I changed all my WBCs to 14x12 frames early on and have never yet had a colony with brood on all frames.

**Pitched roofs are no good and they leak...**well not if they're made properly! But it is more difficult to make them weather-proof. Flat roofs also provide a convenient stand for supers etc. during inspections, which simply doesn't work with a pitched roof. But then, with a WBC, simply remove the lifts and stack them adjacent to the hive and - hey presto! An excellent stand, at a very convenient height.

### **Some of the less obvious perceived disadvantages**

The Varroa mesh floor only covers ~70% of the brood box area. This leaves an area of floor behind the entrance where mites that have fallen off the frames above will have ample opportunity to hop aboard a returning foraging bee. I have modified some of mine to have a much larger open area of mesh but haven't observed there to be any fewer Varroa in these colonies compared to the others.

It's not as straightforward to carry out advanced artificial swarm techniques using clever Snelgrove Boards and their like and requires that the WBC be used without its

Hive Type	Dimensions	Brood Chamber cells	Bee Space Brood Comb area of both sides	Full Super Weight (Approx)	No of Brood Frames (Brood Frame size)
National	18 1/8" x 18 1/8" 460 mm x 460 mm	50000	Bottom 199 sq. in	25 lbs 11.36 Kgs	11 (14" x 8 1/2") 356 mm x 216 mm
Deep National	18 1/8" x 18 1/8" 460 mm x 460 mm	70000	Bottom 292 sq. in	25 lbs 11.36 Kgs	11 (14" x 12") 356 mm x 305 mm
Dartington	36 1/4" x 18 1/8" 920 mm x 460 mm	70000	Bottom 292 sq. in	NA	11 (14" x 12") 356 mm x 305 mm
WBC	19 7/8" x 19 7/8" 505 mm x 505 mm	45000	Bottom 199 sq. in	25 lbs 11.36 Kgs	10 (14" x 8 1/2") 356 mm x 216 mm
Commercial	18 5/16" x 18 5/16" 465 mm x 465 mm	70500	Bottom 275 sq. in	25 lbs 11.36 Kgs	11 (16" x 10") 407 mm x 254 mm
Langstroth	20" x 16 1/4" 508 mm x 413 mm	61400	Top 272 sq. in	30 lbs 13.64 Kgs	10 (17 5/8" x 9 1/2") 448 mm x 241 mm
Smith	16 3/8" x 18 1/4" 416 mm x 463 mm	50000	Top 199 sq. in	25 lbs 11.36 Kgs	11 (14" x 8 1/2") 356 mm x 216 mm
Top Bar	36 to 48" x 16 to 19" 914mm to 1219 mm x 407 mm to 482 mm	Varies	Bottom Varies	NA	NA (varies per hive)
Rose	18 1/8" x 18 1/8" 460mm x 460mm	35000	Bottom 175 sq. in	30 lbs 13.64 Kgs	11 (national frame cut down)
Dadant & Langstroth Jumbo	20" x 16 1/4" 508 mm x 413 mm	85000	Top 340 sq. in	40 lbs 18.18 Kgs	11 (17 5/8" x 11 1/4") 448 mm x 286 mm

lifts. This is feasible, although attention would have to be paid to the roof and entrance areas to keep unwanted visitors out.

**They are more expensive.** True, but oh so worth it.

There's a lot of wood. If I were a commercial beekeeper with 100s of hives I don't think I'd be bothered with WBCs.

Related to the above, one might think that more wood means additional maintenance procedures, but I would say quite the contrary, for it is perfectly possible to re-treat / re-paint the lifts on a WBC without having to disturb or remove bees from brood boxes. The brood boxes need no maintenance other than cleaning out old propolis and the like.

And on that last point I now come onto to what I consider to be the major advantage of WBCs - those very lifts, which:

- Keep the colony completely weather-proof; cool in the (increasingly?) hot summers and warm and dry in the winters, but with good ventilation. With a single walled brood box, particularly one that is not well maintained, the wood becomes wet in the winter and any evaporation in the wind has a huge chilling effect. The latent heat of evaporation of water in 2,260 kJ/kg, and that's a lot of energy that the bees ultimately have to generate. Some of us are old enough to remember terracotta milk coolers ...same principle!
- In a WBC the brood and super boxes are completely insulated from the elements. So, no need to wrap them up in polythene bags etc. for the winter. Indeed, there was a series of articles in the BBKA Magazine a while ago from some beekeepers in the North East who used WBC lifts around regular national

hives in order to minimise winter losses. I have only had one winter loss in 7 years

- With the lifts, I also leave all my supers on the colonies throughout the winter with more than enough stores to get them through to spring. This helps in so many ways:
  - I don't have to buy sugar
  - The bees have a healthier diet
  - I don't have to worry about storing ~20 Supers
- The bees keep the Supers super clean so there's never any sign of mouldy old stores in the spring.
- I do, of course, remove the queen excluder so the cluster can move around to get to the stores they need.

**What about varroa treatment I hear someone think?** Well, that's a story for another time.

- The lifts also prevent woodpeckers breaking in, and I have never had any woodpecker damage even though some Greater Spotted Woodpeckers have broken into a tit box near to my hives.

- The entrance slides are infinitely adjustable from the outside so no need to be pulling out propolised entrance blocks to re-position them.

- There is a good deal more space for the bees in the gap inside the lifts, particularly between the crown board and roof. I notice in the evenings when I go down to have a look under the roof, which is my habit, of a summer's evening, that there may be 1000s of bees just 'hanging-out' – or maybe chilling-out would be a better way of saying it - on the crown board. This undoubtedly relieves congestion in the hive when the bees are ripening honey. When I started out, I had heard or read somewhere to watch out for bees creating burr comb in roof spaces, and that it was essential

to prevent bees entering the space between the boxes and lifts. I have never found this necessary and neither have I ever found any burr comb outside the brood / super boxes.

- *And finally* WBCs are just so pretty! I sound like a WBC salesman, but I did confess my bias at the start.

**Polynukes** - are really great for overwintering small colonies, and with an eke on top to use 14x12 frames, not so small colonies too. I have never lost a small colony in a Polynuke in winter, whereas I doubt some of the smaller ones would have survived in a wooden nuke. A downside is that I don't find them at all easy to clean compared to wooden hives.

**Nationals** - \_Hmmm! – I prefer WBCs

**Observation Hive** – It serves its purpose very well indeed and has been of huge benefit to the Association in terms of generating interest at country fairs and the like. However, it is too small, so I have recently modified it with an eke so it too can accommodate 14x12 frames, which, hopefully will make life easier next year.

There is quite a good succinct summary of hives on line at [http://www.biobees.com/library/hive\\_other/popular\\_hives\\_UK.pdf](http://www.biobees.com/library/hive_other/popular_hives_UK.pdf) by Mike Alsop at [www.fdbka.co.uk](http://www.fdbka.co.uk) who shows a table where I got the cell numbers from.

**Peter Coxon**

*This intended to be a series of articles about different hive types – any volunteers to make the case for other hive types?*

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**Next Edition: April 2019**

Any suggestions, articles, or information then please get in touch with the Editor at:

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