



# Wealden

# Apiarist

Newsletter of the High Weald Division of the Sussex Beekeeping Association

Secretary: Peter Halford E: the.hwbka+secretary@gmail.com  
Editor: Deborah Park E: the.hwbka+apiarist@gmail.com

**August 2017**

## High Weald Beekeepers Events Diary 2017

Date	Event	Address
24 <sup>th</sup> -27 <sup>th</sup> August	French Exchange	various
Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> September	Bee Banter	Rose & Crown Mayfield
Tuesday 31 <sup>st</sup> October	Bee Banter	Crow & Gate Crowborough
Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> November	HWBKA AGM	TBA
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Meal	TBA

### EDITOR'S BUZZ....

This month a rallying cry goes out to members for support with our New Apiary Plan. Read more on the next page.

Other items covered in this edition:

- Skep making workshop
- Tales from the Swarm Co-ordinator
- Anti-social Bees and Autism
- Village Fêtes
- Summer BBQ
- Cookery ad Book Corner
- BBKA Art Competition

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## **NEW APIARY PLAN**

The High Weald Beekeepers' Association has for many years benefited hugely from the generosity of Keith Obbard in so many ways, not least of which in providing a site for the Association Apiary where most of us have been well-trained in the art of beekeeping and enjoyed copious quantities of tea and flapjacks.

On the back of this and the dedication of many others too numerous to mention, the Association now has a record high membership figure of 169 making it the largest association in Sussex. With so many members, it becomes increasingly impractical to beg, borrow and steal and to rely on the goodwill of members to host events.

The Association Committee feels the time has come to forge ahead with **plans for a permanent apiary**, on our own or leased land, which will hugely benefit all members.

Our aspiration is that the NEW APIARY will consist of:

- A centrally located one acre site to house around 12 hives with access and parking for members' vehicles.
- A building, with water and electricity supply, designed for
- provision of Beekeeping Courses
- storage of apiary equipment
- hosting committee and social events
- storage of bulk purchased product for sale to the membership at beneficial prices
- honey extraction room which members could hire at beneficial rates

This will be a huge challenge. Committee members already have considerable draws on their time fulfilling their current roles, so **we need members support** if we are to pull this off.

In the first instance Deborah Park has agreed to project manage the NAP. She is in discussion with Wealden District Council officials who are able to offer advisory and financial support for such community projects. However, we are conscious that we have a wealth of resourceful and experienced individuals amongst our members and we hope to **pull a team together to get the job done** as efficiently as possible.

**If you would be willing to help** in any of the following ways, please let us know:

- Identifying local philanthropists or land owners who might be sympathetic and approachable
- Design and planning of the new Apiary House
- Identification of building supplies providers who may be willing to give to or sponsor HWBKA
- Offer any kind of carpentry/building/DIY/plumbing/ electrical/ tiling etc. skills
- Fund raising – either indirectly via Lottery Grants or similar, or directly by running a fund-raising activity.

Please don't be shy in coming forward...the more help the less each person has to do. So if you can give generously of your skills and/or your time for the sake of the bees and the long-term success of the HWBKA, please respond to this appeal via our secretary, Peter Halford, @ [the.hwbka+secretary@gmail.com](mailto:the.hwbka+secretary@gmail.com) or directly to Deborah Park @ [the.hwbka+apiarist@gmail.com](mailto:the.hwbka+apiarist@gmail.com).

And in case you were wondering, Keith, as many of you know, is easing back slightly on his HWBKA duties to help transform the wider country in the same way as he has helped transform beekeeping in Sussex. His contribution to the wider world via local politics will be doubtless hugely beneficial.... and who knows whether there might not be a hive or two on the roof of 10 Downing Street!

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## **SKEP MAKING WORKSHOP** **contribution by Clare Adams**

The skep making workshop was held on Saturday, 11th March at The Mount, Wadhurst by kind invitation of Johannes.



We had 14 participants & an excellent tutor in Nick Mengham who has many years experience in both bee keeping & the traditional skill of skep making. We all made good progress, some finishing their skep & others taking theirs home to complete.

It was decided that there should be a new class at the annual AGM show - best wonky skep!!! Committee please note!

A great day was enjoyed by all &, if you haven't tried it yet, skep making can be thoroughly recommended. Indeed Peter Halford finished his just in time for the swarming season!!



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## TALES FROM THE SWARM COORDINATOR contribution by Jen Moore

Last year Peter Halford and I split the responsibility of swarm collection between us - a vague boundary was drawn dividing the Association's area in to north and south and we awaited the influx of phone calls...

The cool spring meant that the first swarms didn't issue until May and the general procedure for swarm allocation is as follows: as a call comes in (having established with the caller that it is indeed a swarm) we send a message out to all those on the list. Once a beekeeper has replied and taken



responsibility for collecting that swarm, we then send out another message letting everyone know they can stand down. Of course there are occasions when there is a deafening silence, or only apologies, in which case Peter or I will endeavour to go and fetch it - thankfully most of the time the bees can be recovered and rehomed happily.

We also get calls about bees in buildings; most people think that "the bees are back" whereas of course the colony has been happily residing in their chimney/ wall/eaves (years!) and the spring made them noticeable. owner can be allowed the bees to stay sometimes work is



for some time weather has Hopefully the persuaded to put but being done on makes the

the property, so scaffolding and builders on site possibility of retrieving the bees much more likely.

The calls in 2016 continued from May through to the end of July, with a number of "good swarm days" meaning a hectic time trying to marshal everyone! Quick responses either way are much appreciated by us as we can then organise various back up options as necessary. Swarms don't always make it, and can be combined if they are small so if you have room for an extra little colony, do consider taking it on as towards the end of the summer, cast swarms can be a useful boost to bee numbers in your Apiary.

We are often contacted about different species of bee - usually bumblebees - and these enquiries are directed either to the Bumblebee Conservation Trust website or dealt with with some reassurance that the bees will do no harm and will only be around for a few more weeks. It's



important to do whatever we can to educate people and protect ALL bee species from unnecessary disturbance and harm.

Some of my more memorable swarm collections from last year were scooping bees out from a roof using a child's sandpit

spade, spending the hottest day of the year vacuuming a longstanding colony out of a chimney, and removing combs from between a window and a door, which had created a brilliant impromptu observation hive.



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## **ANTISOCIAL BEES AND PEOPLE WITH AUTISM SHARE GENETIC PROFILE** **contribution by Deborah Park**

A team of scientist from the University of Illinois have identified a link between unsociable honey bees and autistic humans.

Autism is a developmental disorder that affects people's ability to engage socially and communicate. The research team studied 246 groups of unrelated bees and identified a subset of insects that did not respond to two key kinds of social stimulus, the appearance of an "outsider" bee and the presence of a queen larva.

The first situation would normally elicit aggression and the second caring behaviour.

Analysis of the bees demonstrating atypical social behaviour revealed more than 1,000 genes in the bees' brains that were regulated differently. This genetic signature was closely linked to that found in humans with autism.

Lead scientist Professor Gene Robinson, from the University of Illinois, said: "Our data are telling us that social unresponsiveness does have some common molecular characteristics in these distantly related species.

"It's important to point out some caveats. Humans are not big bees and bees are not little humans. The social responsiveness depends on context, and is different in the two cases."

Prof Robinson went on to add that social behaviour probably evolved independently in honey bees and humans, but employed "common tool kits".

Co-author, Dr Michael Saul, added: "What really excites me about this study is that there appears to be this kernel of similarity between us and honey bees, a common animal inheritance that potentially drives social behaviour in similar ways.

"We haven't proved this, but this work is telling us where to look for that in the future."

The full findings of the study are published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

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## **VILLAGE FÊTES**

HWBKA has been active on the village fête front once again this year. These little community gatherings are a great opportunity to educate families on the work we do and the importance of bees in the environment. The display boards and the observation hive are a particular attraction. The Association own a gazebo that this year has been kindly decorated with bunting stitched by Linda Chandler – it all looks very professional. Additionally, fêtes are a great outlet for honey sales. People are often keen to buy local honey to alleviate hay fever symptoms or buy raw honey rather than blended supermarket honey for reasons of health and wellbeing. If you don't mind helping out on the stall you keep all your honey sales money; otherwise if others sell for you a donation of 10% to the association is requested.



*Peter, John, Chris and Amanda at Langton Green*



*Peter and Helen at Crowborough*

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## **SUMMER BBQ**

This summer's BBQ was very kindly hosted by Rachael and Simon Bishop in an idyllic barn setting at their farm in Maynards Green. Not only were the chicken, sausages and burgers superbly cooked by Stuart Goddard who slaved over the coals for much of the evening, but members produced a delicious array of salads, breads and desserts. The weather, having dished out a typical summer's dose of rain, thunder and lightning earlier in the day, held back majestically and released some late rays of sunshine. It was a fantastic opportunity to meet new members, of whom there were several, and to catch up with others.



To close off the evening we were treated to a surprise firework display which, judging by the oos and aahs, was much appreciated by all.

Thanks go especially to Rachael, Simon, Stuart and RoseMarie who organised the event.

Looking forward to next year's already!

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## **COOKERY CORNER**

### **Honey granola**

How better to start the day... It's the honey that really brings this granola together: as well as being a preferable form of sweetener, it binds the ingredients to make fun clusters. No better way to use some of that golden delight your bees have just produced for you! Once you've made your own granola there's no going back to shop-bought.

Makes around 1kg

#### **Ingredients**

150g honey  
60ml coconut or groundnut oil  
250g rolled oats  
100g bran  
150g sunflower seeds or sunflower and pumpkin seed mix  
100g hazelnuts  
150g dates or prunes  
100g dried apricots  
100g wheatgerm  
100g sultanas

[ feel free to trade some flaxseed for an equal amount of wheatgerm.)

#### **Method**

1. Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/gas mark 4.
2. Pour the honey and oil into a pan and heat gently until the honey has melted. Keep it below 35° so as not to denature the honey.
3. In a bowl, mix the oats, bran and sunflower seeds, then pour on the liquid from the pan and mix well. Spread out on a big baking tray.
4. Roast for 20-25 minutes, turning everything three or four times, then leave to cool.
5. Meanwhile, roast the hazelnuts until they turn a golden brown (which takes about 10 minutes), then roughly chop, along with the dates and apricots.
6. When cool, mix everything together with the wheatgerm and sultanas. Store in an air- tight container; lasts for about a month.

And here's a lovely treat that doubles as a tea bread or weekend breakfast bread to beat a brioche.....

### **Dairy-free honey bread**

Makes 1 small loaf

#### **Ingredients**

225g plain flour  
115g caster sugar  
115g honey  
150ml hot water  
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda  
Zest of 1 lemon

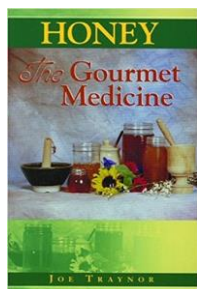
#### **Method**

1. Preheat the oven to 160C/325F/gas mark
  2. Butter a 450g loaf tin and line it with baking paper.
  3. Mix the flour and sugar together in a large bowl.
  4. Melt the honey and water in a small pan. Sprinkle the bicarbonate of soda over the water mixture and stir. Pour this over the dry ingredients, add the lemon zest and mix just until incorporated.
  5. Turn the mixture into the prepared tin and bake in the oven for 50–60 minutes.
  6. Remove from the tin and brush the top of the warm bread with honey for a nice sticky finish. Cool, then serve thinly sliced.
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## **Book Corner**

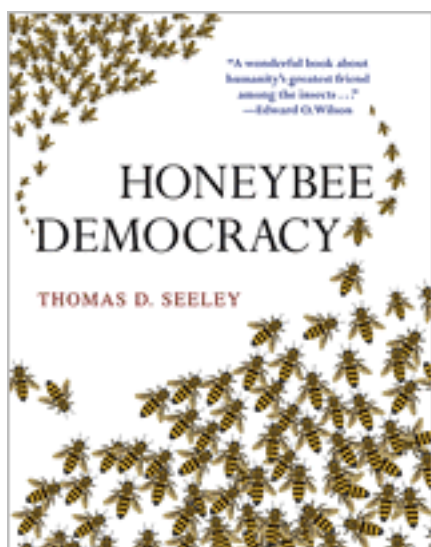
Two books for you this edition – neither of them new but both enjoyable all the same.



### **Honey: The Gourmet Medicine Paperback – ( 2002)** **Joe Traynor**

An easy to use handbook that describes the medicinal benefits of honey in treating a variety of maladies. It discusses the many uses of different honeys and hive products from cosmetic to curative. Burns, hangovers and more significant ailments are discussed and the unique antibacterial properties of honey are stressed. There are personal anecdotes and detailed sensory descriptions in the writing.

Publisher: Kovak Books (2002)  
ISBN: 978-0960470419



### **Honeybee Democracy (2010)** **Thomas D. Seeley**

*One of Financial Times (FT.com)'s Books of the Year in Nonfiction Round-Up in the Science & Environment list for 2010*

If members are not familiar with the life cycle of the bee and the colony they will not survive for long as beekeepers. Dr. Seeley, a renowned animal behaviourist, is a masterful guide not only to the challenges and life-or-death decisions bees face in choosing a nest, building the colony, rearing queens, choosing to swarm and start over, but also to what these incredible insects have to teach us when it comes to collective wisdom and effective decision making.

Seeley reveals parallels between the way swarms make decisions and how the human brain sorts through conflicting neuron signals to reach decisions. He provides a few pointers on how rules of honeybee democracy may be applied to decision-making in human groups, with minimal dependence on a leader, vigorous competition among a diversity of viewpoints, and a method for determining a majority-based resolution

Seeley concludes that what works well for bees can also work well for people: any decision-making group should consist of individuals with shared interests and mutual respect, a leader's influence should be minimized, debate should be relied upon, diverse solutions should be sought, and the majority should be counted on for a dependable resolution.

Perhaps one for our politicians' summer reading list!!

Publisher: Princeton University Press  
ISBN: 9781400835959

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## For BUDDING ARTISTS YOUNG AND OLD

**THE BRITISH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**  
FOUNDED 1874

Open to everyone this is an opportunity to explore your creativity either through drawing, painting or photography and to submit your entries by August 31st 2017.

# THE GREAT BRITISH BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION BEES IN ART COMPETITION 2017

**WE HAVE THREE CATEGORIES**

1. UP TO 12 YEARS OF AGE
2. 12 - 18 YEARS
3. 18 AND OVER

Entries will be judged by a team of experts and the winning entries and reserves will be exhibited at the Honey Show in October 2017

**FRIENDS OF THE HONEY BEE**

The theme for 2017 is 'Sound and Vision' and the BBKA are particularly interested in seeing how you interpret 'honey bee sounds' visually.

First prize is an individual personalised plate of the winning entry.  
For further details and T&C's see  
[https://www.bbka.org.uk/about/honey\\_bee\\_supporters/bees\\_in\\_art](https://www.bbka.org.uk/about/honey_bee_supporters/bees_in_art)

Good Luck!

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IDEAS, PHOTOS & ARTICLES FOR THE NEWSLETTER  
ARE ALWAYS WELCOMED WITH OPEN ARMS!

You do not have to be a budding writer. Just drop me a line and I'll happily talk over the phone or catch up with you at Bee Banter

If you would like to let other members know of any bee-related activity you are involved in just drop me a line and I'll spread the word.

Contact the Editor at [the.hwbka+apiarist@gmail.com](mailto:the.hwbka+apiarist@gmail.com)

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