



## September 2020 Newsletter

**Hello again Beekeepers! The beekeeping year is sadly coming to an end, a year none of us will ever forget - for all the wrong reasons! However, I'm pleased to say that this newsletter contains access to some very interesting webinars and talks by prominent beekeepers - plus a photo competition to enter! What more could you ask for!?**

**Please feel free to tell us all about your beekeeping adventures during lockdown; submissions from some of our members below!**

From Sheila Myron.....

Our wildflower meadow (lawn) didn't produce that many flowers this year but my neglected veg plots became a riot of borage, poppy, buttercup, pansy, etc, plus wildflowers like the willow herbs and many unidentified ones - and the bees have been on it all summer. Marjoram and strawberry colonised the patio cracks to the delight of bumble bees.

Right now, birds are feasting on brambles and my raspberries. A young hedgehog wandered up the garden one afternoon to drink at the bee's waterdish. We put out some hedgehog food, which it ate and potted off again. It has plenty of time to put on weight before winter. So it has been a great summer for wildlife and we have loved watching it. Right now in flower is the yellow buddleia, fuschia, hebe, rudbeckia, lavender, hemp agrimony, Viburnum bonariensa (all summer) and winter flowering(!) viburnum bodnantense.

Cliff our Education officer has had fun and games this year:

A strange summer all around! Now that we are into Autumn, I think it can be said that one of our hives has definitely had a strange summer.

All looked ok in March. Only a few varroa, bees flying and brood at all stages. A disease inspection and no signs of any nasties. This colony had never been prolific honey-producers, and in previous years seemed to have had a liking for supercedure, but maybe this year would be different.....

By the middle of April they were building up but we noticed multiple eggs in quite a few cells. Not just a couple of eggs either. Five or six eggs in a cell. Was there a laying worker? There did not seem to be an over-abundance of drone brood and the eggs were still being laid at the bottom of the cells and in a close pattern. Maybe there was a new queen? But the queen marked last year was still present and looking healthy. We left the colony alone and a couple of weeks later the multiple eggs were gone and things looked back to normal. Maybe things would now go more smoothly?

Into May and a filled queen cup emerged in the one of the supers, even though the queen excluder was in place and the marked queen was in the brood box. Never mind, the queen cup can make up a new nucleus (this nucleus never got going). In the main colony, bees are on ten frames, so we did a Demaree swarm control. Things must surely be back to normal soon?

June and into July saw eggs, larvae and sealed brood, as well as more queen cups. They must be superceding the queen so we left them to it. Late July and no eggs or larvae, so hopefully the new queen will soon be up and running..... or maybe not. Middle of August there were eggs. Great. Single and in a decent laying pattern. We were up and running again. At least that is what it looked like until pretty much all of these have come out as drones. Is it a drone laying worker? Or a poorly-mated queen? And just to add to the confusion, in the first week of September there was a sealed queen cell and two queen cups with royal jelly in them. Are they fertilised eggs or not? Will a new queen emerge and maybe survive the winter? At least there will be plenty of new drones around! Sometimes bees do the strangest of things.

Please let's hear more of your stories from this year. How much honey have you all had? Any good swarm adventures worth sharing?

## **Branch Meetings**

Advice is as previously stated - sadly, all branch meetings remain cancelled. However, Webinars, Zoom meetings and YouTube videos are plentiful! There is no excuse not to expand your beekeeping knowledge. I personally have enjoyed the Webinar talks from BIBBA - particularly the one by Lynfa Davies titled "The Mystery of Bee Mating"; although I think it probably should have been on after the watershed as there was some pretty graphic stuff on there! You can catch up on this second round of talks by following the link below.

<https://bibba.com/>

## PLUS - A Reminder ...



### The National Bee Improvement Programme (NatBIP)

BIBBA is launching NatBIP to encourage all beekeepers to produce hardy, docile and productive bees suited to their local environment.

For over 100 years there have been significant importations of honey bees and queens into the U.K. The reasons for this practice are varied; from the "Isle of Wight Disease" to hard winters (such as 1962/63) to management reasons to suit beekeepers. However, there is increasing concern from beekeepers, both new and experienced, with regard to continued importations and this is backed by scientific evidence. Concerns include but are not limited to:-

- Bee health. Possible introduction of pests, diseases and pathogens.
- Unsuitability to the locality. Possibly contributing to increased colony losses.
- Drones interbreeding with existing queens. Weakening the quality of local stock.

A series of webinars have been planned in a logical progression to explain NatBIP, experience of importations, scientific evidence, teaching beekeepers and how beekeeping associations can help improve our population of bees for the benefit of everyone. The provisional programme of webinars for NatBIP, all Tuesdays at 7.30pm is:-

1. 22nd Sept *"The National Bee Improvement Programme - Outline"*  
**Jo Widdicombe**

2. 29th Sept *"More details of the National Bee Improvement Programme and Participation"*  
**Jo Widdicombe**
3. 6th Oct *"Global pandemics, bee imports and native bees"*  
**Norman Carreck**
4. 13th Oct *"My 50 years experiences of imported bees affecting local stock"*  
**Peter Jenkins**
5. 20th Oct *"Resilient Honeybees"*  
**Grace McCormack**
6. 27th Oct *"Where we are, how we got here and how we can move on....."*  
**Roger Patterson**
7. 3rd Nov *"Some Fresh Ideas for Teaching and Learning"*  
**Roger Patterson**
8. 10th Nov *"Bees and queens for everyone"*  
**Roger Patterson**
9. 17th Nov *"Answering Your Questions"*  
**All Speakers**

NatBIP provides us with the first ever chance to choose to be self-sufficient with our beekeeping, reducing the need for increasing importations that many beekeepers feel are harming our own honey bees. It is hoped that as many beekeepers, groups and associations as possible will attend these webinars.

### **Register on Beebase**

This is a good time of year to register the number of hives you have on Beebase. They do an annual survey of how many hives survive the winter so this is a good way to assess how our beloved honey bee is surviving... or more realistically, the rate at which it is declining!

Follow the link below (from Sept Bee magazine):

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/public/register.cfm>

Please note that the Woolton Apiary is open for very controlled consultations with Dave. Book in to discuss your concerns with Dave and others on:

07530 514514

**\*It is very important you get in contact prior to turning up\*.**

## **GENERAL BEEKEEPING ADVICE** **For September**

from 'Dr. Dave Harrison' our resident Apiary Manager

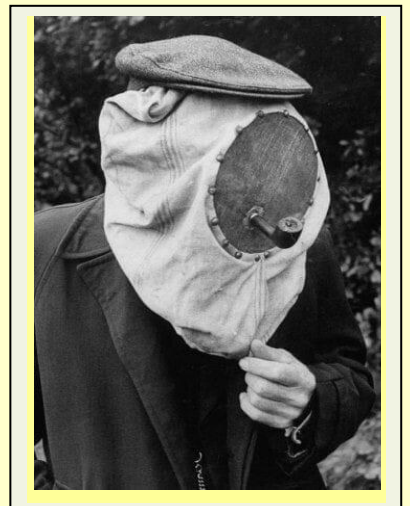
**"He's forgotten more than most of us know about beekeeping" so listen up for his latest pearls of wisdom....**



Dave is taking a rest from writing this month - concentrating on his new acting career - I hope you all saw the video of him feeding bees with sugar donated to us by BIDFOOD down at the apiary in Woolton. Click on the link below to see him in action! The video is also posted on our website and the Facebook page. We recently received some more sugar from BIDFOOD - if you want some please call Dave on 0151 428 5372 (that's his home number) - a bucket of sugar will be yours in exchange for a jar of honey - which will be passed onto BIDFOOD to keep them sweet!

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uUHU94NZ3nLDdyVdSIDNF\\_3b-b2JCwaG/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uUHU94NZ3nLDdyVdSIDNF_3b-b2JCwaG/view)

I hope you are all treating your bees for varoa... When it first appeared, one of the many methods employed to control it was the use of tobacco. Beekeepers would add tobacco to their smokers to quieten the bees and hopefully kill varoa. As this was considered pest control, the tobacco used was registered as a 'medicine' and so avoided the heavy cigarette tax! Some pipe smoking beekeepers used this to their advantage - but unfortunately the efficacy of tobacco was negligible and the loophole was soon closed! The photo to the right is a picture of one of our beekeepers from around this time!



## **Liverpool Beekeeping Association Committee**

It's that time of year again when the opportunity arises for you to think about getting involved with your Association and playing a more active role in determining how we operate.

The Committee is made up of the following:

Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Education officer, Librarian, Web Master, Apiary managers, Honey Show Officer, plus others.

If you are interested in joining the committee, please get in touch directly. If you have any skills - web design, for example - we need you! We are also particularly looking for a person or couple of people to work together to arrange the annual meal, annual BBQ and organise the refreshments at the branch meetings each month - plus organise any trips out to annual conventions - like a social secretary! Let me know if you would like to get involved!

## **BBKA PHOTO COMPETITION**

**We are looking for the best photo of a wasp, hornet (European or Asian), nest or gadget to protect your bees. Thorne Beekeeping Equipment have kindly donated a £100 voucher for the winner.**

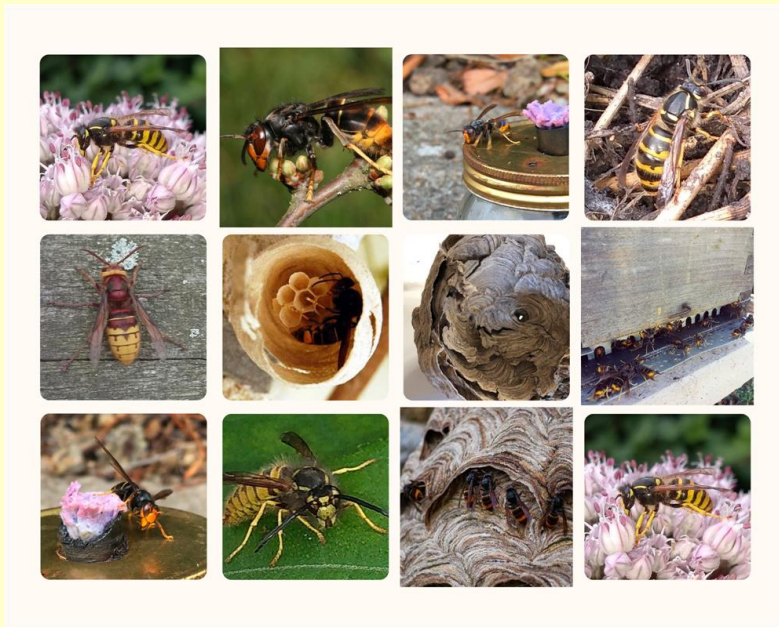
Photos should be of good quality resolution as entries may be used on the website, social media or BBKA (with credit).

Enter by sending your photo in to:

[Julie.Horbury@bbka.org.uk](mailto:Julie.Horbury@bbka.org.uk)

With the subject "Photo Competition".

Deadline 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020. The winner will be announced in BBKANNEWS, on the BBKA WEBSITE during last week of October.



### **Plus....**

One of our Beekeepers - Jeff Hughes - who had to give up beekeeping , has given us a pollen trap. If you would like this please get in touch - for a small donation to branch funds.

### **And Finally....**

If anyone has a surplus of rape honey they would like to sell, please contact Doug Jones.

***Happy Beekeeping!***

*John Mooney, Branch Secretary, [contact@liverpoolbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:contact@liverpoolbeekeepers.co.uk)  
[www.liverpoolbeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.liverpoolbeekeepers.co.uk)*