

# Cardiff, Vale and Valleys Beekeepers' Association

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## Newsletter April/May 2011

The unusually sunny weather has stayed for the last 7 weeks so many hives are exceptionally strong and probably ready to swarm any day now! If you were in the audience at my talk on the 12th April then you will know how to do an artificial swarm, but for those that couldn't make it I will add the hand-out at the end of this newsletter. Looking at your bees just once a week at this time of year may not stop them as they can make queen cells on the day you have just looked at them and have them sealed 6 days later. You always need spare equipment so make sure this is ready for when you decide to do this manipulation or split the hive.

### **Me and the Bees** (Who needs the A Team when you can have the Bee Team) **by Tim Wright**

I wanted to tell you all how the humble little Honey Bee has enriched and changed my life. Five years ago sitting around a picnic bench on my allotment I made a decision to start keeping bees, little did I know that this would change my life forever. It has had such a positive effect on my life allowing me to meet some wonderful people, learn new skills, give me a sense of belonging and given me focus and direction for the future.

Most people myself included drift through life doing jobs that we don't really enjoy and wish we could do something else that would give us a reason to get up in the morning. My wise old gran once said to me that if you have a hobby that you love and you can turn it into a business you will never feel that you are working and you will wake up every morning itching to get going. I decided to take her advice and you know what, she was right.

### **DIARY 2011 - Meetings and other events**

Sunday May 15th at 2.30pm Out apiary meeting Pontypridd Phone John King on 01443 400798 for directions and so he knows the numbers attending.

Wednesday June 15th Trip to Newquay Honey Farm, coach seats 51, to reserve a seat before it is fully booked send £10.00 with your e-mail to Lewis Roberts, 27, Cardinal Drive, Lisvane, Cardiff, CF14 0GD before June 1st Cost £5.00 on the day to look round.

Saturday July 9th at 2.30pm Out apiary meeting, Caerphilly Phone Dinah Sweet on 02920 869242 for directions and numbers attending. **PLEASE NOTE CHANGED DATE**

Friday 19th August 2-5pm Microscopy Course on adult bee diseases at Thornhill. Need to bring microscope and register with John, john.king1949@gmail.com

Saturday 13th August at 2.30pm Extracting honey at Lisvane Honey Farm with Tim Wright and Peter Shaw. Phone Peter 01633 897195 so that they know numbers.

June 11th 2pm Tutorial session for those wishing to take Basic Exam - contact Dinah

Newsletter contributions If you have any contributions for the newsletter such as letters, articles, poems, cartoons etc. copied from elsewhere or made up please send them to Dinah Sweet, GraigFawr Lodge, Caerphilly, CF83 1NF. Advertising rates for commercial / semi-commercial traders at £5.00 per year for approx. 1/6th page in 11 monthly issues. One off adverts at £1.00. Non-commercial adverts i.e. for sale of surplus equipment are free to members for a single entry.

After taking a beekeeping course and meeting my friend and mentor Pete (who continues to inspire me) I decided to start a business with Pete and another friend, Nigel. This didn't happen straight away, I kept bees for a couple of years learning the ropes and gleaning as much information as I could. After 2 bad years of honey production I took the decision to try and add value to the honey that the bees had worked so hard to produce. I did masses of research and experimentation with ingredients to create the products we have today in our range at 'Natures Little Helpers'. Making soap was a natural progression, so I went away with Nigel to learn how to do this properly which is very important.

We also wanted to sell beekeeping equipment which we now do from our unit in Lisvane, wow how lucky am I. People often say to me they hate bees because they sting people, I say to them that they have given me so much. Going out every week looking through our hives during the beekeeping season for me is a joy, I get a real buzz (pardon the pun) every time I open a hive to say hello to our girls. When I get feedback from the general public about how much they like our honey and our cosmetics it always inspires me to want to do more and create other natural products. The relationship between man and the honey bee is so intertwined that if these creatures were not around doing what they do best neither would we. So let's do our bit as beekeepers to help them as much as we can.

So to all you new beekeepers be warned, beekeeping is a very addictive hobby and all the above could happen to you !!!!!!! Just a final thought, if deciding to become a beekeeper has given me all of this in the last five years all I can say is bring on the next five because I am excited at the prospects.



Photograph of Nigel and Tim at their first Car Boot sale.

Tim has also started studying again for the WBKA module exams, 2 of which he took in March. He says that 'when you are passionate about something you want to learn all you can about that subject' and plans to continue until he reaches the Master Beekeeper qualification. D.Sweet

**BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES from 'Natures Little Helpers' open every Saturday from 9am - 1pm**

**Lisvane Honey Farm, Unit 8, Mill Farm Industrial Estate, CF14 0SH**

Peter Shaw (Thorne's Agent). Tel. 01633 897195

Tim Wright (Hand made natural products) Tel. 07970 289677

Nigel Harris Tel. 07970 293016

Contract extraction services available and taster sessions for beginners

**L & G R Chirnside**

Foundation available at a straight exchange for wax.

Beekeeping supplies available from stock. Equipment new and used available.

Bryn y pant Cottage, Upper Llanover, Abergavenny. NP7 9ES.

Tel. 01837 880625