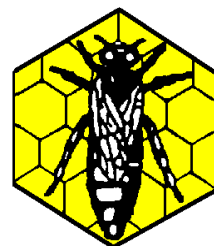


Cardiff, Vale and Valleys Beekeepers' Association

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Newsletter March 2009

Spring has arrived, it's official! Once the snowdrops and crocuses are poking out of the ground we know the bees are going out and collecting pollen in the warm part of the day, to feed the new young brood in the hive. Now is the time to heft the hives to check on the stores and if a little light, then start feeding syrup using a frame hanging feeder or contact feeder.

To be sure that your hives are covered for BDI insurance purposes, if you haven't already then send your subscription renewal in by 23rd March, as Lewis has to send off the returns. Also, if you haven't paid by then you will be removed from the association data base.

We are holding a competition to design a Bee logo to go on Polo shirts and mugs. It will need to have our associations new initials CVVBKA on it and must be bee specific with either a bee or hive. It should be in colour and sent to my e-mail sweetd@cardiff.ac.uk as an attachment before 11th April. We have an independent judge to decide the winner and the prize is a polo shirt and mug with your design on it.

The four Glamorgan beekeeping associations are getting together to put on a joint stand at the Royal Welsh Show this summer (July 20th to 23rd) as it is our turn. We need 4 volunteers to be stewards for a half day, starting early at 8am 'til 2pm or 12 'til 7pm. They will get a free ticket to get in to the show but may have to pay for a Glamorgan Beekeepers T shirt (this matter is still being decided). Please phone John King (number above) if you are interested.

DIARY - EVENING MEETING DATES at Llandaff Village Hall

Tuesday 10th March at 7.30 pm Gwyn Owen & Andrew Connell, talking about 'Urban Beekeeping' in a very small garden in Cardiff.

Saturday 28th March, 9am to 4pm WBKA Spring Convention at RWAS, Built to be opened at 10am. by wild life presenter Iolo Williams who will give the first talk. Tickets in advance at £5.00 from Barbara or £7.00 at the door.

Tuesday 14th April at 7.30 pm Professor Pickard will be giving a talk.

Out apiary meetings once a month during the summer May, June, July and August at different members' apiaries (Dates to be announced).

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.

The association is planning a trip in August to visit Chris Adam's bees at the National Botanical Gardens of Wales, near Carmarthen. Normally the public are not allowed in the apiary but we would be able to look at the bees with Chris and also spend time looking at the beautiful gardens and seeing what plants his bees are making a 'beeline' for. If you are interested in this trip, please let John King know and the committee will organise an appropriate sized bus to take us all there.

We are also planning a teaching apiary to be sited at Duffryn gardens, St. Nicolas with Harold Williams as Apiary manager. This should be up and running by Spring 2010, as it needs to be positioned so that the public can see it and yet be protected from the bees for safety reasons.

The bees at the teaching apiary here in Caerphilly are taking a short holiday as a new drive will be constructed at the end of March and they will be re-sited when they return. They should be back in time for the beginners to look inside and see what is happening but at least 6 weeks needs to be the time interval, as the foragers will remember where they used to be sited and just fly back there!

You may have noticed that yet again we have changed the name of this beekeeping association, however we think we have at last got it right as the name now really does represent the area where we keep our bees.

As soon as the warmer weather starts, we should be able to have a quick look inside the hives and give the floor boards a clean and take off the mouse guards. This very quick assessment should take no longer than 3 minutes as the brood can easily chill. It needs to stay at a temperature above 30 degrees centigrade to keep viable and the bees can maintain this only if they are not disturbed for too long.



Usually at this time of year it is easier to find the queen as there are less bees in the hive so many beekeepers will clip her wings and mark her thorax so that she will be easier to spot when there are many more bees around at the height of the season. When the queen is found, the frame that she is on should be put in an upside-down roof so that when she is picked up she can be seen easily if dropped. There is nothing worse than stepping on your only queen!!!

Dinah Sweet

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