

**editors comment**

As we carry out the final jobs in our apiaries and start to reflect upon what kind of year it has been for our bees and in-turn our management of them; then the following piece of bar room philosophy I had relayed to me might come in useful. When expressing my disappointment on how my bees had performed over the year, one of our senior association members replied that an old time beekeeper and late friend of his always said that beekeeping runs in five year cycles .... One good year, one bad year and three average years...So along with an accepting smile I raise a honey jar to the average years!

Thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of the Hive.



Thanks to Mick Hildich for the photo of pollen brought in by his bees at the end of July.

He comments that the Rose Bay Willow Herb is easily the most worked.



Above: left... our new President Ray Day with the outgoing President Phil Hulme.

Back in May the official handover of the President's badge of office took place at our monthly meeting.

We take this opportunity to wish Phil all the best and thank him for his services to the association.

# honey shortage?

As beekeepers we have varied experiences within our own colonies and as an association it is good to share amongst each other the successes and failures we experience, particularly for new bee-keepers. This summer has brought about changeable weather conditions which affect our bee colonies. Members are reporting a loss of honey flow, discernible this month. The impact is not just a loss of honey to ourselves but a shortage of food for winter for our colonies. We would like to include this as a topic for discussion in our October meeting Q&A session, so anyone with concerns or experience of this problem will be welcome to add their thoughts so that we may pool our ideas. This could be a baffling season for any new members and explanations/coping strategies will be more than welcome.  
Linda Day

**\*Congratulations\*** go out to Angela Fearon who gained a distinction in the BBKA written exam module 3: Honey bee pests, diseases and poisoning.



**Programme**  
doors open thirty minutes before the start

02/09/15	02/09/15 Hanchurch Village Hall, with South Cheshire Association. Speaker Chris Deaves Topic: Thinking about winter. Includes record keeping per hive, whole apiary/disease management
07/10/15	FMH. Q&A session, all members welcome, aimed at new beekeepers.
17/10/15 (SATURDAY)  Additional meeting	Minton Community Centre, Hartshill. Time to be announced Topic: Annual Honey Show Margaret Teasdale organiser. Terry Ashley to judge. Speaker: Michael Badger MBE Topic: Making and showing Mead.
04/11/15	FMH. Speaker Matthew Lepp. Topic: Soap making demonstration. Matthew has experience of using honey for soap making
02/12/15	FMH. Speaker Phil Ward from Staffs Wildlife Trust. Topic birds and wildlife on Isle of Mull, followed by Christmas social. Pat Twigg to organise food

**more detailed information on the talks is available on the website**

FMH = The Friends Meeting House, Miller Street, Newcastle under Lyme ST5 1QJ

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# honey show

Saturday 17th October is our annual honey show event.

If you have a product from your hive/hives then why not enter into the show. Your entry will help to ensure that 2015 will be as successful as last year. It is also an opportunity to meet fellow members have a chat, a sandwich and above all have fun. Margaret has put together some tips, below, on preparing and showing

for more info: <http://northstaffsbees.org.uk/event/honey-show/>

### Some tips to help with your Honey Show entries

- Read the Show schedule very carefully and decide which classes you can enter.
- If you have never won a first prize in a Honey Show then you can enter Class 1 in addition to any other classes.
- If you have 4 jars of the same honey you can enter 2 in Class 1 and 2 in another class depending on the colour.
- All honey will need to be in standard honey jars, if you have not bought any via the NSBKA then see if a member will sell you a few.
- You need 2 identical jars of honey for most classes.
- Your honey will be judged on both taste and presentation, check your jar and lid are clean and your honey free of debris.
- You only need one jar for the 'Black Jar' class. It is judged on taste alone so the jar will need to be painted black or covered neatly in masking tape.
- The jar labels to identify your honey will be provided at the Show.
- If haven't got any honey this year - try to put entries in the cookery, handicraft or equipment classes.
- You may enter as many classes as you like there is no charge for entries.
- The more classes you enter, the more chance you have of gaining points.
- More points may mean you win Cups or Prize money.
- Our new cup will be awarded for the most points in all the classes.

Please ring or ask for help/ advice if you need it. Let me know if you need a printed copy of the schedule, entry form or show rules.

**Margaret Teasdale**  
**Tel 01782 502495**

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### Turtle Wax is more than a car polish !!

We all know the healing and health properties of bee products. Who would have thought that the honey bee could play such a vital part in helping save the lives of giant sea creatures on the worldwide list of endangered species.

Well, it's happening in marine centres in the State of Georgia in America. Where honey and beeswax is being used to treat injuries caused by boat propellers hitting turtles that live in the Atlantic.

This includes the Loggerheads which can weigh up to 300 lbs, and in particular the females who are especially vulnerable when they swim in from deep water to lay their eggs on the beaches of Florida and Georgia.

Research has revealed that honey has been recognised as a natural healer for everything from battle wounds to burns by humans for thousands of years, but it has only recently been used to treat these sea creatures.

Dr Terry Norton is pioneering the work, plugging deep wounds with a honeycomb mix that helps to kill infection and waterproof the damaged tissues. (The photograph shows a turtle with a full shell coating.)

As well as using Medi-Honey, which is produced from the Manuka tree in New Zealand, he has tapped into the pure honey from local beekeepers which is full of natural enzymes that are anti-inflammatory and stimulate cell growth. Honey is also fed by mouth to under-nourished turtles !

courtesy of Jenni Balow West Cornwall BKA



Photo courtesy of Jenni Balow

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## The Bees of Paris

### *(Les Abeilles de Paris)*

There is something heart-warming and reassuring about finding the familiar in unfamiliar places. I remember, as a child, discovering that you could buy a Mars Bar in France and it tasted just as good as it did at home.

So discovering, on a visit to Paris in June, that *les Jardins de Luxembourg* in Paris are home to one of the oldest beekeeping schools in France, together with a thriving apiary, equalled the Mars Bar moment in discovery and delight. The Bee School (*Rucher Ecole*) has been teaching beekeeping skills since 1856. Classes run on a regular basis during summer months and 'students' are provided with suits and smokers.

And it appears that there is indeed a need for this 'ecole'! Forget small pet dogs carried around in handbags. Now the must-have fashion item in Paris is a bee suit (and of course, the bee hive to go with it).

On a more serious note, the bees (*les abeilles*) in Paris are doing extremely well. For over 10 years, Paris has been a pesticide-free zone. The lack of pesticides, the reasonable climate and the abundance of flowering trees and flowers late into the year, have made Paris a top city for beekeeping. Compared with high colony losses in the French countryside over the years (up to 50% in the past 10 years), the losses in Paris hover around the 5% mark. In addition, analysis has showed that 250 varieties of pollen can be found in Parisian honey. However, overall, *L'apiculture française* is having a tough time at present.

Back in *les Jardins de Luxembourg*, the bees there are thriving. There is a wide variety of flowering trees and shrubs and, at the time of my visit, the air was redolent with the scent of lime trees. The bee hives (*les ruches*) in the apiary (*le rucher*) have an oriental look about them – a metal, pagoda-style roof sits on what looked to me, like a stack of Langstroth boxes and the whole thing perches on metal 'legs' so that each hive is off the ground. I counted 16 hives, arranged in a semi-circle, near to one of the fountains and pools and surrounded by a low wooden fence. There was an abundance of bees coming and going from the hives on the day I visited. Truly a delightful discovery of the familiar in an unfamiliar place.

## SWEET REWARDS

Celia Davis - via eBees

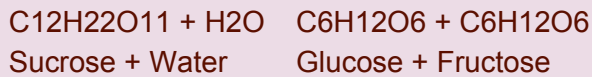
**Nectar** is food for many insects: butterflies and moths, some flies, some beetles, bees of all kinds and some others too. It is an energy food, composed of water (30 – 90%), sugar in varying concentrations and of different kinds, but generally a mixture of fructose, glucose and sucrose, and a few other ingredients in very small quantities. More of those later. As adult insects are generally concerned only with searching out a mate and laying eggs, often in a very short time and involving a lot of flying about, energy is of prime importance, so the sugar in nectar is of great value. Nectar is produced in structures called nectaries and these are usually found inside the flower near the base, in a situation where, to reach them, the insect has to brush past the reproductive organs of the flower, so collecting/ delivering pollen. Nectaries are made up of groups of cells which are able to extract substances from the plant sap, producing a solution which is passed to the outside. This may be stored in some way so that there is an abundant supply when an insect visits. Plants do not produce nectar continuously, often requiring specific conditions of soil type and moisture, weather, temperature and shade, and each plant type will have a diurnal pattern where it will produce best at a certain time of day. The composition also varies with the time of day, some nectars containing much more sugar at certain times.

Once a flower is pollinated it ceases to produce nectar and may signal this in different ways eg. the individual florets of white clover (*Trifolium repens*) hang down and turn brown and the centre of the forget-me-not flower (*Myosotis* spp) changes from yellow to white. Bees can recognise these signals and will avoid those flowers.

**Transportation** - Most insects simply feed on the nectar, but our honey bees need to transport some of it back to the nest where it can be turned into honey. This is done solely to provide the colony with a food source during dearth periods, and particularly in winter when few plants flower. The worker bee carries the nectar back to the nest in a structure called the crop. This is part of the bee's digestive system but is separated from the rest of the system by a valve, the proventriculus, which prevents the passage of the nectar from the crop into the next section of the gut. Once back in the nest, the bee regurgitates the nectar and passes it to one or more receiver bees, which put it into a cell in the nectar collection area. The forager bee will have added enzymes, produced in her hypopharyngeal glands, to the nectar. The ones we are concerned with are:

1. Sucrase (invertase) This breaks sucrose molecules into glucose and fructose. We can show this in a simple equation:

### Sucrase



The chemical process of adding water to a molecule to break it down into its constituent parts is called hydrolysis.

2. Glucose oxidase which acts on some of the glucose to break it down into hydrogen peroxide (an antibacterial) and gluconic acid. The receiver bees and nectar processors will add more of the same enzymes.

**The all-important physical change** — As well as the chemical changes, the nectar has to undergo a physical change where its water content is reduced to about 18%. The hive is maintained at a high temperature of around 34.5°C so that helps in the evaporation process. In addition, large numbers of bees produce air currents through the hive by fanning their wings. During a heavy nectar flow it is fascinating to listen to the noise from the hives in the evening, where thousands of bees are fanning their wings, and to see those at the entrance helping in this process. The scent of the nectar will also be wafted out of the hives. The nectar will be 'rolled' on the tongues of processor bees and spread thinly over the cells, both methods exposing a greater surface area to the air. Once the water content is reduced to 18% the bees will fill up the cells and cap them over with an impermeable wax capping. This keeps out the moisture present in the hive atmosphere, as the very concentrated solution of sugar is hygroscopic, attracting water if it is present. A practical point to remember is that the collected nectar takes up far more space in supers than the finished honey so sufficient space is essential.

**The importance of honey** - So why go to all this trouble? An ability to produce a food for the winter is essential to the maintenance of the perennial colony. Nectar, the bees' natural food, will not keep for any time as its high water content will result in fermentation, where the natural yeasts in the nectar will use the sugar to produce carbon dioxide and alcohol. Reducing the water content of the nectar will avoid this as the sugar concentration is then too high for the yeasts to function. The process provides us with a luxury food much enjoyed by many people. And what of those apparently unimportant constituents of nectar I mentioned earlier?

They include a wide range of compounds but they are present in tiny amounts. However, once the water has been removed, these substances are more significant and endow the honey with a characteristic flavour, aroma and colour, so giving us the wide variety of honeys which we enjoy.

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## The poet and the Beekeeper by Pam Ayers

I miss my lovely wife, she's gone, I've lost her that's for sure,  
Bees have tampered with her brain; she is besotted, she's a bore,  
She talks a different language; it's all gibberish to me,  
With her Modified Commercial and her WBC.

She's working in the shed, I am a very lonely chap,  
She's making up the frames, going tappy-tappy-tap,  
I get no smile of greeting as she nails another batch,  
Her mouth is full of gimpy pins. They might go down the hatch.

Every time I see my wife I think I'm going to choke,  
She is permanently trapped in an engulfing cloud of smoke,  
We'd apples on the branches once, that's how it used to be,  
Now great swarms of honey bees are swinging from the tree.

I see a stealthy creature in the dingy undergrowth!  
I catch a flash of metal and I swear a mighty oath,  
"A terrorist!" I cry and leap up brandishing the poker,  
To see my wife emerging with a hive tool and a smoker.

My spouse was cool and fragrant; once we cuddled and we kissed,  
Before she took the veil and called herself an apiarist,  
She drops her suit and doesn't care what anybody thinks,  
It may be smoke or sweatiness, but either way she stinks.

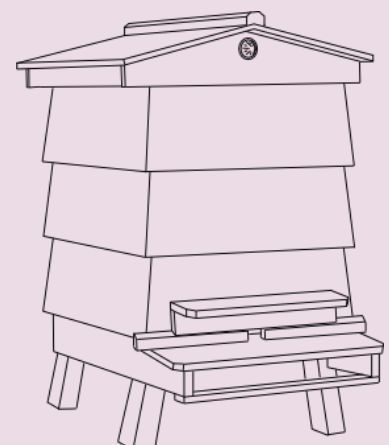
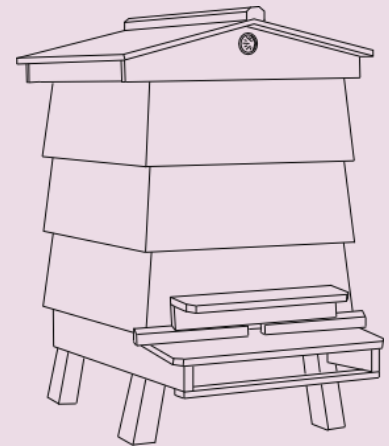
I miss her company; we don't do anything together,  
She takes her bees to Scotland; they go camping in the heather,  
Then, when they come back again, her one and only topic,  
Is honey Caledonian and glories thixotropic.

When buying birthday presents I am overwhelmed with gloom,  
She's not a gal contented with a bottle of perfume,  
Her needs are very complex. Can I find? Can I afford?  
A solar wax extractor, straining tank and Snelgrove board?

Autumn is upon us; bleakly now the leaves are lost,  
The hives are cosy in the cold no matter what the cost,  
Varroa has been taken on with remedies assorted,  
Mice are disappointed; Woody Woodpecker is thwarted.

My wife's on the extractor and the house looks like a slum  
She makes me wind the handle which in turn rotates the drum,  
Thickly in the warming tank we watch the honey pour,  
With hands stuck to the table and with feet stuck to the floor.

Now from our endeavour, see the product, see the fruits,  
Of summer days spent sweltering in reeking gloves and boots,  
By tanks of golden honey we are richly reimbursed,  
I'd give my wife a cuddle ... if she had a shower first."



# Could you fill this space or more

Why dont you let us know your beekeeping stories... It maybe about your favourite colony or the most useful piece of equipment,...how you came to beekeeping or one of your bee photographs, your favourite poem or the hurdles you have faced while managing your bees ....These are only a few ideas I'm sure there is more you can come up with....

## Bee Promotional Days

The photographs below are from our bee promotion days organised by David Booth.

This one was part of the "Heaton House big weekend event" near Rushton Spencer.

With the the observation hive stocked our stand was up and ready for the visitors.

There was a great interest shown in the display and many questions were asked and answered.

We are always after help at these events so if you can spare a day at a weekend for next years events then why don't you contact David Booth to register your interest....I can assure you you won't regret it!

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