

### editorial

Here we are again starting a new beekeeping year and I am sure by the time you read this the bee colonies will be expanding as expected. If you have experienced colony losses I hope they have been minimal.

This is the time, too, when all our preparations put in over winter come to fruition: equipment repaired, cleaned and sterilized, frames assembled and ready for foundation and a clear plan set out on how we intend to manage our colonies over the coming months.....oh I wish!

Our newsletter needs your stories, beekeeping articles, worries (bee related) & successes, photos and drawings etc...I sit at home on my lonesome wondering what a group of beekeepers would be interested in .....come on 180 members plus... you don't want to just hear from me so help to make our publication one that is compiled by all.



Remember to make a note in your diary for the **Summer Social** **saturday 4th july**

### Discounts for Members

The following companies have agreed to give a discount on purchases made by Northstaffs beekeepers, from them.

[www.beebasic.co.uk](http://www.beebasic.co.uk)

[www.modernbeekeeping.co.uk](http://www.modernbeekeeping.co.uk)

[www.beewear.co.uk](http://www.beewear.co.uk)

For further information on how to claim your discount plus the required discount codes go to the Members page on the Website.

### for hire

#### HONEY EXTRACTOR & SETTLING TANK

The Honey extractor and settling tank is now stored at Brian Holdcroft's.

If you wish to loan it please call or text...07969805252

or email...bryan@bryanholdcroft.orangehome.co.uk

Please allow a minimum seven days prior to your preferred loan date.



**SPRING,SPRING,SPRING** Gardeners everywhere are beginning to see the green shoots of their labour emerge as the days start to grow longer and none more so than those working the allotments at Richmond Street, Stoke.

But also we at North Staffs Beekeepers have cause to be pleased as we see the Association apiary at Richmond Street finally establishing itself too .

There is one colony on there at the moment, but they're doing well. Co-organisers Debbie Nelson and Rachael Lewis have been very busy, sorting out the shed and getting things ready for the season.

Regular meetings are on Sundays at 3pm, and you can sign up for the Meet Up here:

<http://www.meetup.com/stoke-apiary/>



It promises to be a really nice group, and we have use of the lovely allotment hut (especially welcome on wet days) and we've also got a camper stove there for a brew and a chat afterwards.

Any queries please contact Debbie on [debbie.mca@btinternet.com](mailto:debbie.mca@btinternet.com)

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

<p>Wed 6th May 2015 FMH-ST5 1QJ</p>	<p>John Charlton..Manchester and District BBKA "Changes in Beekeeping" John's interest in bees goes back to a time when he made all his own equipment including foundation and frames. After studying Chemical Engineering and completing National Service (REME) he increased to a maximum of 30 hives. He has served on the VBBA (BIBBA) committee and also Cheshire BKA committee. John took over as Hon. Microscopist for Manchester BKA some 20 years ago and in his own words has not stopped learning. He runs a course of 7 Saturdays on microscopy each year, found three new parasites but (curiously) cannot get anyone interested to follow up his discovery. He is now down to 10 stocks but produces too much honey to handle!</p>
<p>June</p>	<p>Apiary Meeting...Stoke Apiary Richmond Street, Off Honeywall, Stoke</p>
<p>Sat 4th July 2015</p>	<p>Summer Social... Kindly Hosted by Melanie Bishop "Park House" Newcastle Road Little Madeley Crewe CW3 9JT The driveway is on the A525 Newcastle Road 50yds west of the M6 bridge. Enter between the white railings, parking is available at the rear. Pat Twigg will coordinate your offers of food if you contact her on <b>01630 673299</b>.</p>

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

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

.....cut.....cut.....

**IMPROVE YOUR BEES BY RAISING YOUR OWN QUEENS A TWO DAY COURSE**

The Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders' Association (BIBBA) will be running a small number of practical and theoretical queen rearing courses during 2015. These will be aimed at beekeepers who wish to improve their bees that show the characteristics of native bees, with emphasis on suitability to the environment, docility, calmness on the comb, ease of management, good use of stores, etc.

The first courses to be arranged will be held at Glan-yr-afon, Corwen, LL21 0HA in North Wales on 14/15 and 16/17 May. The two day course including refreshments and buffet lunches is £75 for BIBBA members, £85 for non members. Numbers will be limited.

Please contact Steve Rose [steve-rose@bibba.com](mailto:steve-rose@bibba.com) or see [www.bibba.com](http://www.bibba.com) for more details, other dates and venues.

## PLANTS FOR BEES and other POLLINATORS



When it comes to planting flowers shrubs and trees in our gardens, balconies and in the land around our towns and cities then it worth thinking whether our choices are providing nectar and pollen as food for bees and other pollinators throughout the year.

Examples set out in the Wildlife Trust information sheet are, “pussy willow primroses and crocuses in spring, Lavenders, meadow cranesbill and ox-eye daisies in summer, ivy and hebes in autumn, and mahonia shrubs and cyclamen in winter. ”

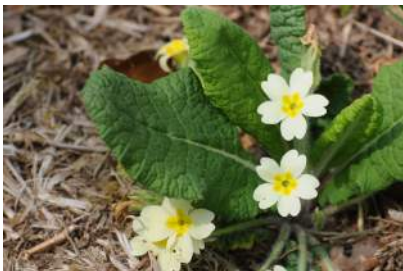
The important principle is to plant a wide range of nectar / pollen producing plants that span the whole year. Many plants such as Borage, Comfrey, Viper’s bugloss, and bird’s foot trefoil are favoured by bees. Take a look at The Wildlife trust’s [‘Planting for bees’ guide](#) .

For further information on what to plant and when; look out for the Royal Horticultural Society’s [‘Perfect for Pollinators’ logo](#) at garden centers or suppliers. Try to select single flowers rather than double flowers that produce little or no pollen or nectar.

### Which plants and when?

The resources provided by flowering plants can be split into three key periods during the year. Getting the timing right is crucial **so that plants are in flower from February to October, with no gaps:**

#### February/March to May:



When many insect pollinators are emerging from winter hibernation and need access to energy resources (nectar) pretty quickly. Examples of good plants for this period include goat and grey willows, pussy willow, dandelion, blackthorn, hawthorn and some of the fruit trees like apples, pear and plums. Garden plants include aubretia, wallflower, heathers, crocuses, primroses and flowering currants (*Ribes*)

#### June to mid-July:



When most insect pollinators are on the wing and actively foraging for food and fuel, including collecting pollen as a protein source to produce and feed the next generation. There are many examples of good plants for this period with the more common ones including ox-eye daisy, red and alsike clover, birds foot trefoil, self-heal, knapweed, vetches, thyme, betony and brambles. White and red deadnettles and thistles provide great natural resources. Poached egg plant, foxglove, snapdragons, cornflowers, mallow, lavenders, meadow cranesbill and honeysuckle represent just a few of the more commonly sown garden and border species.



### End of July to October:

When insect pollinators are looking to build up their energy levels and reserves before they head into hibernation over winter. There are considerably fewer plants that produce these important hibernating resources, but garden plants that do include Michaelmas daisy, late-flowering hebes and asters, while common ivy is also a very important source. In addition, several bumble bee species remain active during the winter

particularly in urban areas of south east England. Plants to provide resources for this period include cyclamen and mahonia shrubs. Specific flowers are beneficial to pollinators of conservation importance. Good plants include clovers, deadnettles, knapweeds, foxglove, comfrey, and birds foot trefoil.

Note: examples of pollinators of conservation importance in England (identified under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act , 2006) include the brown-banded carder bee (*Bombus humilis*), the short haired bumblebee (*Bombus subterraneus*), the shrill carder bee (*Bombus sylvarum*), Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) and the Cinnabar moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*).

*Note: Government experts and a wide range of interested parties have helped to inform the development of these actions and the supporting advice. It is intended as good practice advice and should not be regarded as official guidance. The Bees' Needs is hosted by The Wildlife Trusts on behalf of Defra in support of the emerging National Pollinator Strategy. The Wildlife Trusts do not own or endorse any content other than as a contributing stakeholder to the National Pollinator Strategy along with many other organisations and individuals.*

Contact us at: [pollinatorstrategy@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pollinatorstrategy@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

The above article is a summary of a leaflet issued by the Wildlife Trust. To view the full article visit <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/Bees-needs/growmore> .

#### **Beginners Bit:** Factors to be considered when siting colonies:

“Is there adequate forage in the area for the bees to support themselves

“Is there a constant water source or can one be provided.

“The site should not be a frost pocket.

“The flightpath of the bees should be such that it avoids footpaths and areas where there is likely to be human or animal activity. Hedges and fences can be used to push the bees up but aggressive bees can still be a problem. For this reason it is worth having an alternative site 3 miles plus away where they can be taken in an emergency.

“Shade is important from nearby trees particularly at mid-day during summer. However the bees should not be sited directly under trees where rain drops can fall onto the hive in winter and disturb them.

“There must be adequate space around each of the colonies (min 1metre all around) for manipulation and general maintenance and the site needs to be free from any form of flooding.

“Out apiaries should have road access and where livestock are present there needs to be a stock-proof fence erected around the site.

“The hives should be set out in an irregular pattern to minimise drifting. Drifting is where bees from one colony inadvertently try to enter the wrong colony.

“Space for future expansion should be considered at the planning stage. This is often overlooked.

“Stands should be considered which lift the hives off the ground and set them at a comfortable working height.

“In home apiaries the hives are best if positioned out of sight of neighbours where possible.

“ Bees will at some time swarm despite the best efforts of the beekeeper to prevent this. Shrubs and trees around the the apiary are useful for the swarms to hang on.

It cannot be over emphasised that careful consideration must be given to siting an apiary. Bees cannot be moved easily like other livestock. If in doubt always seek expert advice.

References: Beekeeping study Notes J.d.&B.D.Yates./ BBKA Guide to Beekeeping.



**A Beekeepers friend:** Thanks to Peter Graystone , Scholar and good friend of mine, who sent me the following Old English Poem... **Do you know someone who has something to offer?**

**Wið ymbe: nim eorþan, oferweorþ mid þinre swiþran**

**handa under þinum swiþran fet, and cwet:**

**Fo ic under fot, funde ic hit.**

**Hwæt, eorðe mæg wið ealra wihta gehwilce**

**and wið andan and wið æminde**

**and wið þa micelan mannes tungan.**

**And wiððon forweorþ ofer grot, þonne hi swirman, and cweð:**

**Sitte ge, sigewif, sigað to eorþan!**

**Næfre ge wilde to wuda fleogan.**

**Beo ge swa gemindige mines godes,**

**swa bið manna gehwilc metes and epeles.**

**Charm for a Swarm of Bees.** This Old English charm exists in the eleventh-century manuscript MS41, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The charm is for use after the bees have swarmed, to make them stay near the hive and not fly away to the woods. It is a mixture of prose and verse. The prose tells the beekeeper what to do, the verse gives the words to be spoken by him. I have indented the verse, to make it clearer. It follows the regular Anglo-Saxon form: there are four stresses to each line, and there is alliteration along the line. I mostly use the translation of Bill Griffiths (1948–2007), a poet and Anglo-Saxon scholar, who obtained a Ph.D. in Old English from King's College London in 1987, and published a number of editions and translations of Old English texts.

The letters ð and þ, no longer used in English, both have the sound of 'th'. I like the description of the bees as 'victory-women'!

**Against bees swarming: take earth, throw (it) with your right hand under your right foot, and say:**

**I catch (it) under my foot, I have reclaimed it,**

**Lo, earth prevails over all creatures.**

**and over malice and over jealousy**

**and over the tongue [i.e. against the spell] of the powerful person.**

**And from above cast the soil over (the bees) when they swarm, and say:**

**Settle ye, victory-women, sink to the ground!**

**Never should you, wild, to the wood fly.**

**Be ye as respectful of my welfare**

**as is every man of food and shelter.**

note on 'stress': The stresses in the poem are the accentuated syllables - for example, in the phrase 'I catch it under foot', the words 'catch' and 'foot' have a greater stress than the other three words. English is a stressed language: we always stress some words or syllables more than others. Thus, the word 'together' has a stress on the middle syllable.



## THE MANAGEMENT OF BEES

### MAPPING OUT A PLAN OF CAMPAIGN by D.E. Waller

Beekeepers can with advantage, devote some part of an evening in the New Year to mapping out a plan of campaign for the coming season.

For the novice the period of greatest difficulty is the swarming season- the period from the end of May to the end of July- but many systems have been devised with a view to overcoming, with a reasonable certainty of success, the problems bound up with the control and prevention of swarming.

It may be that wider reading, attendance at lectures organised by local Beekeepers' Association, or a chat with some more experienced beekeeper will reveal the details of some system which will meet the needs of a particular beekeeper or one that he thinks he would like to try.

Questions which every beekeeper should put to himself and be able to answer with certainty at all times will include some like these:

- " What are my chief sources of nectar from which I can, given reasonably good weather, expect the bees to produce sufficient honey for themselves as well as surplus honey for the beekeeper?
- " What plans have I for making sure that every colony will have a strong foraging force at times when such sources are in bloom?
- "What plans have I got for ensuring that every colony will in the coming season, do as well or better than my best did last year?
- "What am I going to do when I find queen cells in a colony.
- " How can I make increase up to so many colonies with the minimum loss of honey, or how can I avoid increase if I have sufficient colonies already?

It is up to each individual beekeeper to compile his own list of questions based on his own experiences and records for the past year or years and to search for, and, find the answers.

Every answer upon which his mind is clear will make beekeeping easier, and, it is hoped, more profitable in the coming season.

## Ogden Nash ...1902 / 1971 American Poet Known for his light verse

### Verse - Ogden Nash

I eat my peas with honey  
I've done it all my life  
It makes the peas taste funny  
But it keeps them on the knife



Message for John Twigg  
who is recovering after  
surgery.....On behalf of  
the membership may I  
extend our best wishes.  
It will be good to see you  
up and about and  
attending the monthly  
meetings again soon....

### KEY CONTACTS

#### President: Ray Day

Chairman: Nick Mawby  
Tel: 01538 387506  
northstaffsbees@gmail.com

Secretary: Stewart  
01538 702048  
stewart.boulton@gmail.com

Treasurer: David Booth  
Tel: Fax 01782 395489  
Mobile: 07870 594277  
david\_booth@talktalk.net

Membership: Chas Burgin  
01782642127  
chas.burgin@gmail.com

Programme: Tim Waye  
Tel: 01782 680453  
tim@microwaves.net

Honey Show: Margaret Teasdale  
Tel: 01782 502495  
teasdale.margaret@btinternet.com

Social Sec: Pat Twigg  
01630 673299

Education: Angela Fearon  
angelafearon@googlegmail.com

BBKA Delegate: Paul Cooper  
paul955cooper@ntlworld.com

Editor: Brian Holdcroft  
Mobile: 07969805252

bryan@bryanholdcroft.orangehome.co.uk