



NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2018

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MELPLASH SHOW 23RD AUGUST 2018 WDBKA HONEY SHOW & THE DORSET COUNTY HONEY SHOW

What a great time we all had again this year. The weather was super, actually a bit too warm in the marquee at times due to the number of visitors. Thanks to all the helpers before and on show day - it was a another very successful day.

The judge this year was Suzette Perkins who kindly stepped in at the last minute due to Hazel Blackburn having to decline as she had a knee operation, but Hazel is booked in for next year. Our steward was one of our committee members, Terry Knight, who had not taken up this role before. He said he had learnt a lot from the experience, so we are expecting great things next year Terry!! We had over 180 entries which must be a first, may it continue for years to come.

Our County President Richard Norman kindly came along and presented all the cups, trophies and sponsorship awards. The Blue Ribbon for Best in Show was awarded to Carole Astbury for her pieces of wax. Carole actually stole the show with her exhibits this year, winning several of the awards.



Stephanie Rowse won two awards in the Novice Classes. One allows free entry to the National Honey show 25 Oct 2018 – 27 Oct 2018. Well done.

Suzette said that the standard overall for the exhibits was very good indeed: one or two exhibits were of National Honey show standard, which we were all delighted about.



Well done and thank you to everyone who entered this year. Hope to see you all next year with a few more newcomers having a go too - it is such fun!

A special thank you to Tilly Stobart, who with her two helpers who arranged all the flowers in the marquee. So many people remarked on how wonderful they were.

Thanks also go to Groves Nurseries for bee-friendly plants, Filberts for Beeswax balms, salves and classic polish, and Debbie for candle rolling.

Sadly when packing up we found four pots of honey which had disappeared. Maybe someone has picked them up by mistake. Please check you picked up your correct entries and let me know if you have them, or someone has stolen them. There will be stricter vigilance next year.

MELPLASH SHOW RESULTS 2018

COUNTY CUPS AND TROPHIES

Dorset Challenge Cup awarded to member gaining most points in classes 470 - 491

Winner - Carole Astbury

FW Carter Challenge Cup awarded to member gaining most points in classes 472, 477, 478, 478A, 479

Winner - Carole Brown

Betty Courtney Memorial Shield awarded to member gaining most points in classes 481, 481A, 482, 489, 490

Winners – Carole Astbury

Pearl Wellington Memorial Shield awarded to member gaining most points in classes 485, 486, 486A, 491

Winner - Carole Astbury

Novice Trophy & National Honey Show Card awarded to member gaining most points in classes 476A, 476B, 476C

Winner - Stephanie Rowse

Branch Shield and £20 awarded to the Branch with the most points in classes 470 - 491

Winner - West Dorset BKA

WDBKA TROPHY & SPONSORED CLASSES

M C Bond Shield for WDBKA member gaining most points across all classes 470 to 500 :

Winner - Carole Astbury

Carole Brown Trophy for WDBKA member gaining most points in classes open only to members 492 to 500:

Winner - Carole Astbury

M R Wood Challenge Cup - Class 480

for honey (novices who have never won a 1st Prize):

Winner – Stephanie Rowse

Bob Mather Challenge Cup Class 477 or 497 - for best comb of honey ready for extraction:

Winner - WDBKA

Blue Ribbon of Merit for Best Exhibit in Show:

This year it was Class

Winner - Carole Astbury

Class 471 Sponsored by Felicity's Farm Shop -

2x 1lb jars of clear medium honey

Winner – Dennis Clemens

Class 473 Sponsored by Modbury Farm Shop

2 x 1lb jars of naturally crystallised honey

Winner – Carole Astbury

Class 485 Sponsored by Waitrose of Bridport –

Honey fruit cake

Winner – Jane Bard

Class 486 Sponsored by Leakers Bakery

Six Honey Crunch Biscuits

Winner – Deborah Childs

Class 487 Sponsored by Longs Fish and Chips – Photograph relating to Beekeeping

Winner – Chris Thompson

Class 488 Sponsored by Footprints Bridport – Photograph of bees inside/ outside the nest

Winner – Sally Boxall

Class 492 Sponsored by Sue and Mike English, Fruits of the Earth Wholefood Shop – 2x 1lb Jars of light honey

Winner – Carole Astbury

Class 493 Sponsored by Co-op of Bridport –

2x 1lb Jars of clear medium honey

Winner – Hilary Green

Class 495 Sponsored by W M Morrisons of Bridport -

2x 1lb jars of naturally crystallised honey

Winner – Sarah More

Class 497 Sponsored by Moore Than Tea -

Frame for Extraction

Winner - WDBKA

Class 499 Sponsored by Filbertsbees.co.uk –
Beeswax in 8 moulded pieces
Winner – Carole Astbury 1st
Jane Bard 2nd

Presentation of awards made by Richard Norman, DBKA President

The Visit by Trevor and Bryony to Quince Honey Far

As we now had a free Sunday and had not yet celebrated Father's Day, Bryony and I decided to go to Quince Honey Farm ourselves.

The drive was pleasant through the Devon countryside and we arrived at 10.45. The first thing was a cup of tea and Bee insisted we try out the Devon Honey cream tea! Four scones topped with a big dollop of cream and each with a different honey in a well in the cream. They each had a little label: there was heather, summer flowers, dandelion and ivy. All were delicious. The ivy was not as strong as we expected but our favourite was the dandelion. It was flavoursome and not over-sweet, absolutely gorgeous.

We then tried out some of the samples such as passion fruit and honey curd, honey mustard, cooking honey and more of the delicious dandelion among the dozen or so on offer. From here we went to look at the small reptile and spider collection before joining the guided tour. Mark, our guide, took us around the displays showing the wax room, the extraction room with all its equipment, the bottling room and the frame making room. Although this is a commercial venture the process is very much like our own, just on a larger scale.

The wax is melted and made into blocks, the mould for which is a cat litter tray! This is then stored until required for candles, cosmetic creams and the like.

The extraction is just as we do it, with two people taking the cappings off using bricklayer trowels and then 72 frames put into the extractor. Honey then flows into 50-gallon tubs for moving into the filter section where a transfer pump lifts it to the strainer, an octopus-like structure with fine bags like stockings that the honey is pushed through under mild pressure. From there it goes into a massive settling tank for 72 hours and then back into the tubs for storage until required for bottling. Bottling is pretty much done by hand although the honey is pumped from the tubs through a machine into the jars, which are all moved under the nozzle individually by hand. Mark says this is surprisingly awkward as the "accelerator pedal" used to keep the machine moving lets through the exact amount and if you miss a jar you have honey in your lap!

The frame-making room made me jealous. A jig allows 20 frames to be made all at once, but apart from the jig and a nail gun everything else is done by hand. Every frame is made and filled with foundation which they wire themselves. The only "mass production" bit is the jig to hold the frames as they are nailed.

We moved to a display of opening a hive where Mark put on a suit and we all watched from behind glass and fine mesh. He gently opened the hive, explaining all the parts to everybody and bringing a frame around to the glass. He quickly found the queen (she had a big green "49" on her) and everybody got to hold a frame using



some massive gauntlets. With persuasion from Bryony I did have a go; it was hard resisting the urge to spin the frame over and gently blow the bees away from what I was looking at! Did manage to find a bee emerging from her cell which made all the kids excited to see a bee "being born"!

Mark was great and at the end asked me if he did OK! He wanted to know if he had pitched his talk right to include Bryony and me as well as the others who were not beekeepers. I was able to assure him it was excellent and I really enjoyed it. We then went off for more tea??!! and to have a look around the displays and some 15 or so colonies which you can observe. Yes, they are behind glass, but press a button and they open up briefly for you to look inside. OK, so Quince is a commercial venture with 1,500 hives but it is also a great and friendly place to visit. We had a fantastic day and finally left at 5pm with a few bits from the shop. The only downside was that the bee supplies shop just around the corner closes on a Sunday, otherwise I would have come back more loaded with goodies and with less in my wallet.

Hopefully we can arrange something in the future as I do believe our members would enjoy it.

Kindly by Trevor Ford

THIS MONTH'S NEWS FROM THE APIARY August 2018

We are still struggling with failing queens at the Apiary.

Hive 1 This had been the best hive of 2018 but the queen suddenly failed with no sign that the bees had tried to supersede her. We felt it was getting too late in the season to raise a new queen ourselves for this hive. In the end we reluctantly purchased a new queen from Exmoor Bees, having confirmed they were queenless with a test frame of eggs from one of Carole Brown's hives. The new queen has settled in well.

Hive 3 (the old dustbin hive) Superseded their queen in July but then produced multiple poor queen cells in early August so we are waiting to see what comes of those.

Hive 4 (swarm from Bridport) Superseded their queen in July which became a drone layer so was shaken out in early August.

Hive 5 (swarm from Beaminster) Superseded their queen in June and this new queen which had proved elusive was found and marked the day before Melplash and used in one of the observation hives.

Hive 6 One of the nucs from Carole Astbury. This queen also suddenly failed in early August so they were combined with Hive 7.

Hive 7 The second nuc from Carole Astbury. This hive seems to be doing well and the queen was taken to Melplash for the other observation hive.

So we currently have 3 queenright hives and one not looking very promising.

Despite a frustrating year we had a harvest of 67 lb of honey – from Hive 1 and Hive 3, taken off the hives on the 4th of August and extracted on the 11th of August at Liz Moxom's house – thank you to Liz for hosting this!!

More Ramblings

I do hope that you and your colonies are thriving and in good health. I trust you all had fun at Melplash and that the apiary bees were a credit to WDBKA.

Rain at last! It was amazing how the garden woke up on that Sunday in mid- August when it really rained. The birds appeared apparently from nowhere and were actively seeking out food among the plants. I saw a wasp organizing a raindrop on to its mouthparts and flying off to the nest with it. The bees, the day before, after the light rain, had started work again on the balsam. Unfortunately well-meaning people have been clearing it locally, not giving a thought to the local bumblebees, some of whom have had their nests ransacked by the badgers and the rest already under stress with the dry conditions and lack of forage. The willowherbs have nearly all set seed and now there is even less forage with which to raise the next generation and to feed it before the winter. Yes, the balsam is not good for the river banks and needs to be removed from there but why didn't they get other forage plants established first to feed the bumblebees, who unlike honeybees don't travel far? Why remove it when it isn't close to the river? It's sad how much easier humans find killing than nurturing.

My wasps are very busy hunting food. They are still feeding brood and carry off weak, damaged and dying honeybees. They also tidy up Freya's (my cat's) little rodent bodies, leaving just the skeletons and fur. Opening hives needs to be quick so as not to let too many in. Afterwards you need to check carefully for any crack they can gain access through. I am rather bored of getting them out of my house, the little wispy devils. At least they are bright and will exit through an opened window. Do take care with robbing by bees when you put back supers for cleaning or put on feed. Only do it after 6pm so that the robbing time before nightfall is short. I'm using fondant on the away nucs, as it doesn't attract robbers.

I have been lucky to have European hornets around my apiaries. They, like the wasps and bees, have done well this year. They are so beautiful in their smart golden suits. I love hearing their drone myrtle, see picture. They only take the frail and unaware and don't risk going too close to the guard bees. Can be a pain as they are attracted to lights at night and blunder around like tired, overactive children.



While extracting is still fresh in your mind, it's a good thing to make a note of the quality of the colony's frame-building and capping. It makes uncapping so much easier

if the frames are flat and well drawn and the cappings are white. This means there is an air gap that the knife can slide through. It is even more important if you are asking colonies to draw and fill brood combs above the queen excluder. Do make a note if you can, and do select your queens.

Have you noticed the numerous wax moths this year? Some fly out of the hives when opened and others are on the varroa trays: both the greater and the lesser wax moths. I also see pupae in the odd place in the hive, tucked away safely from the bees, also safe on the varroa trays that I have left in to stop the wasps threatening the bees. I don't think I've ever seen so many. I wonder why they have done so well, and why aren't the bees controlling those not in the trays? I shall be treating my supers and stored brood frames with acetic acid soon to stop damage. My deep freezers are full so I can't treat them with cold, but maybe you could?

My attention was drawn to Monty Don and his bees, the episode where he found the top bar hive unoccupied, apparently the hive was active three weeks earlier. Oh dear, how sad. What a pair of beekillers. That nest had been dead some time and either had died of lack of food or been robbed out. We weren't allowed to see enough frames to determine cause and timing of death. Useless people possibly spreading disease to other nearby colonies! What I want to know is when he last looked in there properly. The other hive looked a miserable bunch too. He had a qx on, but why take a brood frame of stores out to show us rather than a super frame? Presumably because the super was empty? It looked suspiciously like ivy honey too! I'm sorry, but that is a nice hive to keep a miserable colony in. Should have called the friendly bee inspector in and, if given the all clear, requeened and nurtured her. Oh dear, these TV presenters and their master beekeepers! I feel so sorry for their colonies, which they treated like dirt instead of with love and respect. Sorry -- I have no time for the BBKA's exams. The Basic, yes, is a good thing, but the rest? Set and marked by master beekeepers and not by honeybees.

If your colonies are light you need to get on and feed them. Do take care, as there isn't much coming in. Most of mine are heavy as lead, even the young colonies, as I have boosted them if necessary with old store frames that I had removed earlier in the year to give the queens room to lay and stored for later use. They always come in handy.

Please watch out for the Asian hornet and put your non-killing traps out, and also try to check your colonies daily for sightings. Probably the early part of the morning or after lunch, as if I remember correctly Kevin told us they retired to the nest at about 11am. Unfortunately my trap has been inundated with wasps so is pretty useless. There must be better bait but my wasps seem to like anything they are so hungry. The Asians are coming and will probably stay, as it's unlikely all the nests will be found and there won't be enough energy and willpower to find them. We have such little invertebrate life left in this country and they will finish that off.

On that cheerful note... happy beekeeping, and my best wishes to you and your bees.

Kindly by Sarah More

DORCHESTER & WEYMOUTH HONEY SHOW

Dorchester Show Ground

1st & 2nd September

2019 BEGINNERS COURSE

Our annual course for prospective beekeepers will run again in 2019. There are only 25 places each year and several have already been booked.

We would advise anyone to register their interest as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. The course is always oversubscribed - it represents excellent value for money and serves as a comprehensive introduction to beekeeping and the WDBKA network of support.

Beginners' Course 2019

Venue - Bridport Christian Fellowship Hall in East St car park

Cost - £75 - Secure a place with a £10 non-refundable deposit.

Time and dates 7pm - 9.15pm Jan 29th, 5th Feb, (12th Feb is Half Term week, we will have a session for frames-building & fish& chips) 19th & 26th Feb, March 5th, 12th, 19th: theory part of the course, followed by practical sessions in the apiary on Saturdays in April and May.

If members are aware of anyone who would like to join the course please refer them to the secretary Carole Brown secretary@westdorsetbees.org.uk or our website for further details www.westdorsetbees.org.uk

WEST DORSET BKA EVENTS COMING SOON

DATE	TIME	EVENT	WHERE	DETAILS
Sunday 2nd September	2pm	APIARY MEETING FOR ALL BEEKEEPERS VARROA TREATMENT	NETHERBURY APIARY PARK FARM DT6 5LY	CLEAN SUITS PLEASE
SAT/SUN 1st & 2nd SEPTEMBER	ALL DAY EVENT	DORCHESTER SHOW + Dorchester & Weymouth Honey Show	Dorchester	
TUESDAY 16TH OCTOBER	7.30PM	Talk by Clare Densley Bee Unit Manager at Buckfast Abbey on Pheromone Communication	CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP HALL EAST ST CAR PARK BRIDPORT DT6 3 QD	

