

BOURNEMOUTH & DORSET SOUTH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter

June 2023

David Aldersey Chairman

Was it only three weeks ago that we were all complaining about grey skies, cold winds and even rain! Now I am sitting in our garden enjoying the warmth of the sun on my back, while listening to the steady hum of our bees.

We found that the good weather came just too late to stop several of our colonies from initiating swarm preparation. We had very large colonies that were kept in their hives too long by the cold winds and poor light. Result, we have been fighting like the dickens to stop the swarms. Artificial swarms, splits, caging the queen and putting her in the top super; all these methods have been used this year. With the advent of good weather the nectar has been pouring in and supers are filling.

Turning to the affairs of our Association I am pleased to report another well-attended Wannabee Day at High Mead. The first of two Beginners courses has just completed. I want to thank Kelly and Helga for helping to present these events. It has also been a pleasure to watch Lizzie Woods and Emma Jones, two relatively new beekeepers, who have also assisted in teaching the rudiments of our craft.

We are hoping to arrange two social events over the next couple of months and it would lovely to see as many of you as possible. In the meantime I hope all is going well with your colonies and a bumper crop of honey is had all round.

Beekeepers Course

"I recently attended my first ever Bee keepers course where I was shown many aspects of Basic Beekeeping. I was blown away by the level of information received from many very informed members.

I also had the thrill of putting on a Bee suit for the very first time and then introduced to the main swarm.

I was so thrilled to see and handle the Bees personally that the moment I got home I ordered my first Bee hive.

And of course I have enrolled onto the next course which starts very soon.

I would like to thank Anne Moran personally for all the help and direction she has offered to me and with my application for membership.

Looking forward to Beeing !!! with you all very soon."

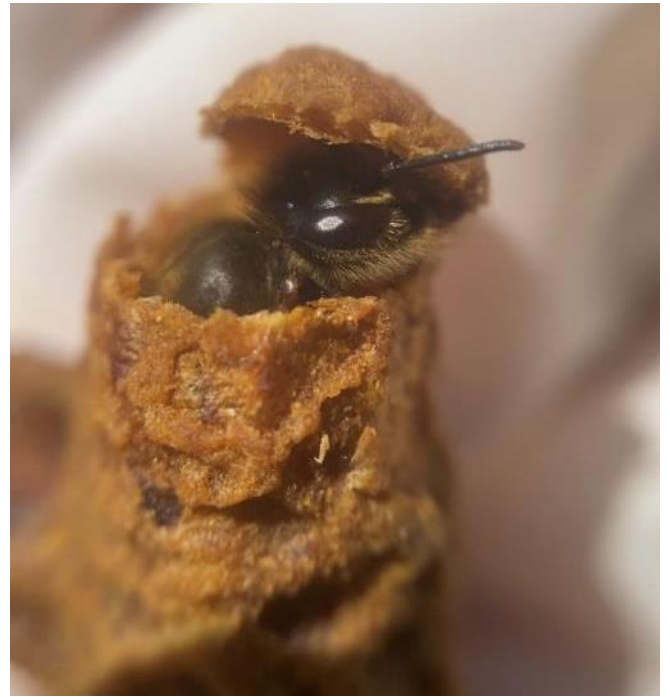
Ian Loder

"This has been an eventful year for the country and no less can be said for the beginners course 2023. Emma Jones and I joined David, Helga and Kelly in running the course so we could gain experience of teaching.

The course covered all the basics needed to start up as a beekeeper and gave valuable experience doing hive inspections. With the exception of the Coronation day, which rained in true British style, the rest of the course saw beautiful sunny weather; perfect for the hive inspections.



I was able to capture footage of a queen emerging from her cell and also attempted my first swarm collection on the farm which resulted in an empty cardboard box and lots of bee activity. After a bit of a run around the farm the swam were eventually caught and given their new home.



Thank you again David, Helga, Kelly and to Emma for the time given on a Saturday mornings to lead the course and share your knowledge. I'm sure all the beginners would agree it was much appreciated."

Lizzy Wood

Dear Members – Your Contributions please

The next Newsletter will be in September. I don't mind what you would like to send in so long as there is a bee theme...good or bad experiences, some ideas on how to do things better, anecdotes, interesting photos, honey based recipes.

Also, I invite you to send me the story of one of your mistakes! I have made plenty over the years and described one of mine in the last newsletter. Please contribute and don't feel embarrassed. If you want your piece to be anonymous it will still be acceptable!

Thank you

Adrian Rozkovec newsletter@bads-bka.org



...When things go wrong ... “I don’t like crushing the queen but this can make “life” more difficult!”

I had a nasty colony that needed to be re-queened as they weren’t much fun and a nuisance to neighbours. The new queen was in a nuc and I was ready to unite the two.

Step one: Find the nasty queen!

As they were particularly aggressive, I enlisted the help of my assistant beekeeper who is an excellent queen spotter, my husband. We gave them a smoke and started gently but once opened up, they were out to defend their colony. With bees ping-pong off our visors, we found the queen very soon but with limited vision, I was fumbling and struggling to get her in the queen cage without damaging her (not sure why, when she would be in the freezer by tea-time) and she escaped. We found her crawling up my arm, but again with more fumbling, she made her 2nd bid for freedom. The bees were now very wild but we continued searching and just as we were about to give up, I turned around and John noticed a clump of bees on my back and there she was. This time, she was in the queen cage and on the way to the freezer with no messing about, while I completed the uniting.

Anne Moran

Wild Bee Farming in the Ukraine

Ukraine is one of the main producers of honey in Europe. Until the war with Russia, around 1.5 per cent of Ukraine's population was engaged in various forms of beekeeping, according to the United Nations.

“Bortnytstvo” (wild-honey farming) was especially developed in the region west and to the north of Kyiv. The forests here are rich in pine trees, where bees like to build their nests. In the old days, people simply searched for bee nests when the bee foraging season (“vziatok”), was over, and literally dug out the honey, often destroying the insects and tree hollows. Such uncontrolled honey gathering led to a decline in the

number of wild bees, forcing bee hunters to venture deeper into the forests and create new homes for the bees.

The bees settled mostly in pine hollows created as a result of rotting, or the tree being struck by lightning. The bees lined the hollow with propolis, preserving and disinfecting the wood as well as helping to keep the colony warm over winter.

Wax products (especially candles) were used in many traditional ceremonies in Ukraine, so the need for bee products grew. It became more and more urgent to increase the number of nests. The first artificial “borty” (hollows) were dug out in old trees and bee colonies were introduced into their new homes.

Another hollowing technique was introduced in the 17th century. Trees that had fallen during storms were fashioned into hollows and attached to living trees or placed in log fields. Later, bee farmers began making such logs separately and nesting bees in them. The logs were considered the most convenient and best way to extract honey, even after movable frame hives were invented.

Because of the “temperament” of the bees, wild-honey farming required great courage. Moreover, bee farmers had to be physically fit in order to carry the hollows through the forests and then climbing up the tree, hoisting them onto a branch as high up as possible. It is said that this positioning contributed to the unique taste of the honey.



Today, wild-honey farmers mostly use log hollows covered with a small roof to protect against moisture and rain. To reach the highest branches, they use a ladder, which looks more like a long thick climbing pole with foot pegs attached to the sides.

The year cycle: removing excessive wax and cleaning the nests from dead bees in spring, covering up holes made by woodpeckers in winter, protecting from martens and bears, caring for the colony in summer, and gathering the honey in autumn.

Honey, harvested by the wild-honey farmers, is reputed for its healthy, natural and delicate taste, and is, therefore, much more expensive. The farmers are convinced that bees, which live in movable frame hives, do not produce such good honey.



There are few truly real wild bees left. They have become domesticated.

Adrian Rozkovec

Recipe

EASY NUTTY GRANOLA WITH HONEY

Makes 20 portions & keeps for 3 months in airtight container
400g jumbo rolled oats (or gluten free oats)
75g desiccated coconut 75g seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, sprinkle of sesame) 200g nuts (any mix but almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, brazils, cashews all work well) 200g runny honey 110g butter, melted

Preheat oven to 150 degrees C/ Gas Mark 3 Line 1 very large or 2 medium lipped baking trays with parchment.

In a large bowl, mix all the ingredients together and turn into the trays. Spread out the layer as much as possible.

Toast for around 30-40 mins, checking and stirring every 10 mins.

Granola is ready when it is crisp.

Leave to cool in the tin, then roughly break up the clumps.

If you like a crunchy granola leave it as is; for a fruitier breakfast, you can add any soft dried fruit, but this will give your granola a softer texture



Joanna Bellis

Bee Supplies – Mike and Liz Duffin

If you need bee equipment or supplies please be aware that the Duffins, are the local agents for Thornes (EH Thorne Beehives Ltd), a major national

Beekeeper supplier. They are very helpful, keep a good stock and you don't have to pay for packaging and postage!

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