



Cider apple orchard by: Belinda Dale

October 2016

**WVBKA Charity Registration
Number: 517008**

Equipment for sale

As a result of poor health Ian Hydes has passed on to me some of his equipment to sell, please let me know if you are interested.

Peter Woodward, 01981 240280.

There are:

- Four National hives each consisting of a solid floor, a brood box, super and a roof. These appear to be cedar and still have a few years life in them.
- Thorne's table top extractor – 4 frame.
- Small solar wax separator.

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Diary Dates

October 9th

- Honey Show

November 16th

- Planning meeting

December 3rd

- Christmas lunch

2017

January 18th

- Committee meeting - pre AGM

February 18th

- AGM 2:30pm Moccas Hall

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**Queen Colour of the Year 2016
is: WHITE**

The Kington Show - Saturday 10th September 2016

David Williams, Dave Bannister and I put the tent up on Friday evening in a worryingly stiff breeze but Dave's expertise ensured it was still standing when David and I arrived on Saturday morning to finish off putting everything up inside. It looked very attractive.

The observation hive attracted an enormous amount of interest and during the day we gave away over 260 'I Saw the Queen' stickers. We must have had some 300 people visit the stand because not all the adults were given stickers. David had found a very attractive display stand for the honey and we sold £160 worth – a big thank you to him for bringing apiary honey along with some of his own. Also, thanks to everyone who donated a jar or two to show an example of different honeys produced by local bee keepers in Herefordshire. Hopefully we will have more next year.

A huge bunch of colourful cut flowers from Peter Woodward's garden plus sedums and lavenders from Arrow Mill Garden Centre in Kington, made a splash of colour outside the tent. Thanks to Sara Turner for lending them to us.

Our 'staff star' is Fletcher Barker, who is one of our youngest members.

He is a fantastic public relations man and wore his bee suit and gloves, which made him very eye-catching. An enormous thank you to Fletcher and to his father, Adam, who came to relieve us and stayed to help get the tent down safely.



David Williams, Fletcher Barker and Bill Wiggin MP

Thanks are due too, to Sue Quigley for coming to relieve us. We all need a break during the day to be able to go and look around the show, have some lunch and to just sit down somewhere for a while.

We had a surprise visitor, which was very pleasant, when Bill Wiggin MP for Leominster came to see us. He has been very supportive in Parliament in attempting to ban the use of neonicotinoids in the UK and he is also Patron of Hereford BKA.

The photographer from the *Hereford Times* took a picture of Fletcher and me, which appeared in the paper's Kington Show write-up.

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The Kington Show is a very enjoyable day out and now that the entrance fee has been increased, coming to help on our stand for part of the day means volunteers have a free entrance and parking pass. Six people taking turns to man the stand during the day are all that is needed so that there can be a rota giving everyone longer breaks. The Show is always held on the second Saturday of September on a site just outside Kington on the Leominster road.

Rosie Bashford



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Invasive Asian Hornet spotted in Britain

An invasive hornet that kills honey bees has been spotted in Britain for the first time, experts have confirmed. The Asian hornet was found near Tetbury, Gloucestershire. Work is under way to find and destroy its nests.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has set up a three-mile (5km) surveillance zone. Defra said it had been anticipating the hornets' arrival "for some years" and had a "well-established protocol in place to eradicate them".

The Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*), which is up to 2.5cm (1in) long, is now common across Europe after being accidentally introduced to France in 2004 in a shipment of pottery from China. In the summer, the non-native species was discovered in the Channel Islands of Jersey and Alderney for the first time.



Image copyright PA Image caption

Identifying an Asian hornet:

- *Vespa velutina* queens are up to 3cm (1.2in) in length; workers up to 2.5cm (1in)
- Entirely dark brown or black velvety body, bordered with a fine yellow band
- Only one band on the abdomen: fourth abdominal segment almost entirely yellow/orange
- Legs brown with yellow ends
- Head black with an orange-yellow face.

Obituary – Barbara Knowles

It was with sadness that we read in the *Hereford Times* of the death of Barbara Knowles from Kilpeck. She was the wife of Wallace Knowles who did a great deal for the association years ago. He was a past Chairman, served on the committee for many years, attended almost every event and regularly won at the Honey Show.

Some of our older members may remember Wallace doing the WVBKA tests for the beginners' cup after the practical classes here. The committee feel it would be nice to offer our support at this time.

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Image copyright PA Image caption Asian hornets prey on pollinating insects such as honey bees and could do serious damage to colonies in the UK, which have not evolved to cope with the threat

It is thought the hornets will not be able to survive in the north of the UK due to the colder winters. Nicola Spence, from Defra, said: "It is important to remember they pose no greater risk to human health than a bee, though we recognise the damage they can cause to honey bee colonies.

"That's why we are taking swift and robust action to identify and destroy any nests."

A Defra spokesman said, the hornet found in the Tetbury area had been killed and was undergoing DNA testing to establish how it arrived in the UK.

Meanwhile, bee inspectors are using infrared cameras and traps in a bid to locate and destroy any nests in a three-mile area radius around the initial sighting.

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Source: National Bee Unit



Notes for October

Now the season is well and truly over it is a very good time to take stock of your requirements for next year i.e. frames, foundation and perhaps the odd bit of new equipment. Reflections on the season are as follows; it appears that most people have had a reasonable honey harvest, which is to be welcomed. The bees have had a good back end, providing they are queen right and have adequate stores there should be no problem over wintering. Of course it goes without saying that they should have all been treated for the dreaded Varroa mite. There always seems to be something new in bee-keeping. This year is no exception with probably the best back end to the season for many years, which should help the bees survive the winter period.

Wye Valley Apiary

The bees have all been fed and treated for winter. Considerable work has been undertaken by David and me to get where we are today. We have six good strong colonies and one not so good. I think there is at least one on a double brood so all in all the bees are looking in quite good shape. Hopefully, next year will see more colonies through the winter which will enable us to build on what we have already achieved.

Planning for next year has already started and there will be a full programme announced in due course. The success of the apiary is largely down to you – the members. If you do not turn up and take advantage of what has been achieved, then it's your loss.

Bee Connected

A new web-based crop spray alerting system, BeeConnected, linking farmers and beekeepers, has gone live across the UK. Alerts from farmers will tell beekeepers when spraying is happening up to a maximum of 5km from their hives, the crop being sprayed and the compound being applied. The beekeeper will receive an email allowing them to take mitigating action such as moving their hives or shutting the bees in for a short while.

A considerable sum of money has been invested in this project and a balance sheet will be produced at the end of the year to show where the money has been spent and what is left at the moment.

Despite rigorous splitting of the existing colonies we still have managed a surplus of honey. Again, this will be announced in due course so that you, the members, can see exactly where the money is being spent and what we have left.

Future development

We have talked about many things on a practical level. We intend next year to follow the season with practical advice as and when it is required, with full explanations given as to what we are doing at the time. We intend if possible to produce some nuclei for our members to buy or for sale to other people. Of course all this continued development needs to be ratified at the Annual General Meeting, where you will be able to express your views and voice your opinions. If you have any observations or suggestions they can be put up for consideration at the AGM. You the members have the ultimate say on what should be done with the apiary.

Remember a little bit of light reading to enhance your knowledge will help. Borrow a book from the library or go online and look up those niggling little things which you don't quite understand.

Don't say '*what*', just do it – you may be surprised. Remember, there is no season exactly the same as the previous one; this is what makes bee-keeping such a fascinating hobby. There are of course normal things which take place but the bees in general are still the boss and there are always surprises around the corner. Queen-less bees, drone laying queens etc. all have to be addressed to stay ahead of the game. It isn't difficult and in most cases things can be put right with a little effort on the part of the beekeeper – effort being the operative word. Good luck, have a good winter and may all your supers be full in the spring.

Dave



BeeConnected is a joint venture under the Voluntary Initiative between the BBKA, the National Farmers Union and the Crop Protection Association. The BeeConnected website will also allow beekeepers to read the approved manufacturers' information on the compound and whether or not it is associated with a bee alert being known to harm bees.

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Apiary meetings

The regular sessions at the apiary have now finished for this season of beekeeping but will begin again next spring. Over the winter there may be occasional opportunities for a meeting at the apiary – for instance around the end of December or early January there will be a demonstration of applying oxalic acid to the colonies in the apiary to reduce Varroa numbers. We also need to plan a maintenance session at the apiary to move some of the stands and to ensure they are all levelled up, ready for next year, and to make up some of the supers ready for next year to go onto the extra colonies raised this year, which we hope will come through the winter. I will let you know when this will be by email and anyone who is available to help will be welcomed.

Although the winter is a down time for beekeeping it is a time when you have an opportunity to do a bit of studying and preparation for the next season. The committee will be developing the calendar for next year starting with a planning meeting in November. Developing a framework for the apiary meetings will be part of this and we would appreciate any ideas you would like included in the programme.

Our concept of apiary meetings is to have practical sessions covering topics relevant to the time of year to give members an opportunity to pick up a few tips to help improve their enjoyment of keeping bees, to socialise with other beekeepers and to have a bit of fun. Thanks to the work of the 'Two Daves' we should have more colonies of bees at the apiary next year and more hands on sessions will be possible. We are also considering a plan to raise a few nucleus colonies at the apiary which we can sell to members. This process will become a learning opportunity for anyone interested.

If any members want to study beekeeping in more depth through the BBKA basic exam and maybe some of the modules then we can plan support sessions to help with this, which could be held as evening training sessions. If you would like to discuss this in more detail then give me a call.

Peter Woodward

Neonicotinoids debate

The large-scale, long-term decline in wild bees across England has been linked to the use of neonicotinoid insecticides by a new study.

You can find more information at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-37089385>