October - December 2016

BUZZWORD

Ayr & District Beekeepers Monthly Newsletter

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President's Message

It is finally turning cold and the bees are starting to hunker down for the winter. Given the unusually warm weather into October, the colony will have been moving around and flying without much chance of replenishing stores. It would be wise to keep a close eye on the levels of stores within the hive. Being unable to open the hive, hefting must be the way to assess stores during the winter. If it feels light add fondant or a bag of soaked sugar to help get them through until spring.

Between now and spring, Alan Forster has organised an excellent programme of winter talks. Charlie Irwin, Alan Riach and Faye Gibbins have already provided some memorable evenings and the remaining programme looks to offer many more. On Wed. 7th December the AGM gave members the opportunity to hear the overall condition of the associations, elect officials and catch up on previous and planned activities. 2017 is ADBK's centenary so we have an exciting year ahead. As part of the celebrations we have joined forces with the Scottish Beekeepers Association to provide a two-day convention at Ayr racecourse. Dr Jamie Ellis, Dr Robert Paxton, Megan Seymour and Adam Leitch NDB are the speakers along with workshops on skep making, microscopy, chocolate making and cosmetics.

Roll on spring and the centenary year!

Julian
Club President

UPCOMING EVENTS:-

Wednesday 18th January
Julian Stanley - Food, trophallaxis and communication
Carrick Centre, Maybole 7:30pm

Wednesday 1st February
Fiona Highet - Small hive beetle and other invasive species
Carrick Centre, Maybole 7:30pm

Wednesday 15th February
Peter Matthews – Title TBC
Carrick Centre, Maybole 7:30pm

Going to the Heather

The club was invited to take bees to the heather on Lord Hume's estate near Muirkirk – they were hoping to improve the quality of the heather by getting better pollination. Lindsay and Phil went to do a reconnaissance and were taken the mile and a half up a farm track to the proposed site, which Peter, the gamekeeper offered to fence in. Duly impressed by the security of the site compared to the Leadhills, the deal was done. Lindsay duly started badgering us all to take hives and eventually the band taking hives was: Lindsay, Phil, Ian Stirling, Alan and Margaret, Tony, Chris, Julian and myself (Jane).

Four-wheel drive was needed to go up the track, so Lindsay and Tony used their cars and Peter helped with his. We all went through the joys of preparing our bees – choosing our strongest hives, putting them on a single brood box, preparing supers, fitting travel screens and shutting the bees in. There were the usual traumas – screen with gaps, floors with holes in …. Mike and I eventually got our bees shut in at 2am!

We met at the site and, in two journeys, took the hives up to the heather. Approaching the farm, we had been worried as there was no sign of heather but once up into the hills we found areas of heather that had been in bloom for about a week. The site was a beautiful site and the enclosure was large enough for all our hives. We duly installed them and left a lot of disgruntled bees to orientate and get collecting!

A group of us went back after a week to check progress. Ever optimistic, I took an extra super and – in spite of the fact that there was very little in the super on the hive! We noticed that there were piles of dead bees in front of many of the hives. On investigation, we found these were drones. Presumably, the cooler weather in the hills had persuaded the workers it was time to ditch them!

We paid one more visit and then after a month went to collect the hives. It turned out that most of us had very little heather honey in the supers but most had quite a lot in the brood boxes – so at least we needed to feed them less. Lindsay did the best, which was interesting as she was the only one to take polystyrene hives. She had a box of round sections on one hive and actually got about ten sealed sections. Did the fact that the bees found it easier to maintain optimum temperature in the brood boxes allow more to go out foraging?

The whole experience had been very interesting and we had remarkably few stings – unlike the horror stories we had been told about club members experiences with "Africanised" bees in the Lead Hills. I think we would all be prepared to repeat the experience – doing a little more research about preparing hives and maybe taking them a little earlier as I think that missing the first week or so had been crucial. I may have no jars of heather honey but the supers and brood box smell wonderful!

Many thanks to Peter for all his help and patience!
Jane Šik

News from BeeBase

Asian hornet nest found and destroyed

An Asian hornet nest (image 1) has been located and destroyed by experts in the Tetbury area. The nest (image 2) was found at the top of a 55 foot tall conifer tree (image 3). Inspectors from the National Bee Unit are continuing to monitor the area for Asian hornets alongside local beekeepers. However to date, no live hornets have been seen since the nest was removed.

We urge anyone to report suspect Asian hornet sightings to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.

Further guidance on the Asian hornet can be found on the Asian hornet pages of Beebase where you will find a very useful Asian hornet ID sheet sheet and Asian hornet poster which is available for identification purposes.

A confirmed finding of Asian hornet north of the Mendip Hills in Somerset

As with the first sighting, work to find, destroy and remove any nests is already underway, and includes:

- setting up a three mile surveillance zone around the location of the initial sighting
- opening a local control centre to coordinate the response
- deploying bee inspectors across the area who will use infrared cameras and traps to locate any nests
- readying nest disposal experts who will use pesticides to kill the hornets and destroy any nests

Bee inspectors in Somerset will be supported by nest disposal experts who will use an approved pesticide to destroy any hornets and remove any nests.

The first Asian hornet confirmed in the UK was discovered in the Tetbury area. A nest in the area has since been found, treated with pesticide and destroyed. No further live Asian hornets have been sighted in the area since the nest was removed.

Husbandry Advice:

It is very important that beekeepers remain vigilant and monitor their apiaries and surrounding

QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

- What is the difference between Braggot and Bracket?

LAST MONTH WE ASKED

What is the following item?

It is a Bee Hive Frame Wire Crimper , seen here - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEuNInaXYQc

forage for any Asian hornet activity. At this time of the year, Asian hornets can be seen foraging on the ivy for nectar and preying on other foraging insects for protein.

Traps should also be hung out and closely monitored. When using bait, please refrain from using light beer or lager mixed with sugar as this does not work. In France a dark beer, mixed with 25ml of strawberry syrup and 25ml of orange liqueur has proven to work well.

Additionally, a protein bait of mashed fish e.g. prawns or trout, diluted to 25% has also proven effective. Anyone wishing to make their own traps may find the following factsheet useful: How to make a homemade Asian hornet monitoring trap.

Further guidance on identifying the Asian hornet can be found on the Asian hornet pages of Beebase where you will find a very useful Asian hornet ID sheet and Asian hornet poster. Any suspected Asian hornet sightings should be reported to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk.

If you are not sure, please still send in a sample for ID or report any sightings. When emailing, please include your name, the location of the sighting and if possible, a photograph of the hornet. Please do not put yourself in any danger of getting stung when trying to take a photo.

December 2016 - 2016 Hive Count Reminder

Don't forget we need you to update your colony records on BeeBase by 31st December. You can do this by clicking this link to update your Hive Count.
https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/secure/beekeeper/hiveCensus.cfm

More details of this project, its importance and why we need your help can be found on the Hive Count page on BeeBase.

If you have any further questions, please visit the Hive Count page on BeeBase or contact us at Hive.Count@apha.gsi.gov.uk

New Varroa Treatment VARROMED

The 1st ever Bee Medicine with EU-wide approval: Ready-to-use for Spring/Autumn/Winter treatment

BeeVital introduces new Medicine against Varroosis: For the first time the European Medicines Agency (EMA) recommended the registration of a product for bees:

VARROMED was shown to be effective in all European climate zones and will be approved for "Spring, Autumn and Winter Treatment". This makes VARROMED the first Varroa treatment that can be used at all relevant times throughout the beekeeping year.

This approval marks a milestone in Europe-wide combating of Varroosis, still the No. 1 problem worldwide for bees and beekeepers.

VARROMED is a ready-to-use product based on a combination of natural components with the active ingredients oxalic acid and formic acid. This combination leads to increased efficacy against Varroa mites and to a better tolerance by the bees. It is an easy to use liquid formulation that is directly applied onto the bees

The new product has been scientifically tested in the most extensive field studies in Vienna, Stuttgart, Celle and Madrid representing Continental, Maritime and Mediterranean climate. Spring, Autumn and Winter tests for each climate zone were undertaken to prove the excellent efficacy of the product. The result is a product that can be used at any critical moment throughout the beekeeping year and in the Varroa life-cycle.

Right Sort of Weather' Helps Honey Harvest

BBKA's annual Honey Survey results reveal that honey bees overcame summer starvation threats to provide 26lbs of honey per hive

The East remains England's most productive region with beekeepers citing the 'right sort of weather'

The results of the British Beekeepers Association's annual Honey Survey are released today (28 October 2016) and reveal that the average colony of bees in England produced 26lbs (11.8 kilos) of honey this year - an increase of 5lbs (2.7 kilos) per hive over last year's crop.

Despite a dismal start, a quarter (25 per cent) of beekeepers reported 'the right weather' as having the biggest potential effect on honey quantity in this year's crop, compared to just nine per cent who thought weather conditions had been favourable in 2015.

Larval selection for queens by workers

Another interesting snippet from the Scottish Beekeeper:

Workers select larvae to become queens on the basis of the weight of the egg from which the larva arose

Link: http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/dissertationen/al-kahtani-saad-naser-saad-2011-07-27/HTML/chapter2.html

Naperville (Illinois) sets regulations for backyard honeybees

The Naperville City Council Tuesday established limits on the number of honeybee hives residents can keep in their backyard based on the size of their property.

Under the new regulations, properties under a quarter acre in size quarter can keep up to three hives, residents with between a quarter acre and half acre can have up to six hives and residents whose property is acre or larger can have up to 10 hives.

The council agreed to change the setback for the hives from the originally proposed 15 feet to five feet at the behest of former Councilman Robert Fieseler, who addressed the council after distributing honey made by his own bees and granola made with the honey to council members.

"A honeybee doesn't care whether they're 15 or five or zero or 50 feet away from a property line," Fieseler said. "They're going to move just as quickly into wherever they want to forage."

Councilmen John Krummen and Kevin Coyne voted "no" on the ordinance. Both said they saw no reason to regulate hives.

"I don't understand why we're getting into this," Coyne said. "All we're doing is adding bureaucracy."

In accordance with state of Illinois regulations, residents keeping beehives are required to register their hives with the state. The annual registration is free and, once approved, applicants receive a certificate.

Including the required state registration as part of the city ordinance means Naperville can enforce it, Naperville Mayor Steve Chirico said.

Naperville residents who are already keeping honeybees have six months to bring their hives up to code. Honeybee keepers who violate the new rules will be fined between $100 to $500 for each offense.

Councilwoman Patty Gustin asked whether the regulations would keep residents from taking up beekeeping as a hobby.

Fieseler said he does not think the regulations will keep people who are not yet keeping honeybees from wanting to do so.

From - http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/naperville-sun/news/ct-nvs-naperville-bee-regulations-st-1104-20161102-story.html

Bee Time: Lessons from the Hive review – the imperilled world of the bee

Mark Winston has spent 30 years studying and working with bees. His book is a passionate celebration of bees, apiaries and honey, as well as a calmly reasoned critique of industrialised farming and a plea to halt the dramatic decline in bee numbers. Sixty five per cent of plant species depend on bees for pollination: “a world without bees would be almost impossible to contemplate”. And yet in the last decade there has been a “precipitous drop” in the number of bees, with US beekeepers now losing 850,000 of their 2.6 million colonies each winter.

Winston blames a perfect storm of factors from the spread of the varroa mite, the over-use of antibiotics and pesticides on colonies, as well as the spraying of neonicitinoids and other chemicals on crops. Research has found 121 different pesticides within the wax combs of hives, a toxic cocktail that has weakened the immune systems of bees. Winston sees their demise as a sign that our food systems are on the brink of collapse: “bees may be the canary in the agricultural mine”. The book is a wonderfully rich insight into the imperilled world of the bee.

From - https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/oct/28/bee-time-mark-winston-review

French Bees Producing Blue and Green Honey Due to Unusual Taste Preference

A coloured honeycomb from a beehive is seen in Ribeauville near Colmar Eastern France. By Vincent Kessler/Reuters

Bees in a cluster of beehives in north-eastern France have been making honey in shades of blue and green, alarming bee keepers and leaving scientists to discover the reason of the occurrence. It’s now been determined that the bees have developed a taste preference for the residue from containers of the candy M&M’s processed at a nearby plant.

Since August, beekeepers around the town of Ribeauville have been discovering that their hives are carrying unidentified colorful substances, which turned their honey into unnatural shades of blue and green.

The investigation led them to blame a biogas plant, situated 2.5 miles away, which has been processing waste from a Mars plant producing M&M’s. The resulting honey is unsellable and has affected dozens of beekeepers in the region, which are already dealing with high bee mortality rates and dwindling honey supplies following a harsh winter.

The company operating the biogas plant, Agrivalor, has tried to address the problem after being notified by the beekeepers. The company now cleans its containers and incoming waste is now stored in a covered hall. Mars operates a chocolate factory near Strasbourg, 62 miles away.

France is one of the largest honey producers within the European Union, and releases 18,330 tons annually. Ribeauville has been best known for its vineyards, but there are about 2,400 beekeepers in Alsace who tend to 35,000 bee colonies and produce about 1,000 tons of honey per year.

Who Is Really to Blame for The Honeybee Deaths?

Imagine you're a critical worker in a vital global industry. Despite your best efforts, you can't meet your quota because you keep losing co-workers. What's more frustrating is that all industry parties blame each other about why you are losing numbers.

Well, that's what honeybees face these days.

The smallest agricultural worker continues to fight a losing battle. Beekeepers in the U.S. lost 44% of their colonies from April 2015 to April 2016, according to the Bee Informed Partnership, which is supported by the USDA and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

That's 27% higher than the rate beekeepers call acceptable for this insect that's responsible for one of every three bites of food people take, according to the Pollinator Partnership. Meanwhile, honeybees contribute an estimated $15 billion annually to agricultural production by pollinating crops such as apples and almonds.

"It's not just the United States or North America," says Jerry Hayes, honeybee health lead at Monsanto, previously chief of the apiary inspection section for Florida's Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. "Everyone is worrying about honeybee health," he says.

"We have overwintering honeybee colony losses that are way above what's acceptable," says Ric Bessin, University of Kentucky Extension specialist, who holds a doctorate in entomology, "Some would say not sustainable. It's likely due to many stressors."

Who's to blame? There's lots of it to go around. Here are five of the largest causes for the shrinking honeybee workforce.

From - http://www.agriculture.com/crops/conservation/who-is-really-to-blame-for-the-honeybee-deaths

Asian hornet outbreak contained, says Defra

An Asian hornet outbreak has been contained, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has said. The first sightings of the pest in the mainland UK were reported in Tetbury, Gloucestershire, in September.

Inspectors from the National Bee Unit destroyed the nest and although two dead hornets were found in North Somerset no further sightings have been reported.

Nicola Spence,Defra's deputy director for plant and bee health, said: "I am pleased our well-established protocol to eradicate Asian hornets has worked so effectively. We remain vigilant, however, and will continue to monitor the situation and encourage people to look out for any Asian hornet nests."

Asian hornets are a predator of honeybee colonies and other insects. The Asian hornet is now common across Europe after being introduced in error to France in 2004 in a shipment of pottery from China.

In the summer, the hornet was discovered in the Channel Islands of Jersey and Alderney for the first time. Defra said that it was possible Asian hornets could reappear in England next year and members of the public are urged to report any suspected sightings in the spring.

AGM 2016 – Report and Changes

This year's AGM was held on Wednesday 7th December at the Carrick Centre in Maybole.

There has been some rotation of positions on committee. Alan Forster has stepped down as club president after two years. I think we can speak for the whole club when we thank Alan for all the time and work he has done as club president. Julian has taken over as President of the Club. Jane Šik has also stepped down as Treasurer and taken up the role of Vice President. Chris Urie has taken over as treasurer.

Winter Talks

Faye Gibbins from Edinburgh University visited us on Wednesday 2nd of November to give a fascinating talk on Mead. She has been kind enough to let us distribute copies of her recipes and her slides from the talk. The recipes have been attached at the end of this month's edition of

Buzzword and the full slides from the talk can be found at - http://links.adbka.com/meadtalk

Also, a big thanks to Charlie Irwin who spoke to us about raising a small number of queens for replacement or increase.

Thanks also to Alan Riach for his talk on Microscopy, and bringing lots of microscopes to let us all have a shot at using both dissecting and compound microscopes.

We also look forward to another 4 speakers in the new year, our own Julian Stanley talking on Food, trophallaxis and communication, Fiona Highet of SASA talking about small hive beetle and other invasive species. Peter Matthews and Michelle Berry of the SBA will also be giving talks with the title to be confirmed.

Picture of the month

Hives at the Heather

Sack Mead the Old Way

- 3-4lbs Honey
- Wine Yeast & Nutrient
- Campden Tablets and Yeast Stopper
- Lemon, orange juice
- Strong Tea
- Herbs, spices, fruit, adjuncts
- Very strong mead! 12-14%

Simple Method

- Simmer at 55°C for 15 mins
- Cool to 25°C - Pour into a Demijohn
- Add the activated yeast and other Ingredients (a cup of tea, orange juice).
- Fit an airlock
- Leave for 4-6 weeks. Until 1 bubble per minute.
- 'Rack Off' - add Campden *and* Potassium sorbate (be careful of botulism).
- Shake, shake, shake and shake some more.
- Bottle and mature for several years ~ 10.

Modern Recipe

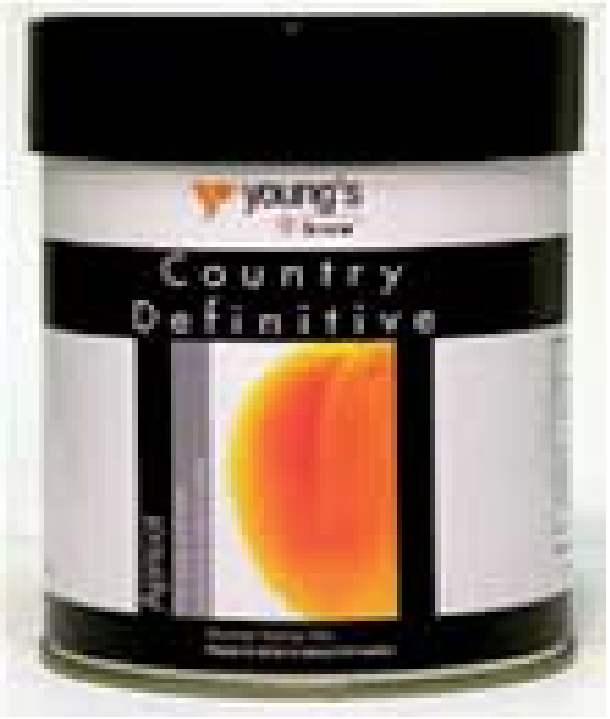
- 15 lbs of honey
- 5 tsp of yeast nutrient
- 25g of Citric or Tartaric or Malic acid
- 1 tsp of grape tannin (mix up powders)
- 500mg of Vit C (stops it oxidizing)
- 3 crushed tabs of Vit B1 (helps yeast thrive)
- tsp of pectaze
- Modern Yeast (pre activated)
- spf. Grav ~ 1.100 (13.4%)

Pyment 8 Gallons

- 12 lbs of honey
- 2 x 5G wine kits (no extra sugar)
- 2 ½ tsp of pectic enzyme
- 1 tsp of grape tannin
- 4 tsp of yeast nutrient
- 4 x 3mg tabs of Vit B
- 20g of Citric acid
- 400 mg of Vit C

Cheating at Melomel
Makes 4G

- 2x 450g Youngs fruit wine kits
- 3826g of Honey
- ½ tsp grape tannin
- 10g citric acid
- 2 tsp of yeast nutrient
- 200 mg of Vit C
- 2x 3mg tab of Vit B
- 2 tsp of pectic enzyme



Bochet

- Same ingredients/method as Sack Mead.
- But first heat honey in a much larger pan to ~155C
- The honey will blacken.
- Turns to a caramel/toffee mead.
- Very yummy.
- Very sweet.

Braggot

- Beer made with Honey.
- Easiest done with a kit.
- Choose one which sugar is needed.
- Avoid open barrels.
- Top up to 5 Gal with tap water.
- Follow instructions in the kit.
- Replace sugar with honey.

Other Recipies

http://www.edinburghbeekeepers.org.uk/downloads/drink_recipies.pdf

Krupnik 10-50%

A honey liqueur which is very popular in Poland and Lithuania.

750ml Vodka (preferably over strength)
300g Honey
2 Cinnamon Sticks
10 Cloves
1 Vanilla Pod
1” Root Ginger
3 strips Lemon Peel
3 strips Orange peel
1/4 Whole Nutmeg
Water

•Simmer the spices and peel in 1 cup of water for 5 minutes.
•Add the honey and mix well.
•Add the vodka, cover and leave to cool.
•Leave for a week, strain and bottle.