



# NEWSLETTER

## December 2019

Here is the December 2019 newsletter. Any contributions or ideas for future editions please email to: [newsletter@gwentbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@gwentbeekeepers.co.uk)



*Wishing all our members and associates a happy Christmas and New Year*

# Things to Think About.

## This Month's Meeting

**No meeting this month** as the Goytre Village Hall is being used as a polling station. The next meeting will be on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January when the speaker will be Lynne Ingram on the topic of drones.

## Volunteers required in New Year

There are going to be lots of activities in the new year that will require help from as many of you as possible.

- If you have any time between Christmas and New Year or in early January, then we have 450 saplings to plant out at the new apiary site – please contact Janet Bromley [bromleyjan@hotmail.com](mailto:bromleyjan@hotmail.com) if you can help with this.
- We have to vacate the Ochrans Apiary site by March/April with the bees being moved to temporary accommodation as the new apiary site will not be ready. If you can help with the dismantling of the site or the transport of hives, then let Miriam Knight [beekeepingknight@gmail.com](mailto:beekeepingknight@gmail.com) know.

The groundworks for the new apiary site and study centre are going to begin in the new year with the new building in place sometime in Spring. We then have lots of work to fit out the building etc. if you are willing to be a member of the working parties that will be required then let Janet Bromley know so we have some idea of the available workforce.

We will be issuing more specific reminders in the New Year.

## Membership Fees

Membership Fees are due in January. You will be receiving a reminder from our new treasurer/membership secretaries (Nicky & Matt) with ways to pay. We are also going to circulate to all members a letter that will provide information on the different activities of the association and the new and exciting ways that we propose to communicate with members in the future.

# In the News

## New Apiary & Study Centre Funding

We have succeeded in our third attempt for £10k from the Heritage Lottery so many thanks to Vicky Martin for her assistance. The £10k is for apiary levelling and fencing, parking access which is effectively phase 1 groundwork plus apiary fencing and sign boards and nature trails. We have also received an offer from Garfield Weston of £10000 if we achieved our budget estimate which we have done. This means that we can go ahead with the groundworks and initial build which will begin in January. Again, many thanks for the hours of hard work that have gone into obtaining this funding.

## Member Awards at AGM

The following awards were presented at the AGM

- 9 members successfully passed the basic exam; Dexter Stewart, Rhys Edwards, Steve Pitts, Graham Evans, Matt Williams, Dave Barrell, Peter Maloney, Chris Garrett, Cenydd Smith.
- Ceri Joyner successfully passed Module 2.
- Miriam Knight successfully passed Module 6 and is now a qualified intermediate beekeeper having passed 4 modules.
- June James Award for their dedicated contribution to Gwent Beekeepers – Angela Thomas. JB collected the award on her behalf.
- Chirnside Cup for Best Exhibitor at Usk Show – Dan Baxter.
- Chirnside Cup for Best Novice Beekeeper – Sally Williams.
- Special mention was given to Les and Jill Chirnside for the support received by the association over many years.
- Honorary Membership was awarded to Eric Long in recognition and thanks for significant contribution to the association and beekeeping.

Congratulations to all

## National Hive Count

Don't forget you need to update your colony records on your BeeBase record by 31st December 2019. You can do this by clicking on the following link: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/secure/beekeeper/hiveCensus.cfm> and submitting your response.

If you have any further questions, please visit the Hive Count page on BeeBase or contact the National Bee Unit at [Hive.Count@apha.gov.uk](mailto:Hive.Count@apha.gov.uk)

## **Supermarket honey ‘bulked out with sugar’**

I suppose we shouldn't be surprised that when a 454g jar of own-brand supermarket set honey costs just £1.35, a recent Hi-tech analysis of a supermarket's set honey raises fears of widespread adulteration that may affect other retailers too.

According to Jonathan Leake (Sunday Times Science Editor - November 24, 2019 online edition)

“A national investigation has been ordered into the adulteration of supermarket honey after tests indicated that one of Tesco's own brands contains cheap syrups made from ordinary sugar. The alarm was raised by trading standards officers in Richmond, southwest London, who commissioned tests on the Tesco set honey from a public analyst laboratory. The National Food Crime Unit, set up after horsemeat was found in burgers and ready meals in 2014, is understood to be investigating how widespread such adulteration is.”

Perhaps we need to be more proactive in teaching people what real honey tastes like and perhaps give them an insight into what it actually costs to produce.

## **This Month's Article**

As it is coming up to Christmas and New Year just a short article on something that might warm you up.

### **Honey Bees and Alcohol**

To most Europeans, the production of alcohol in the form of mead, is intrinsically linked to mediaeval monks and monasteries (They also produced a fair amount of wine and beer as well!). However, they were not the first. Chinese pottery vessels dating from 7000 B.C. suggest evidence of mead fermentation that out-ages both wine and beer. The very first batch of mead was probably a chance discovery: Early foragers likely drank the contents of a rainwater-flooded beehive that had fermented naturally with the help of airborne yeast. Once knowledge of mead production was in place, the sweet beverage became globally popular with Vikings, Mayans, Egyptians, Greeks and Romans alike.

Referred to as “nectar of the gods” by ancient Greeks, mead was believed to be dew sent from the heavens and collected by bees. Many European cultures considered bees to be the gods' messengers, and mead was thus associated with immortality and other magical powers, such as Olympus-level strength and wit. For this reason, mead continued to factor heavily in Greek ceremonies even after its eventual decline in drinking popularity.

It has also been the drink of kings and queens from ancient times. When the tomb of King Midas, of golden touch fame, was discovered in Turkey it revealed the remains of the king's funeral feast. Guess what was found in the ancient drinking cups: sweet mead residue. Mead is also believed to have been the choice beverage of Queen Sheba and King Solomon.

Apparently, our own Queen Elizabeth has been known to throw back a golden goblet or two and even maintains a favourite mead recipe made with rosemary, thyme, bay leaves and sweet briar.

It's not just for royalty. The origin of "honeymoon" harks back to the medieval tradition of drinking honey wine for a full moon cycle after a new marriage. All that golden essence would supposedly ensure a fruitful union bearing plenty of children. This mead-based insurance policy was taken so seriously that a bride's father included a month's worth of mead in her dowry. Recently published figures suggest that mead has been making a comeback, especially in supermarkets, after winning a strong fan base among younger drinkers in pubs and at beer festivals. It can now be found with numerous different flavourings, such as strawberry or blackcurrant and in sparkling variants. English Heritage, which claims to be the UK's largest retailer of mead through the gift shops in its 400 historic buildings and monuments as well as online, says it sells a bottle every 10 minutes. Sales of mead have increased by an average of 10% annually for the past three years, according to English Heritage, and between April 2018 and March 2019 they sold 29,750 bottles.

Of course, the best mead is the one you produce yourself and so if you have any homemade or have recently purchased a bottle of the real 'amber nectar' here are a couple of suggestions of mead drinks for Christmas.

### **Mead Hot Toddy**

#### Ingredients

- 1 x 1/2 oz traditional mead
- 1 x tsp honey
- slice of lemon
- slice of fresh ginger
- 1 oz Rye Whiskey
- 1 x cup hot water

#### Instructions

- Pour the whisky and mead into a mug.
- Heat the water so its steaming, but not boiling.
- Stir the honey into the mug then pour the hot water over the spoon and into the mug and continue to stir.
- Cut a slice of lemon and ginger, add to the mug and allow to infuse for a couple minutes.

### **A Cure for What Ails You**

#### Ingredients:

- 2 x 1/2 oz. Mead
- 1 x 1/2 oz. Ginger Beer

- 1 oz. Lemon Juice
- Lemon Peel

**Instructions:**

- Shake mead and lemon juice together over ice.
- Pour into glass tumbler filled with ice.
- Top with ginger beer.
- Run the lemon peel around the rim of the glass and drop into the drink.

Enjoy the soothing properties and have a great Christmas.

## Events for Your Calendar

The following is a list of the Gwent Beekeepers programme for 2020:

**GBKCIO Diary 2020**

<b>Thursday 9th January Goytre Village Hall 7.30pm</b>	<b>Lynne Ingram</b>
<b>Thursday 13th February Goytre Village Hall 7.30pm</b>	<b>Megan Seymour</b>
<b>Thursday 12th March Goytre Village Hall 7.30pm</b>	<b>Wye Valley Meadery</b>
<b>Thursday 9th April Goytre Village Hall 7.30pm</b>	<b>Claire - Hive Originals</b>
<b>Sunday 10th May 2.15pm</b>	<b>Apiary</b>
<b>Sunday 14th June 2.15pm</b>	<b>Apiary</b>
<b>Sunday 12th July 2.15pm</b>	<b>Apiary</b>
<b>Sunday 9th August 2.15pm</b>	<b>Apiary</b>
<b>Thursday 10th September Goytre Village Hall 7.30pm</b>	<b>TBC</b>
<b>October TBC</b>	<b>GBCIO Annual Dinner</b>
<b>Saturday 22th November Goytre Village Hall 2.15pm</b>	<b>AGM followed by a talk Speaker TBC</b>
<b>Thursday 10th December Goytre Village Hall 7.30pm</b>	<b>Social Evening</b>

## **Other Events**



**ASIAN HORNET *Vespa Velutina nigrithorax***

### **CONFERENCE**

***The National Beekeeping Centre, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG***

***10am- 4pm, Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2020***

***This conference is free and for all Asian Hornet Team Leaders or representatives from Area Associations. Initially there will be an opportunity for two representatives from each Association area but if requested more individuals may be able to attend, it is dependent on the maximum numbers in the hall. Regional Bee Inspectors are also invited.***

***The purpose of the conference is to learn more about Asian Hornets and the current research, examine the experience during 2019 and develop a way forward considering suggestions from those involved in incidents***

***Nigel Semmence, Sandra Gray (NBI) and Belinda Philipson(Defra Policy) will update the conference on the current position and also answer questions during the conference.***

***Steve Martin will be sharing his knowledge about Asian Hornets and Xesus Feas will share his experience and research about the Asian Hornets in Portugal.***

***If you would like to attend please send your name, email address and Association name to [Liz.Leddy@bbka.org.uk](mailto:Liz.Leddy@bbka.org.uk) at the BBKA office to book a place. Initially each Association can register two representatives but please apply and join the waiting list if you would like to attend. We will book a larger hall for the conference if numbers indicate it is required.***

***This is a chance to influence the development of policy surrounding the elimination of non native Asian Hornets in the UK. It will also be an opportunity to share best practice with other team leaders.***

***I look forward to hearing from you***

***Anne Rowberry***

***BBKA Vice Chair and Asian Hornet Coordinator***

# An evening with Monty Don and Bill Turnbull

## United Kingdom

30 January 2020, 7.30pm The Blake Theatre, Almshouse Street, Monmouth NP25 3XP

A Bees for development event

Monty Don is Britain's favourite gardening expert, and Bill Turnbull won hearts while BBC1's Breakfast presenter, now with his own weekend shows on Classic FM. As well as sharing a love of dogs, Monty and Bill are both passionate about bees, and in this one-off event raising funds for the international charity **Bees for Development**, Monty and Bill will discuss a range of topics close to their hearts – and with open forum for audience questions.

Absolutely not to be missed!

*Tickets: VIP – £40 to include front or second row seats, a glass of wine and a Bees for Development tote bag full of goodies!*

*Tickets: Full Price £25, Concession £23 (over 60's and under 16's)*

[Click here to purchase your tickets from the Blake Theatre](#)

All profits going to the charity **Bees for Development** which promotes sustainable beekeeping to combat poverty and to build sustainable, resilient livelihoods.



**Bees** for development

**Sell your honey with us!**

Known locally as *The Bee Shop*, we are Monmouthshire's favourite Beekeeping shop. We sell fondant and foundation, and are your local Thorne's stockist.

All revenue from our shop supports our work with beekeepers in the world's poorest nations. UK Charity 1078803

**Talk to us today**  
**01600 714848**  
[beesfordevelopment.org](http://beesfordevelopment.org)

**Bees for Development**  
1 Agincourt Street  
Monmouth  
NP25 3DZ