



October NEWSLETTER 2018

Ormskirk & Croston Beekeepers Branch

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What's happened lately?

Internal events

Our club Honey was cancelled due to lack of support. This was a real disappointment to those who had put in a lot of time and effort. Can I thank you all ever so much for what you have done.

External events

22nd September, Dave Farmer, Ian Hinde and Robina Johnson manned the club Bee stand at The Old Smithy Heritage Centre, St Helens.

22nd/23rd, Vicki hall, Sue Webster and Sue Wilkinson manned the club stand at Martin Mere's "Animal Magic" weekend.

24th September, Edwina gave a talk to the Rainhill Horticultural Club.



A letter from the Chair, Margaret Wilson._

Dear Members,

You will know by now that this year's Honey show was cancelled due to lack of support. We are not sure if it was the date, the lack of honey (although there are other classes) or that you are just not interested, but this will be looked into and discussed at our next committee meeting.

Quite a lot of work goes into organising this event and if you are not interested, please tell us. We have had some response regretting it was cancelled, but what do you all think???

**We need to know so that we can
plan for future events!**

Now, what else has happened recently involving Ormskirk and Croston club members and bees! Vicki, Sue Webster, Sue Wilkinson, Dave Farmer, Ian Hinde, Robina Johnson and Edwina have given up their time to do this and by doing so have promoted not just Ormskirk & Croston beekeepers club, but beekeeping in general.

The year is moving on and we now have less and less to do in our own apiaries. Honey will be off and the bees are getting ready for winter. Do make sure you have carried out any necessary treatment and have checked your hives for stores. If they are light, feed with a syrup solution of two sugar to one of water, so they can store it without a lot of work.

It is also important to make sure that our hives are weatherproof and situated out of the fierce winds we are being told to expect, Strap the hives to make sure that if they do fall over, the colony will remain intact, albeit on its side. Regular visits to your apiary will make sure that you are able to take remedial action if needed.

It is also a time to carry out maintenance tasks, both at your own apiaries and also at our club apiary, at Fir Tree Farm. This involves replacing any parts that are damaged or rotted, cleaning queen excluders and crown boards and making up frames for next year. I was given a tip, to purchase Hypochlorite (a very strong bleach) from a Farm Suppliers, it is £12.50 for 25 ltrs and is used on the farm to clean the milking equipment. It's ideal for cleaning poly hives and I also use it on my own queen excluders, after I have removed any wax. The residue is then used to clean the paths in my garden, so I get double the use. It is a corrosive liquid so it is important to wear protective gloves etc. I now have a pair of jeans which are spotted with the bleach, now only good for gardening, but my wellingtons have never been so clean! **So please take care if you decide to purchase some yourself.**

At the out apiary, Eddie is looking at the queens to see which ones would be good for queen rearing next year. He will probably put them on double brood and feed, feed, feed to make sure they come out of winter in good condition. In Spring, the best of those will be selected for queen rearing, so start thinking about it now if you are interested in learning that skill, you will need to let us know in advance as numbers will be limited.

With best wishes to you all,

Margaret.

Experiences of a committee member, Ian Hinde.

After three years, I have reached the conclusion that maybe bees cannot read. After the excellent beginners course at Ormskirk school and a lot of Wednesday afternoons at the out apiary, out came the BBKA guide to beekeeping. For several months, I read to my bees every morning, as they prepared themselves on the landing board to go foraging. I diligently read them the guide and I'm sure I heard them chuckling, although that may have been the chickens!



After some time and a bit of effort from me, along came a certificate and a badge. One morning, these were proudly displayed to my boxes of bugs,.....more laughing! To restore a bit of order I wheeled out Ted Hooper's book, thinking they will really like the detail in this, as everybody says this is **THE BOOK**. It's even the updated version of Guide to Bees and Honey. After an awful long time spent next to the hive, I told them "now you know exactly how to behave. I see you every day and read the book to you, now play the game". The response was even more laughter!

Next I read them Celia Davis - even more laughter!

There's lots of talk at the out apiary about modules. For me, this

involved even more hours sat with the books reading to the bees, Roger Patterson, JD & BD Yates and even a few chapters of HA Dade. They really were impressed with the reading list. Ha ha more laughter from the bugs!

They still do exactly what they want to do and flourish, despite myself and all the books trying desperately to interfere and upset their plans. So maybe after finishing their instructions from Honey Bee Democracy by TD Seeley they will surprise me, or maybe they would prefer a pollen colour chart so they'll know exactly what they are looking for.

Ian Hinde.

Editors note... I'm impressed Ian, even if your bees weren't!

Eddie's Update on the Out Apiary

We've recently checked all the colonies' mite levels and have treated as required with maq strips. Hopefully this will keep the levels low until it's time to treat with oxalic acid in the form of Api bioxal

We are currently reducing the number of colonies to take through winter, selecting what we think are the better colonies and dealing with those with disease or temperament issues. This could only be done with the National colonies, as it would be difficult with the others due to limited equipment.

Most nationals will go through winter on double brood; the others will have a super put underneath the brood box to allow the bees to cluster without coming in to contact with the mesh floor.

We are currently feeding the colonies in earnest, following the arrival of a bulk delivery of inverted syrup the club has purchased

A big thank you to Alan and Edwina from the farm and Ian Hinde from the Wednesday crew for taking the delivery and getting it indoors

Eddie

Editor's Note

And.....a much deserved "Thank you" from all club members for the work you, Eddie, and your team do in looking after our club bees.



To conclude then,

- 1. Please respond to Margaret's email, asking for reasons why our Honey Show was not supported.**
- 2. Remember that winter meetings take place at Ormskirk Parish Church Hall, the first one on 9th October at 7.30.**

See you there!

Vicki.