

The Daily Worker

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Web site: www.holsworthybeekeepers.org.uk



New Year

We wish all our members a Very Happy and Successful New Year.

Lets hope that we have another good summer and that our bees produce good crops of honey, but most important that the bees, and beekeepers stay healthy.



Wildlife Bonanza by Derek Gow - Monday 13 January, 7.30 pm

The first winter meeting of 2014 will be an illustrated talk by Derek Gow entitled **Wildlife Bonanza**.

Since his last visit in 2011, Derek has been busy working with Chris Packham on the 2013 BBC series 'The Burrowers'. Derek's farm was used as the base for the programme and he will be telling us all about the filming as well as giving an update on his on-going work with beavers and water voles.

So it should be a very interesting meeting – do come along.

The meeting is at 7.30 pm on Monday 13 January at our usual winter meeting place, The Stables, Chilsworthy Methodist Chapel ([map](#)). All are welcome. Members £1, guests £2. Tea and biscuits provided.



Beginners Course

Wednesday 12th February 7.30pm

The start of a 10 week theory course for members who are new to beekeeping.

To be held at The Stables, Chilsworthy Methodist Church



Holsworthy Spring Convention 2014

Book now or you may not be able to get a place.

Booking is via the branch website at www.holsworthybeekeepers.org.uk

What? Branch Spring Convention 2014

When? Saturday 22nd February 2014

Where? Holsworthy Memorial Hall – **note new location**

Who? Philip McCabe – **‘Spring apiary management’ & ‘Summer apiary management’**
Professor Steve Martin – **‘Chemical recognition in the hive’ & ‘The Asian hornet’**
Emma Van Huysee – **‘Planting for bees’**

Choice of workshop: Simon Jones – **‘Feeding bees and their nutrition’**
Ian Homer – **‘Changing combs for a healthy hive’**
Jo Widdecombe – **‘Cornish black bee project’**

Why? To hear some of the finest and most knowledgeable researchers and speakers on bees anywhere in the country and it only costs £14 for members.

How? Booking is now available on the branch website at www.holsworthybeekeepers.org.uk

Winter Feeding of Fondant

By the time you read this, the time may well be upon us for feeding fondant as an addition to winter stores. Therefore, I thought I might share my thoughts on the process.

The why's and wherefores of winter feeding are described in detail in many beekeeping manuals and publications, but the common theme is feeding fondant by placing it as a block over the feeder hole in the crown board. Many sources describe the use of an empty margarine tub which is placed over the fondant.

The purpose of my random jottings is to highlight the problem of having to remove the tub to check on the bees' consumption of the feed. This runs the risk of disturbing the bees and may require the beekeeper to wear protective clothing.

So the next time you visit the Supermarket, save those clear plastic containers used for selling mushrooms and so on. The ones from my local store measure 6" x 6" x 3½" (15cm x 15cm x 9cm) and are just right for the job.

I place a small piece of queen excluder or similar over the crown board feeder hole to support the fondant and then place the clear plastic container over the fondant. A weight such as a piece of slate holds the whole lot in place.

Checking how much fondant your bees are taking down is now a very quick process. Just remove the roof and look through the clear sides of the plastic container. Little or no disturbance of your bees occurs.

To avoid the stickiness of replenishing the container, I place a block of fondant about the size of an orange inside a plastic food bag and then turn the bag back over my hand whilst still holding the fondant. Gently lift one edge of the plastic container whilst still in place on the crown board and slide in the new block of fondant. Don't worry about removing the bag, the weight on the top of the container will continue to hold everything in place.

And finally, you may notice some condensation building up inside the container. Again, don't worry. This will in fact be used by the bees and will reduce the task of the bees in gathering water to break down the fondant.

Notes provided by Alan Pedrick

Written by Christopher Smith



Sweet Notes

I have recently been given a number of old bee books and publications, one of which contained an extra item of interest.

The publication concerned was the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries 'Bulletin no. 9 – Beekeeping' published by His Majesty's Stationery Office in 1937, price 1s 0d

Tucked inside was a letter written just after World War II, part of which reads as follows:

'We shall be pleased to see you the Sunday before Easter. Let us hope the weather has improved by then..... So Kathie has got her bees at last. It is time now to give them their Spring feed of sugar. You can get a permit from the Food Office for 5lbs per hive, and feed them a syrup of equal weights of sugar and water. This is 1 ¼ lbs of sugar to 1 pint of water, heated until all is melted. If you do this, you will have a strong lot of bees on the wing for the fruit blossom, and if the weather is good they will bring in a lot of honey!'

The last page of the letter is missing, so the author of the letter is unknown, but I found its contents historically interesting. Hope you do as well.

Christopher Smith



Membership renewals for 2014

Time to renew your membership. DBKA will again be operating the rule that if the subscription is not paid by the end of February 2014, the membership will lapse.

If you have not yet received your subscription renewal form please contact Graham Jones at info@holsworthybeekeepers.org.uk Blank forms are available on the branch website.

Please note that as a temporary measure for the next few weeks, whilst I am away in Australia, all completed forms and cheques should be sent to the branch treasurer, Deidre Conniss, 5 Coastguard Cottages, Stoke, Hartland, EX39 6DU.

Graham Jones



Committee Members

The Daily Worker editor asked committee members if they would like to write a short article to describe how they came in to beekeeping. The only one to respond was Willa Bailey. So thanks Willa for the following;

I have only kept bees for two years, the same amount of time that I have been a committee member, so I am very much a beginner.

My interest came from watching my elderly neighbour pottering around for hours with his bees - they were his passion. I was inspired to do the

Holsworthy beginner's course, very helpful, and acquired my first colony two summers ago. My neighbour sadly died 18 months ago but some of his bees are still around and persist in trying to colonise the eaves above the porch of his house, much to the frustration of the new occupants. My husband and I have a smallholding so my colony of bees have joined a small herd of saddleback pigs, a flock of sixty Welsh ewes, three horses, three dogs, two cats and some bantams. I still have much to learn about beekeeping but have found many knowledgeable and helpful friends in the Holsworthy club.

Willa Bailey