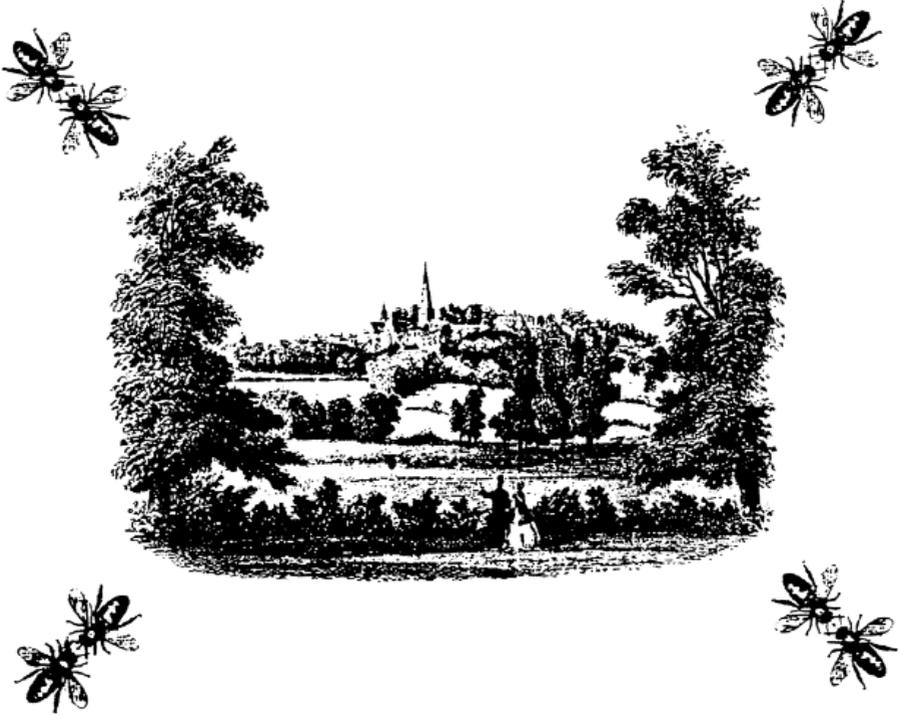


Volume 71 Spring 2015

Forager



Magazine for the Bee-Keeping Association of Harrow

www.harrowbeekeepers.co.uk

Forager

**Published by the Harrow Bee-Keepers Association
by whom this magazine was founded in 1946**

Editor

**Anna Surgenor (This is my last edition, handing over to
Rod Parker)**

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Forager Diary Dates

All events are scheduled for Hatch End Apiary unless otherwise stated. For an updated diary and more details please see our website at: <http://www.harrowbeekeepers.co.uk>

Sunday, 14 June, 2015 - 11:00 [Queen Rearing](#) Simple ways to rear a queen. A Training Event at the Apiary

Sunday, 12 July, 2015 - 11:00 [How to Extract Honey](#) A Training Event at the Apiary

Sunday, 19 July, 2015 - 11:00 [Honey Extraction](#) Practical session at the Apiary

Sunday, 9 August, 2015 - 11:00 [Show Preparation](#) Training Event at the Apiary Varroa Treatments available.

Saturday, 22 August, 2015 - 12:00 to Monday, 24 August, 2015 - 16:30 [Harrow in Leaf Show](#) Annual Honey Show, venue and times TBC

Whilst care is taken to verify the material published, the Editor does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of all statement made by the contributors, nor does she necessarily share the views expressed.

Editorial

It seems winter and spring have been and gone and I've not managed to deliver a Forager, where does time fly?! Talking of which, it sounds like our bees have been doing a lot of flying, and swarming recently. A reminder that more and more of us are taking up bee keeping and we need to ensure we are being responsible by routinely checking that they have enough space to lay and store, not to mention checking for diseases. And of course we now enter June, where the nectar flow slows down in the UK, read more about it here and how it can affect your bees

<http://www.bbka.org.uk/local/northherts/bm~doc/the-june-gap.pdf>.

In this edition we hear from Mike Davies, who was far more loyal to his duties as Beeline producer and sent me (earlier this year!) an interesting and reminiscent account of the Harrow Show from the 1950s and associated prizes as well as recounting the benefits of honey which dates back as far as 2000BC!

We have a poem taken from the Kipling website sent over from Bill, who also referred to an interesting Facebook discussion on the tradition of Telling the Honey Bees

<https://www.facebook.com/tellingthehoneybees>

Eileen Samuroff gives a very helpful and well explained run down ar about building your own solar wax extractor. No excuses now not to be collecting your wax and preparing for the up coming Harrow in Leaf Show this August!

Peter Steele references a 'Bees for Development' discussion which looks at training those in developing countries to keep bees – a key part to successful bee keeping in any part of the world.

So I hope you'll excuse me sneaking in a 'Spring' edition of the Forager this June before I hand over the Editor role. This will be taken on by Rod Parker, with support from Patricia Herbig who I/m sure will do a wonderful job at taking the Forager forward. I've

realised the art of balancing a family, work, bees and general life is a tricky act and I'm best to do a few things well!

On that note, I wish you and your bees every success as we go into the summer sunshine, and thanks for all your support.

Anna Surgenor
Editor

Please note that all contributions intended for inclusion in the Winter issue of Forager must be with the editorial office by 10 th December at the latest.	IN THIS ISSUE	
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Beeline

By Michael P Davey

I am writing this with the sound of 2015 bells ringing amongst the beehives which stimulated me to look back and recall the Gardner Cup that was won by Anna at the last Harrow in Leaf show. This cup was donated by Miss Gardner who lived with her brother in Mount Park Avenue, Harrow on the Hill, their home is now the Purcell School of Music. They were generous land owners and gave a field opposite South Harrow Gas Works to the Church Lads Brigade and another field off Orley Farm Road to the Harrow Cricket Club.

In the 1950s Mount Park Avenue was gated with a Toll house; in order to drive through one had to sound the motor horn charging sixpence for non residents. The gas lit road was tended by the Gas Lighter who arrived on a bicycle with a ladder slung on his shoulder.

South Harrow Tube station was near the gate and its car park was designed and built by a Harrow Beekeeper, Rodney Buckell

The Garbe Wax Bowl.

Mr Garbe was a rich jeweller who owned immaculate beehives set in a beautiful garden. During the late 1950s M.P.D offered to help as the H.B.A. librarian but Mr Lyon, retiring secretary, who was going to build barges in the Midlands , asked me to take on his secretarial job instead.

Mr Garbe belonged to the old school ie he referred to committee members by their surnames, and he designated people as junior and senior beekeepers. However he did give silver engraved spoons to the winner of the bowl which was much sort after. The Foul Brood Officer would often visit Harrow members. A visit to Mr Garbe led to the F.B.O.an infected hive in which he had detected A.F.B

because the owner refused to have a conflagration in his beautiful garden.

The Harrow Show Committee was well supported by the H.B.A so when G.E.C offered a large cup to the Show H.B.A. was well placed to take possession.

I welcomed the few wasp attacks last year, after the initial appearance of wasps, none were seen for the rest of the Summer. Thankfully the natural death of queens which is caused by excessive cold, heat and fungi growth on their bodies occurs during their six months of hibernation.

Social Wasps by Robin Edwards is the best available book on wasps. He did research for Rentokil on wasp control.

During the last 60 years Sugar Puffs have become a children's favourite cereal. Recently a lot of sugar has been taken out of the puff, a 30gms portion will now have 9.3gms less sugar. Three million pounds have been spent in advertising "out with the sugar in with the honey"

Manuka honey is still the most highly prized of general honeys on the market. Some supermarkets have to lock their stocks in plastic security boxes. Sales are helped by "Star" promotions and the small amount that can be harvested. Some of the honey has been found topped up with ordinary honey.

There is a long history of honey being used as a medicine dating back to the ancient Greeks 2000-600B.C. The Maoris in New Zealand discovered its benefits long before Westerners settled there. It is said that Manuka is four times greater antiseptic than normal honey. It should be noted that beekeepers' honey is not antiseptic, it needs to be sterilised for medical use.

One product from the hive which is very acceptable at least to birds is wax moth larvae. They are high in fat and protein and therefore

care should be taken not to overfeed the birds. The larvae are being marketed through the Wild Life Trusts. The leaflet shows a handful of larvae emblazoned with the Union Jack, produced in Great Britain. One tub of 250 worms costs £9.00p. I hope that the wax farms have secure control of their product. Last year I saw very few wax moth or chalk brood.

Towards the end of Winter before the leaves appear, this is to ensure wind pollination is effective.

Take time to smell the roses

And eventually you will inhale a bee. Anon

Charles Darwin wrote to John Lubbock in 1862.

"I beg a million pardons. Abuse me to any degree, but forgive me:

It is all an allusion about bees. I do hope that you have not wasted any time on my stupid blunder—I hate myself, I hate clover, I hate bees"

What was the blunder?

"The Bee-Boy's Song"

Contribution from Bill Fitzmaurice. Taken from the website:
http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poems_beeboy.htm

BEES! BEES! Hark to your bees!
"Hide from your neighbours as much as you please,
But all that has happened, to us you must tell,
Or else we will give you no honey to sell!"

A maiden in her glory,
Upon her wedding-day,
Must tell her Bees the story,
Or else they'll fly away.
Fly away - die away -
Dwindle down and leave you!
But if you don't deceive your Bees,
Your Bees will not deceive you.

Marriage, birth or buryin',
News across the seas,
All you're sad or merry in,
You must tell the Bees.
Tell 'em coming in an' out,
Where the Fanners fan,
'Cause the Bees are just about
As curious as a man!

Don't you wait where the trees are,
When the lightnings play,
Nor don't you hate where Bees are,
Or else they'll pine away.
Pine away - dwine away -
Anything to leave you!
But if you never grieve your Bees,
Your Bees'll never grieve you.

Training new beekeepers - Providing life skills that are effective and affordable

By Peter Steele

Learning from others

You can teach yourself life skills for beekeeping and just about everything else, but it's usually much easier to learn from others with the skills, knowledge and experience already available. In any case for best you need access to the equipment, specialized tools and clothing, and to the bees themselves. This thing about '*chickens and eggs*' then.

FAO TECA Network '*Beekeeping*'

Those of you following the FAO/TECA beekeeping network¹ will know that issues of training have recently been discussed within a debate led by Dr Nicola Bradbear of the UK-based NGO '*Bees for Development*'. She described her findings in early February and provided a useful 12-point summary, with recommendations that those interested browse the many contributions made from around the network. There is much to be learned.

Remember that the debate was in support mainly of people in the low-income countries with objectives to encourage more people to engage in beekeeping as a livelihood. The debate was also designed to help those managing and/or investing in training courses.

Summary recommended training practices

1. It is good to raise awareness about beekeeping, because some people have no knowledge of what it involves and are naturally reticent – they need to be shown that they *can do it*.
2. People who progress in beekeeping are those who develop a keen and genuine interest, and learn to admire and respect bees.
3. Training can start with formal sessions of a few days up to two weeks, but this alone is never sufficient. There is always need

¹ **Technologies & practices for small agricultural producers (TECA)**. Current debate is available at: <http://teca.fao.org/comment/2197#comment-2197>. For those of you interested, you can register, follow and take part in new debates. There are no downsides. There are opportunities for sharing experience in Harrow.

- for follow-up, refresher courses and opportunities to seek regular help from more experienced beekeepers.
4. With formal training, hands-on experience and mentoring, a novice gains a basic level of proficiency in not less than two years.
 5. Training should be mostly practical (70-80%). Practical training does not always mean working with a colony: it can mean making equipment or comparing different hive types (empty ones) and discussing their pros and cons.
 6. All training courses should be based upon a good understanding of the skills, knowledge, experience, education, context and literacy of the participants. This is the only way to ensure that the time spent in training meets their needs. When opening a hive for inspection or management it is sensible to have maximum 2-3 participants at a time.
 7. It is important to assess the progress that the trainees are making. Trainers should ask questions, arrange for participants to demonstrate an activity to the group, and eventually visit the new beekeeper's apiary to review progress.
 8. Regardless of gender, beekeepers need the same understanding of bees and the same skill set. It is important to be aware that men and women may start their training with different sets of experience, perceptions and constraints. Women tend to be more tied to the house and this can determine the type of beekeeping that is appropriate for them.
 9. The quality of the training depends on the quality of the trainer! Some people are good trainers and some are good beekeepers, not everyone has both sets of skills.
 10. New beekeepers must learn that a honey bee colony is a superorganism and its needs should be respected. People also need to learn that bees always do something for a reason, and understanding this is the key to becoming a good beekeeper.
 11. Many training projects fail because too much money is spent on equipment and not enough on training. The proof of a successful project is the number of successful practising beekeepers years after the project has ended and not the number of beehives given away.
 12. In addition to learning about bees, beekeepers also need to learn about honey and beeswax processing and marketing. They also need business skills and understanding of how to turn their beekeeping activity into a profitable venture.

"Beekeeping projects fail when a lot of money is spent on equipment and not enough spent in training. It should be the other way around" Tom Hebert, Honduras.

Passionfruit. A bountiful vine heavy with fruit (*Passiflora edulis*)



that demonstrates the value of insect pollination; the bees work from flower to flower and pollinate them all. There is value in mixing and sharing the pollen between flowers. Hand pollination is a deal more demanding – timing, colour, sharp eyesight, fine brushes, physical and more. Bees are cheaper, more

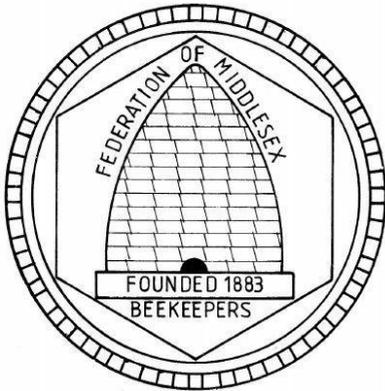
dextrous and provide all those valuable by-products. Passionfruit shown growing in Burundi - where nascent industries are developing for sale of high quality fruits into foreign markets.

A look back at Middlesex County Beekeepers' Association

By David Wheatley

Mike Davey lent me a copy of the 1983 Middx Centenary booklet recently. I scanned it, did an OCR and started making notes. It turned into the following. The following text is also available at <http://harrowbeekeepers.co.uk/content/middx-federation-centenary-1983>

The "Middlesex County Beekeepers' Association" was founded in 1883 and that organisation was the origin of the Middlesex Federation of Beekeepers Associations which dates from 1965 in the present form.



The Federation celebrated the centenary of foundation in 1983 and produced a booklet with some historical detail of the member organisations. A [scanned copy of the booklet](#) is available and also a smaller, [searchable text version](#).

In the years after the BBKA was founded in 1874 there were many disputes about how to organise nationally. It was becoming apparent that a central organisation was too unwieldy and there was lobbying to establish "county" associations which would become members of the BBKA. With many of the previous centralists living around London, other counties were quicker to organise. It was not until 1883 that the Middx County Association was founded after a meeting at "The Feathers" pub (now the Metro Bank) in Ealing.

In the early years the Middx County Association was divided in "Provinces", later "Branches" or "Districts". Individual associations were founded and became "Affiliated Associations" alongside direct members. Various attempts at reorganisation were attempted over the years with consequent boundary disputes until the present structure as a federation was adopted in 1965 with the change of name and no direct members.

The general pattern is a growing interest in the technical development of beekeeping and increasing amateur involvement from the later 1800s. Beekeeping organisation grew between the world wars with the expansion of suburbs and peaked during and just after the second world war until sugar rationing ended. There was a decline in beekeeper numbers from the 1950s to the end of the century, not helped by the arrival of varroa in the 1990s. From a low around 2001, interest in beekeeping has increased and membership numbers have risen.

Many of the long established Beekeeping Supply companies were still trading in the 1980s but did not survive to see the upturn in interest in the next century. The suppliers at the time are reflected in the advertising in the Centenary booklet. Our "Middlesex" based supplier for instance, Robert Lee in Uxbridge, could trace a history back to 1862 and had traded for most of the 20th Century on a site where Debenhams now stands. Before Middx centenary year they had moved to nearby Cowley with the development of Uxbridge town centre. By the mid 1980s many bee business names were struggling to survive and gave way to a series of amalgamations. The remaining Robert Lee business was transferred to Hampshire, taken over by Steele and Brodie (another advertiser in 1983 dating themselves from Scotland in 1875) who were themselves later folded into Thornes. Likewise another advertiser - E H Taylor of Welwyn, founded 1880, were once the largest supplier in England but taken over by Thornes in 1984.

The following time listing is based on various accounts in the Centenary booklet, some dates may be as recalled after the event. Much of the later information is also based on individual recollection. If anyone has firm dates for these or other events, or dates when current association apiaries or the club house was established please get in touch.

- 1485 Earliest known written record of beekeeping in Middlesex; Sion College buys 12 hives at 3d each.
- 1874 British beekeeping Association founded.
- 1883 Middlesex County Beekeepers Association founded and noted in British Bee Journal.
- 1886 Middx Members mount exhibition of 9 cwt of honey at Indian and Colonial Exhibition, South Kensington.
- 1901 Grant of £100 from Middlesex County Council Education Department for apicultural training.
- 1911 Barnet Beekeepers founded, initially independent, affiliated to Hertfordshire in 1997, joined Middx in 2011.
- 1919 Harrow Beekeepers Association founded, some records suggest 1924.
- 1928 Pinner BKA founded.
- 1935 North West Association founded by members of Pinner Association.
- 1941 Uxbridge Association also founded by members of Pinner.
- 1942 The Foul Brood order requires destruction of hives with AFB or EFB.
- 1942 An estimated 36% of Middx hives infested with acarine mites.
- 1943 Ealing Association founded.
- 1945 "Forager" journal founded, by 1980s circulated to all Middx members.
- 1946 C B Dennis organises treatment of all county stocks for acarine, including Twickenham and Wood Green, a total of 3,500 colonies. Acarine campaign taken further afield, as far away as Kings Lynn.
- 1946 Wembley Association founded with the transfer of 60 Harrow members and one third of their funds.
- 1949 Peak Middx membership of 1,560 in nine associations Ealing, Enfield, Harrow, North West, Pinner, Ruislip, South West, Uxbridge and Wembley

- 1950 First Middx "Beekeeping Weekend" at Northwood, held annually until 1975.
- 1951 National Honey Show recognised as "our" County Honey Show.
- 1954 Pinner and Ruislip Associations amalgamate, Ruislip had been founded during the war years but numbers declining.
- 1965 Federation structure adopted as organ of local co-operation and communications channel to BBKA and National Honey Show.
- 1969 South West Association folds, most remaining members join Twickenham and Thames Valley.
- 1970 Current Harrow apiary established at Hatch End.
- 1973 Current Ealing apiary established at Stockdove Way.
- 1975 Enfield leave the Federation to be independent
- c1983 Uxbridge association folds, some remaining members join P&R.
- c1983 Wembley association amalgamates with Harrow
- c1990 North West changes name to North London BKA.
- c2000 Enfield rejoin Middx Federation.
- 2001 Low point in national BBKA membership at under 9,000.
- 2011 Barnet join Middx Federation from Hertfordshire.
- 2013 Middlesex records 624 beekeeping members in six associations - Barnet, Ealing, Enfield, Harrow, North London, Pinner&Ruislip. The numbers per county are from the BBKA Education report, there were over 24 thousand members nationally.

Building a simple solar wax extractor

By Eileen Samuroff

Here is an article about a wax extractor I built a couple of years ago. You will need:

- A plastic storage box with a lid - mine measures 25 x 36 x 18 cm (approx.)
- 2 sheet of thin glass or perspex just smaller than the lid - glass out of picture frames can be used.
- thin sheets of polystyrene, or similar insulating material - I had a roll left over from when we installed a pond.
- duct tape
- sellotape
- aluminium foil
- a hacksaw
- an old kitchen knife
- a small ice cream container
- kitchen cloths - the cheap ones on a roll from pound shops are best as they are very thin. The better quality proprietary brands are good for other jobs but a bit too thick for this.
- elastic bands big enough to go round the rim of the ice cream container

Making the box



First you need to line the inside of the box with insulation. Cut your materials to size so you have pieces to fit the base, and sides. Single pieces need to be about 1cm thick, so if you are using a thinner material you can make a thicker layer by putting several pieces on top of

each other and binding the edges with duct tape. Line you box with them - you may need to use sellotape to keep them in place. If you want a more permanent arrangement, you could glue them into the box, but I find it's useful to be able to remove them if you want to clean out the box.



Next line the whole thing with foil. This is to reflect back as much radiation as possible within the extractor.

For the lid, you need to cut out a section about 1-2 cm smaller than the glass sheets. This is the trickiest part - you can drill

holes around the rectangle to get started then use a hacksaw to cut it out, but you have to be careful not to crack the plastic. You can also heat your kitchen knife over a gas flame, then melt along your cutting line, but make sure you do it in a well ventilated area as it can smell a bit.



Put the lid on a flat surface, and place a sheet of glass over the hole so it covers it evenly. Secure it to the box all round using duct tape. Turn the whole thing over and repeat with the other sheet of glass. You then have a double glazed lid which should fit snugly on your box.



Using the box

The dimensions I have given make a small box useful for filtering small amounts of cappings, brace comb, etc. You can scale it up if you have a bigger box, but you are limited by the size of your glass sheets.

You need a good spell of unbroken sunshine for this to work well. If it looks like a nice day, set everything up as soon as the sun is shining on the place you are going to put your box. I find a paved area such as a patio is good, as the surface gets hot in the sun and helps to maintain the temperature of your extractor.

Put about 1-2 cm of filtered or distilled water in your ice cream container. Wax reacts slightly with hard water so it's best not to use tap water. Place a piece of kitchen cloth over the top and secure with an elastic band. Carefully put the container in your extractor. Pile the wax you want to clean on top of it, then put on the lid securely. Make sure your extractor is facing the sun, and tilt it slightly to get the maximum light intensity.

After a few hours, you should find that the wax has melted and gone through into the water, and you are left with the waste bits on top. Carefully remove the container, open it and drain off the water. You can dry your cleaned wax on a piece of kitchen roll.

Although you can only do this a little at a time, I found that over the course of a summer I was able to clean a large box of wax bits that I had collected with very little effort.

In the World News

Urban areas 'provide haven' for bees

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-31359984>

An Ingenious Invention That Turns Beehives Into Flowing Honey Taps http://www.wired.com/2015/02/flow-hive/?mbid=social_twitter

Flower-friendly farms 'boost bee populations'

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-32022546>

200 Species of European Bees to Become Extinct, Environmental Report

<http://www.newseveryday.com/articles/11755/20150322/one-10-european-wild-bees-wiped-out-report.htm>

European Red List of Bees

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/redlist/downloads/European_bees.pdf

More bee forage in the works

<http://farmfutures.com/story-more-bee-forage-works-0-125393>

GOP and the Bees — It's Time for Republicans to Reclaim Their Eco-Heritage

<http://billmoyers.com/2015/03/20/time-republicans-reclaim-eco-heritage/>

Bees need allies beyond Big Almond

<http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/editorials/article15396410.html>

Friends of the Earth buzzing about victory for bees and freedom of speech

<https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/58548>