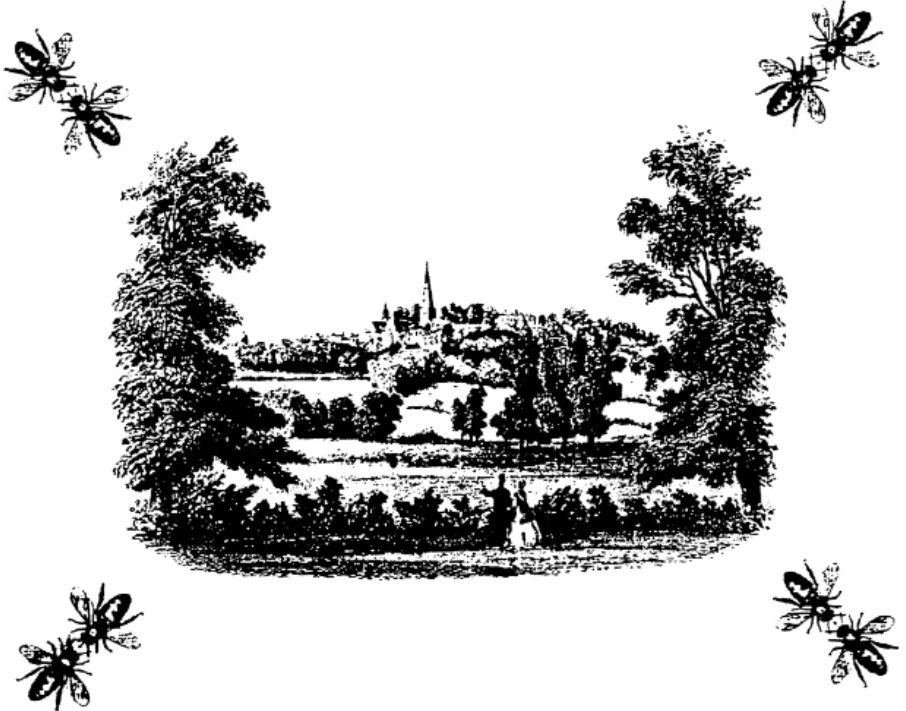


Volume 71 Winter 2015

# Forager



**Harrow Bee-Keeping Association Magazine**

**HBKA news and information**

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Forager Editorial Calendar	
Issue No / Publication Dates	Copy Dates
Volume 72 - Spring 2016	13 <sup>th</sup> February 2016
Volume 72 - Summer 2016	14 <sup>th</sup> May 2016
Volume 72 - Autumn 2016	13 <sup>th</sup> August 2016
Volume 72 - Winter 2016	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2016
Volume 73 - Spring 2017	14 <sup>th</sup> February 2017

BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES		
1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday each month 11am - 1pm	Purchase beekeeping supplies from Brian Desborough	HBKA Trading Officer at Hatch End Apiary

*Contributions intended for inclusion in Forager should be sent to the Editor Rod Parker.*

*The copy dates for future issue are the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of February, May, August and November for the respective – spring, summer, autumn and winter issues.*

**SEE THE FORAGER EDITORIAL CALENDAR ABOVE.**

**Editor's email: [rod.parker@ntlworld.com](mailto:rod.parker@ntlworld.com)**

Including Harrow Beekeeper's Association programme 2016.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday each month always a work party</b>	<b>Hatch End Apiary No hives opened until after 12.00</b>	<b>Start 11am till 1.00pm</b>
<b>Sunday meetings</b>	<b>Hatch End Apiary ABC</b>	<b>Start 11am till 1.00pm</b>
December 6th 2015	work party, winter treatment available.	Bring plastic container for suitable volume
December 13th 2015	Quiz + mince pies. Festive snacks	Winter treatment available/plastic container required
<b>2016</b>		
Jan 10th 2106	Winter feeding and candy making	Moria Spiers
Feb 14th	Shook swarms	TBA
Feb 20th	Federation of Middlesex BKAs <b>Beekeepers' Day</b>	Arkley Village Hall Brickfield, EN5 3LD
March 13th	Wax preparation	TBA
Mar 12th & 13th	Beginners Course	Education team
Mar 19th & 20th	Beginners at apiary	help to make frames & hives+look into hives
March .....TBA	2nd hand Equipment sale	TBA
April 10th	Clipping and marking queens (weather permitting)	TBA
April 8/9/10th	Spring Convention	Harper Adams
May 8th	Swarm control/bee Diseases	TBA
June 12th		TBA
June.....TBA	HBKA Social @ ABC	evening
June.....TBA	HBKA apiary inspection	TBA
July 10th	How to extract honey	TBA
July 17th	Extraction	All members to help
Aug 10th	Honey preparation for show.	TBA
Aug 29th	Harrow In Leaf Show	All members to help
Sept 14th	Beekeeper Question time	Q and A session
October 11th	Bee Book Sunday	TBA
October .....TBA	National Honey Show	TBA
Nov 9th	TBA	
Nov..... TBA	AGM and Dinner	TBA
Dec 13th	Quiz/ mead and Xmas snacks	

## Editorial

Since writing my previous column, a good few months have passed and I have been away abroad for well over a month. Just before I departed I had my second visit from Elizabeth Samuelson of Royal Holloway, University of London for the final audit of my bees for 'Bees in the City' research programme, I have provided a fuller report later in this issue. During the Liz's audit sampling it became clear that varroa levels in the hive were much higher than had been found on Liz's first visit. Next day, I followed this problem up by treating my hive with a full dose of MAQS formic acid varroa treatment - a new experience for me. I wasn't able to check the outcome of the MAQS treatment until I returned back to the UK. I had read the full instruction and had seen their Facebook video, plus had been told some fairly gloomy possible outcomes by well-wishers - I can confirm that this treatment seemed to me to be fairly severe, compared to others that I have used in the past and resulted in the loss of 100+ bees outside the hive entrance the day after treatment. But, on my return to the UK, I carried out a full inspection of my hive in mid-October and can report that the same 2014 marked queen had survived and the hive was absolutely full of healthy bees and even more honey than when I went away. Subsequently I have been told by other members that the full treatment is severe and seems OK on a very strong hive, but can severely affect or even kill weaker hives. For info', there is an option to use  $\frac{1}{2}$  the dose. I checked some drone pupae that I removed from drone comb at the bottom of a standard frame and only found 2 varroa mites out of 70+ drone cell pupae that I dissected, which I think is very low, so for my hive the MAQS varroa treatment worked well.

I am now pondering why this particular hive has done so well in a year that I am told hasn't been a particularly good year for bees. It started as a new overwintered 2014 'nuc', received on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2015 and very quickly became a large strong 14 x12 colony. Possibly the use of a larger 14 x 12 sized hive has helped and that it was a Polystyrene hive, another first for me. The 'Poly' hive certainly produced much more even internal temperatures. I confirmed this by monitoring the hive temps' with a probe – this seems to result in the queen lays eggs much nearer the sides of the frames than I had experienced in a standard National Hive, so I surmise that more brood were laid during the year. Plus, now there are lower levels of varroa, after the MAQS treatment, they are thriving.

**Rod Parker**



## Beelines

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The honey from this year's summer flow has been average. The bees had to cope with cool wetter weather in June /July /August than in previous years. The average temperature was 14° C about 0.04°C below the norm with rainfall 13% higher. We all remember that in July we had the hottest temperature recorded for this month at 36.7 °C (98.06 F). Rainfall for 2015: July 3.9 inches, August 2.9 inches and September was 1.1inches.

The Met Office predicts that we will have a mild winter ahead with high winds. The El Nino effect will be lurking in the background. The above average temperatures will continue until the beginning of January. This will affect the honey reserves because of the bees increased activity and the queen bee early egg-laying. The higher temperature during the winter months seems to have reduced the outbreaks of chalk brood, this can be confused with A.F.B., which has perforated cappings.

Many would consider the Blackberry *Rubus fruticosus* as the best nectar plant in the U.K. There are over 350 species of plants yielding berries in the months of July to September. The species encouraged by many gardeners are self-pollinating. The plant produces large overlapping arches of woody stems which will root on touching the ground. They produce large areas of brambles, which can protect young seedlings from grazing animals. The fruits grow above the thorns and leaves and afford easy access for birds and humans. Our forebears planted brambles on the family graves to keep the dead in the soil and the devil out. The leaves were used for prophylaxis; children would be passed through the arches of the brambles every week to keep them free of disease.

Honey has always been used for healing. A neighbour was afflicted by nasal problems, which were said to be caused by dust mites. It was suggested that a course of honey consumption could improve her condition. We await the outcome with interest.

Some years ago a gentleman purchased a regular of honey to control his blood condition. I was not so pleased when his wife appeared asking for a refund on the empty honey jars. Some 'O.A.Ps.' have flue jabs and then continue to care for themselves with a spoonful of honey a day.

The BBKA News had an interesting article on bee stings by Dick Houghton. I know only one case of anaphylactic shock in a Harrow member. The beekeeper kept a hive of bees in a friends garden about 5 miles away from his home. The 'Sheriff type' veil had not been invented and the bees got in around his neck and gave him more than ten stings. Within minutes he knew something serious was happening to him with his face and neck swelling. He drove home rapidly and managed to open the front door and call out in a soft voice to his wife which was rather unusual!! The wife and friend just managed to carry him up to bed where he became unconscious, but fortunately after a dose of adrenaline was injected he recovered rapidly. He was booked to see an allergy consultant in Harley Street. He was surprised to see a waiting room full of ladies; surely they were not all suffering from anaphylactic shock from bee stings, but It turned out he was in a gynaecologist's waiting room. The second visit was not very fruitful as the doctor had no bee venom, so he used wasp venom instead and advised the member to give up bee keeping

He was subsequently referred to the chest clinic in Harrow where he was given a course of several monthly injections of bee venom. This did the trick and the member felt confident to keep bees again. Several years later a paper in in a medical journal reported that injections with whole bee extract were useless, but that was all that was available at that time.

It amazes me that my family always bring me back a jar of honey when they go abroad. A beekeeper in St Savin, France sells honey with ginger, strawberry, passion fruit or rose in it and they are all beautifully packed in little pots. Here we think that our choice of runny or solid is enough.

A bee is never as busy as it seems, it is just that it can't buzz any slower.

**Michael P Davey**

## HKBA Member News

My thanks must go to all those who helped make this year's AGM at St Lawrence's Church Hall a very nice evening and especially to Eileen Samuroff who organised the details for this on her own.

We have a full complement for our committee and I am pleased to welcome new members to work together during the coming year.

The first committee meeting is to be held on Monday 7th December 8pm at our apiary.

### **Two things come to mind that we need to address.**

Firstly, the treatment of our colonies this winter; this is to be done in the period following a cold spell when Queens are not laying for a week or two. The treatment is to be the new approved Api-Bioxal - a veterinary medicine based on Oxalic acid.

This will be made up for you by Brian and myself and Members will be able to purchase some for your colonies on the Sundays before New Year. The packets of Api-Bioxal that we shall buy are only for 10 colonies, so we shall let you buy just the solution to save you making it up. You will need to bring a plastic bottle or jar to the apiary to hold a maximum of 50ml / colony.

### ***Cost to be confirmed.***

Secondly: We expect to have some tree work done in the apiary during the December/ January holidays and will need some help in handling branches/ logs out of the Montessori school grounds. I hope some volunteers will be able to help when we know the date.

**Jo (Chair to HBKA)**



## The Beekeeper's Year

This is a suggested beekeeper's annual checklist of activities, which you can amend to fit your own activities, should you wish. I have also produced a summary table in A4 format, which can be downloaded from the HBKA website, see link at end of article. I welcome your comments and revisions; other more experienced beekeepers have 'peer' reviewed this article, but I may have missed something important.

Note that weather, hive location and even the type of bees you have will influence such activities. Mild or severe winters can bring forward or delay when 'bee activity' happens.

The calendar gives you an overview of what's going on each month in **each hive**. It also suggests most of the important tasks for the beekeeper and provides a rough estimate of the amount of time you might spend with your bees during a given month. If you haven't already done so, create a **Hive Record Card** for each of your hives and remember to fill them in each time you visit the bees. They are so useful – as they remind you of many things you would have forgotten about individual hives and you can learn so much from these records.

### January: Study and workshop time

**The Bees.** The queen is surrounded by thousands of her workers. She is in the midst of their winter cluster. There is little activity except on a warm day (above 8 - 11°C) when some of the workers will take the opportunity to make cleansing flights. There are no drones in the hive, but some worker brood will begin to appear in the hive. The bees will consume about 10-12 pounds of stored honey this month.

**The Beekeeper.** Little work is required from you at the hives. If there is has been snow, make certain the entrance and hive vents are cleared to allow for proper ventilation. Only if you get a really warm day, which we sometimes get (above 15°C) you could check whether supplemental fondant is needed (do it quickly, so not to chill the bees). This is a great time to catch up on your reading about bees, attend bee club meetings and build and repair equipment for next season. If you didn't do it at the end of last year order 'nucs' of bees that you need from a reputable supplier.

**Time Spent.** Estimate less than an hour.

### February: Beekeeping classes and equipment time

**The Bees.** In the UK February is normally our coldest month, the queen is still cosy in the cluster and will begin to lay a few more eggs each day. It is still "females only" in the hive. Workers will take cleansing flights on very mild days. The bees will consume about 10-12 pounds of honey this month.

**The Beekeeper.** There is not too much to do this month, so there is time to read, attend bee club meetings and get your equipment ready for spring.

**Time Spent.** Estimate less than one hour.

## March: Colony inspection time

**The Bees.** This is the month when colonies can die of starvation. However, if you fed them plenty of sugar syrup in the autumn and leave fondant over the winter, this should not happen. With the days growing longer, the queen steadily increases her rate of egg-laying. More brood means more food consumed. The drones begin to appear. The bees will consume about 10-12 pounds of honey this month.

**The Beekeeper.** Early in the month, on a mild day, and when there is no wind and bees are flying, you can have a quick peek inside your hive. Double check if they are not flying. Remove any dead colonies. In March it's still best not to remove the frames, but just have a look under the cover. If you do not see any sealed honey at the top of frames, you may need to start feeding any very light colonies with fondant or syrup if the weather is mild. But remember, once you start, you should not stop until they are bringing in their own food supplies. If you are going to do an early spring Varroa mite treatment (say, because you collect blossom honey) this is the time to start its application, do it now (or soon) dependent on the weather.

**Time Spent.** Estimate 2 hours this month.

## April: Comprehensive inspection and spring treatment time

**The Bees.** The weather continues to improve, and the early blossoms begin to appear. The bees begin to bring pollen into the hive. The queen is busily laying eggs, and the population is growing fast. The drones will begin to appear.

**The Beekeeper.** On a warm and still day do your first comprehensive inspection. Can you find evidence of the queen? Are there plenty of eggs and brood? Is there a nice pattern to her egg laying? If you wish, feed hive food supplements and Nosevit<sup>+</sup> treated syrup or candy (UK agent is Thornes), twice 10 days apart – see website [www.apivita.hr](http://www.apivita.hr) for details as a preventative and cure treatment for Nosema. Spring varroa mite treatments should be well underway or finished. Dependent on your hives location most treatments

need to be completed before supers for honey production are installed (also you need to check exact details of your chosen treatment routine, as some treatments claim they don't taint honey).

**Time Spent.** Estimate 3 hours.

## May: Critical time

**The Bees.** Now the activity really starts to increase. The nectar and pollen should begin to come into the hive thick and fast. The queen will be reaching her greatest rate of egg-laying. The hive should be bursting with activity.

**The Beekeeper.** Watch out for signs of swarming during inspections of the brood box. If queen cells are found consider destroying them and take action to split the hive into two hives by one of the various artificial swarm control methods. Remember that a hive that swarms can be the sign of an inexperienced or inattentive beekeeper - inspect the hive weekly – always try to keep one step ahead of the bees. Consider a swarm control method that allows for full honey crop. Some beekeepers carry out an artificial swarm method on most hives each year – try using a Horsley or a Snelgrove Board or some other method to split the hive, so they think they have swarmed and therefore don't swarm. The split hives can be recombined in the autumn to produce a stronger hive for winter.

If your hive shows fast build up and looks extra strong, on a very mild and windless day and if you use more than one brood box (BB) **you should consider reversing the hive bodies** (move bottom BB to top and top BB to bottom), or for hives with only one BB rotate the box through 180°. This will allow for a better distribution of brood, and stimulate the growth of the colony. Varroa mite treatments should also have been completed and removed prior to adding any honey supers. Add a queen excluder above the BB, place honey supers on top of the queen excluder and as the nights are still cool keep the mouse guard. Attend bee club meetings and workshops.

**Time Spent.** Estimate 4-5 hours this month.

## June: Swarm time

**The Bees.** Colonies that have not swarmed will be boiling with bees. The queen's rate of egg-laying may drop a bit this month. The main honey flow should happen towards the middle or end of this month. A swarmed out hive will not produce a honey crop, may lose its queen and result in uneven brood pattern.

**The Beekeeper.** Inspect the hive weekly to make certain the hive is healthy and the queen is present. **Keep up swarm inspections.** When overcrowded,

bees cover top frame when inner colonies are removed, add a super to provide more space. Not too late to reverse the brood box to help prevent swarming. Attend bee club meetings and workshops.

**Time Spent.** Estimate 4-5 hours.

### **July: Adding extra supers time**

**The Bees.** When the weather is good the nectar flow may continue until the end of this month. During very warm and humid nights, you may see a curtain of bees cooling themselves at the entrance or exterior of the hive.

**The Beekeeper.** Continue inspections to assure the health of your colony and don't be afraid to ask questions or seek help from other HBKA members if you find something in the hive you don't understand or that needs investigation and clarification. Check for colony slowing down or not flying as it should. Add more honey supers if needed. An extra super or two is good insurance as it gives the bees more space to move around and keeps them happy. Keep your fingers crossed in anticipation of a great honey harvest.

**Time Spent.** Estimate 2-3 hours.

### **August: Honey crop time**

**The Bees.** The colony's growth is diminishing. Drones are still around, but outside activity begins to slow down as the nectar flow slows.

**The Beekeeper.** Add another super if necessary, remove filled supers and return them to colony if they are short of supers. Returning a super with emptied drawn frames will soon be cleaned up by the bees and refilled faster than undrawn frames, if you are lucky. Check all filled supers are well sealed and protected from bees if you plan on extracting this honey later. Not much chance of swarming. Watch for honey robbing by wasps or other bees. There is not too much for you to do this month. Have a little holiday.

**Time Spent.** Estimate about an hour or two.

### **September: Extraction, feeding and autumn treatment time**

**The Bees.** The drones may begin to disappear this month. The hive population is dropping. The queen's egg laying is dramatically reduced.

**The Beekeeper.** Harvest your honey crop, while weather is still fairly warm. Leave enough for the bees or add syrup so the bees can replace the harvested stores. Remember to leave the colony with at least sufficient honey or added stores (about 30-60 pounds) for winter. Check for the queen's presence. In this month you can feed the hive Nosevit<sup>+</sup> treated syrup as a preventative treatment for Nosema. Apply varroa mite treatment once

honey has been harvested. Continue feeding until the bees will take no more syrup. Attend bee club meetings.

**Time Spent.** Estimate 2-3 hours.

## October: Winter preparations

**The Bees.** Not much activity from the bees, unless it is still warm enough for flying. In a cold October or in some colder UK districts the bees are beginning to hunker down for the winter.

**The Beekeeper.** Watch out for robbing and control it by reduce the entrance size, plus now is the time to add a mouse guard. Configure the hive for winter, with attention to ventilation, moisture control and centralise the bee stores in the hive for ease of feeding during cold weather. Consider adding an empty super or BB wooden box under your BB to move the bees away from wind and drafts. Remove the queen excluder above the BB to allow the bee cluster including the queen to move to where the food stores are. Setup a wind break if necessary. Finish winter feeding by end of October. ***Heft hive to determine weight – repeat weekly until end April next year, to check the hive has sufficient stores.*** Attend bee club meetings. If needed, pre-order overwintered 'nucs' of bees from a reputable supplier.

**Time Spent.** Estimate 2 hours.

## November: Check your hive for winter

**The Bees.** If November turns out to be especially cold there will even less activity in the hive. Cold weather will send them into a cluster.

**The Beekeeper.** Moisture accumulation, not cold kills a colony. Consider adding a moisture trap inside the roof of the colony to stop moisture dripping in the hive. A piece of bee screen thumb-tacked over the crown board holes will keep bees from chewing your bag of moisture absorbent material – e.g. sawdust, wood chips, leaves or proprietary absorbent pad placed above the crown board. It will help stop condensation droplets falling on the bees.

Store your equipment away for the winter. Attend bee club meetings.

**Time Spent.** About one hour this month.

## December: Winter is here

**The Bees.** The bees are in a tight cluster. No peeking. The bees will consume about 10-12 pounds of honey this month.

**The Beekeeper.** There's nothing you can do with the bees. Consider using an

oxalic acid in syrup hive treatment on a warmer dry, still day. December is the time to learn from your year's activities. Read a good book on beekeeping, and enjoy the holidays!

**Time Spent.** None

Link to The Beekeeper's Year Summary table on the HBKA website.

<http://harrowbeekeepers.co.uk/content/beekeepers-year>

**Rod Parker**

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## Labelling of Honey Jars

Anybody labelling honey for sale should be aware of the label regulations.

***The following notes are a precis of a longer document available on the HBKA website for Members to download, see link at end.*** Final interpretation of this type of legislation is always up the courts. This is my current understanding of how these various labelling rules affect suburban honey typical of honey produced around Harrow (review undertaken in late 2015). Bee-keeping supply companies produce labels that most beekeepers would expect to be regulation compliant, but if you want to print your own or intend to write in items like lot numbers and best before dates on pre-printed labels, read on.



## The Printed Label

The Food Information Regulations (2014) implementing EU 1169/2011 include:-

- Food information shall be accurate, clear and easy to understand for the consumer and be in the language of the intended market, English in our case.
- Mandatory food information shall be marked in a conspicuous place in such a way as to be easily visible, clearly legible and, where appropriate, indelible. It shall not in any way be hidden, obscured, detracted from or interrupted by any other written or pictorial matter or any other intervening material.
- Allergen labelling was recently introduced, but honey has none of the allergens listed.
- Honey is an unprocessed product and is exempt from listing ingredients.
- Honey is classed as a single ingredient product and therefore doesn't need nutritional labelling, although some honey packers include it on supermarket packaging.

***In summary, honey labels should show the following information:-***

- the name of the food;
- the net quantity of the food;
- the date of minimum durability;
- the name or business name and address of the food business operator;
- the country of origin or place of provenance;
- probably a batch number (read Lot Number Marking paragraph for more details).

A minimum size for type is a requirement and for most size jars that will be an "x height" of 1.2 mm, that is the height of a lower case x in the font used. All printed labels stuck on the jar should comply with these mandatory requirements, whether produced commercially or on a home computer printer. Some supermarket may require items like 'a nutrition list', these could be added voluntarily or required by the retailer.

## Harrow Honey

The Honey Regulations 2015 state what can be sold as honey. They are based on EU Honey Directive 2001/110/EU and include 2014/63/EU which clarified that pollen did not have to be labelled as a separate ingredient. It defines "honey", essentially as the natural product of bees.

"Reserved description" is no longer used, but the effect is the same. Honey can be qualified with specific terms: bakers, blossom, chunk, comb, cut comb in honey, drained, extracted, filtered, honeydew, nectar and pressed. There are also required characteristics. Refer to the legislation for definitions and specific floral and honeydew exceptions but in general most honey should have:-

- Fructose and glucose total at least 60g per 100g
- Sucrose not more than 5g per 100g
- Moisture not more than 20%
- Water insoluble not more than 0.1g per 100g
- Electrical conductivity not more than 0.8mS per cm
- Free acid not more than 50 milli equivalents acid per kg
- Diastase activity not less than 8 (Schade scale)
- HMF not more than 40 mg per kg

These requirements are somewhat technical and beyond most home kitchens. Moisture is fairly easy to estimate at home with a refractometer, although many rely on capped honey being below 20% water. As for the rest, the diastase and HMF are changed by heating or excessively long storage. Avoid that, filter out wax particles and make sure what you extracted is honey, not stored syrup, and it should be well within all the limits.

One option is, if there is doubt about moisture levels, to sell honey as "baker's honey" labelled "intended for cooking only". That has wider tolerances, but geographical and floral origins are not permitted.

Harrow, or any other "Regional, territorial or topographical" origin on the label must be honey wholly from that place.

Any aroma or flavour in honey must derive only from the plants (or honeydew) the bees are working with.



## **Produce of England**

The regulations require the country of origin to be shown, but it does not have to be the EU member state. It can be "Produce of England", "UK honey" or "Made from honey harvested in the UK". Much imported honey uses the suggested phrase from the Regulations "blend of EU and non EU honeys".

## **Weight Marking**

The Weights and Measures (Packaged Goods) Regulations 2006 (WMPG) requires "the numerical value expressed in figures followed by the unit of measurement expressed in words or the relevant permitted symbol".

Minimum print sizes are 4 mm for packages exceeding 200 g to 1 kg, 3 mm exceeding 50 g to 200 g, 2 mm for not exceeding 50 g. Packages of honey, for instance, will be in the range using the permitted abbreviations kg for kilograms or g for grams. The phrasing of the requirement is that the weight in grams can only be written as 500 g or 500 grams, there is a need for a space between the number and g or grams. There is nothing legally to stop you part filling any size jar with any quantity of honey you like as long as the contents are at least what is stated on the label. The offence in the legislation is "short weight", the contents being less than what is listed on the label. If honey is packed on a small scale it is easier to make sure every jar contains at least the weight stated, rather than attempting to comply with the averaging rules.

## **The address**

Beekeepers bottling their own honey are classed as Food Business Operators (FBO). Regulations require that the label includes the address of the FBO. It states "The food business operator responsible for the food information shall be the operator under whose name or business name the food is marketed or, if that operator is not established in the Union, the importer into the Union market."

There is no specific format prescribed, some large manufacturers use PO Box addresses. Since the address can be EU wide, it would not be logical to require a post code. However, it is clear that just a phone number is not enough and as a minimum the FBO address should be a valid postal address.

## **Best Before Date**

The regulations require a "date of minimum durability" for most foods including honey.

The date used is the judgement of the FBO. Many beekeepers use a Best Before Date between 2 and 5 years after packing.

### **Lot Number Marking**

Lot marking is specifically required by "The Food (Lot Marking) Regulations 1996" (FLMR). The purpose of a lot mark is tracing the batch through packing and sale. The legislation expects the producer to keep records in case there is a problem.

There is a proviso in the regulations that the durability date is an acceptable substitute for the lot mark if it names the day and month. But, there is a risk, should a problem occur, all production for that period that has the same implied lot number could be recalled. A "Best Before End 2017" without a separate lot number would extend one lot to the whole year.

### **Label Pictures**

Many pictures are copyright and you must have permission to use any image on a label. Pictures must not make the text illegible. It has long been part of "guides" that a picture of a single identifiable flower type is not permitted unless the honey is of that floral type. For example if honey is 50% or more from ling heather you can label it "Heather Honey" and put a picture of Calluna (ling) heather on the front.

Using general garden scenes or other beekeeping images is not usually a problem even if the hive pictured is not the type used. You're selling the honey, not the hive.

**The full document can be obtained via the Harrow BKA website using the following link:**

<http://harrowbeekeepers.co.uk/content/honey-labels>

**David Wheatley**



## ***Bees in the City: 2<sup>nd</sup> Visit***

You may recall that I mentioned in the last issue of *Forager* that I was chosen as one of the beekeepers taking part in the 'Bees in the City' research programme. Involvement required my bees being checked twice during the year to measure forage, pesticides and disease.

Elizabeth Samuelson of Royal Holloway, University of London was once again conducted the tests. These were a repeat of the various inspections and tests that Liz carried out during her first visit.

Having watched with interest during the first visit, I offered to give a hand. I was again about to depart on holiday, so it was good that the weather stayed fine for the inspection.

One of the tests measured varroa mite infection levels and to my surprise we found that infestation levels had risen markedly from the levels found after the first visit. The test involved taking a measured number of bees and coating them in a measured quantity of icing sugar in a specially converted 1lb honey jar. I was assured that the bees are not hurt by the experience; they just end up coated in icing sugar, which they quickly remove once they are returned to the hive at the end of the test.

The icing sugar is retained for analysis later back at the laboratory. We could see through the sides of the clear sample bag that a reasonably high number of mites had been collected in the sugar – these mites had been shed by the bees during the test.

As a result of this discovery, I made a note to ensure that my bees were given an urgent varroa treatment the next day, just before I depart on holiday. I had luckily already purchased supplies of MAQS, a treatment for varroa, but it

wasn't one I has used before. The reason I had chosen MAQS was it seemed to me as the only treatment that claimed it killed mites inside sealed pupae cells, which is where I suspected much of the infestation was hiding.

My Editorial column sets the results of the MAQS treatment and I will continue to monitor varroa levels in the spring.

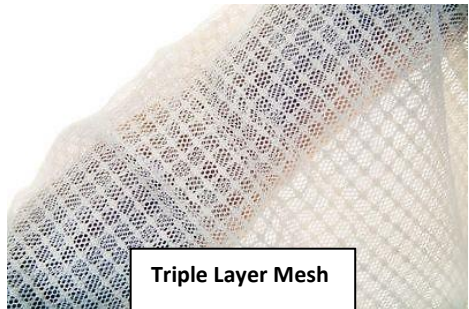
**Rod Parker**

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## Keeping Cool – Follow-up

As promised in the previous issue, HBKA Member Jeanie Cruickshank has reported back to update us on the performance and benefits of her (new) ventilated triple layer beekeeping suit.

Jeanie's report is particularly of interest to me as I have considered using one of these suits, possibly you have too. I wanted to find out if these suits really were the solution to the problem of over-heating, when carrying out your normal beekeeping activities during the summer months, something I personally find a problem.



Jeanie reported that she got on pretty well with the suit. Her initial impression had been that it was heavier than she expected and it didn't stop her getting hot when doing heavy work, but it was nice to have a bit of ventilation. Jeanie thought that she would probably have been even hotter in her old suit, but that it was hard to do a controlled experiment. One good point was that she didn't get any stings through the ventilated suit.

Jeanie had a bit of a disappointment when she washed the suit for the first time, because it ripped where one of the solid cotton pockets joined onto the mesh. Her theory is that the pocket, which made from solid material, had shrunk and this caused the ripping. She tried without success to get hold of a piece of similar fabric from her supplier. So she ended up stitching a piece of plain white cotton cloth over the hole, covering the pocket. Jeanie said be careful to select the right size of suit, try to get a suit that is a little over-size. Carefully check out the true dimensions of your supplier's products and ask about possible shrinkage.

Since then she has washed the suit again, hoping for no further damage. This time Jeanie used a 'cool delicate' wash (with added washing soda), but was disappointed to see that mud stains haven't come out. Next time she thinks she may try adding bleach.

So, overall Jeanie was not 100% happy with the new suit, but it was an interesting experiment!

I would be interested to hear from any other HBKA Members on their experience of using similar ventilated beekeeping suits.

**Rod Parker**

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## **Plants for Members**

HBKA member Jeanie Cruickshank has kindly supplied a number of bee-friendly flowering shrub cuttings for planting out by Members in their own gardens. They are available 'Free of Charge' on a first cum basis at Hatch End Apiary. These cuttings are of the winter-flowering shrub *Lonicera Fragrantissima*. It's a great plant for bees, flowering right through the winter with flowers smelling of lily of the valley, plus cuttings of winter flowering honeysuckle.

## Pesticide exposure in bumblebees 'harms pollination'



**Bumblebees are frequent pollinators of apple crops**

**Bees exposed to nicotine-like pesticides are not as good at pollinating crops, research suggests.**

A study found bumblebees collected pollen from apple trees less often when exposed to the chemical, reducing the success of the crop. Scientists say policymakers should consider the potential impact on agriculture in the debate over the use of neonicotinoid pesticides. The company that makes the pesticide said the findings were "premature". Bees are essential for the pollination of many crops, including fruit, seeds and oils.

The global worth of the pollination services bees and other insects provide is estimated at between 152 billion and 379 billion pounds per year.

Dr Dara Stanley from Royal Holloway University of London said the research, published in the journal [Nature](#), found for the first time that pesticide exposure reduces the pollination services bumblebees deliver. "I think what's important about our work is that it shows that pollination services should also be included in the debate on neonicotinoids," she told the BBC.

"Pollination services are clearly important because about 30% of the food that we eat comes from crops that are pollinated by bees and other insects

and these could include crops such as fruit crops, nut crops, seed crops and oil crops."

Bumblebees are frequent pollinators of apple crops. Victoria Wickens Apples require pollination by insects, primarily bees, to set fruit. There is growing evidence that exposure to neonicotinoid pesticides - the most widely used group of insecticides worldwide - affects bee behaviour and reproduction. But until now, the impact on pollination has not been studied. Scientists in the UK and Canada looked at three groups of bumblebees exposed to varying levels of neonicotinoid pesticides in nectar, then released to forage among apple trees.

Co-researcher Dr Mike Garratt, from the University of Reading, said they found that bees exposed to pesticides returned from apple flowers with less pollen than bees in the control group. "This suggests that bumblebees exposed to pesticides must somehow behave differently on flowers," he said.

Commenting on the study, Prof Felix Wäckers of Lancaster University said it demonstrated for the first time that "field realistic levels of neonicotinoid exposure actually compromises crop pollination". And, Prof David Goulson of the University of Sussex said farmers using these chemicals could potentially experience reduced yields.

But Syngenta, which manufactures the pesticide, thiamethoxam used in the study, described the findings as "premature".

Dr Peter Campbell said the conclusion that thiamethoxam impairs pollination services "is not conclusive, it is premature and only representative of a single experiment conducted under artificial conditions for the apple trees being pollinated and using unrealistically exposed bumble bees".

## **Habitat loss**

[A separate study](#) this week by French scientists found wild honeybees exposed to the nicotine-like pesticides had shorter lifespans. However, whole colonies were able to recover by breeding more worker bees, potentially disguising the effect. Bees are in decline in Europe and North America due to a number of factors, including pesticides, habitat loss and diseases.

A Europe-wide ban on neonicotinoid use on flowering crops introduced two years ago is due to be reviewed at the end of 2015.

**Eileen Boden - Source: BBC website**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-34857858>

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## **‘Harrow in Leaf’ at the Headstone Village Show**

This year ‘Harrow in Leaf’ presented their 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Horticultural & Craft Show together with HBKA Honey Show as a one day event on Monday 31st August at the Headstone Manor & Museum Site.

This was the first year as a one day show having been renamed as ‘The Headstone Village Show’. Unlike past years, the organisation of the stalls and entertainment was being undertaken by the management of the Heritage Centre. Sarah is pleased to report that all the changes to the show, were not a deterrent to HBKA members, as the number of HBKA honey entries was up from last year at 247 (compared to 236), so she would like to say thank you to everybody who made the effort to prepare their honey and honey products, and get them along to the show site in time to be judged.

It is true to say that the barn renovations also presented the show organisers with additional challenges, necessitating two marquees to be hired: one for horticultural entries and the second for HBKA honey show entries. Both marquees were located in the rear field behind the barn, so there were many differences this year, compared to previous.

As with all shows, a great deal of planning went into the event, both before the occasion and across the entire Bank Holiday weekend and Sarah would like to thank everybody who volunteered and gave up some of their ‘spare’ time to help. But as show organisers some things are beyond control and it was not possible to order dry and sunny weather. Unfortunately this year’s prediction for BH Monday rain, turned into a reality. The day started with cloudy skies and rain, the latter persisted all morning, but thankfully the



clouds did break a little and there was some respite in the afternoon. The public showed their support and the turnout was reasonable, given these circumstances. Around 700 visitors braved the elements and visited the show on the Bank Holiday Monday afternoon, this compared to around 250 in 2014 (which was also a rainy day) and 1200 in 2013 when the sun shone (these are numbers comparing the Monday visitors only, remembering that previous years were two day events).

Our thanks must also go to our Honey Show Judges, Martin Buckle and Sue Lang, who had the onerous task of judging so many entries; it was a hard day's work for both of them. Overall they commented that the standards were high which is very encouraging and reflects everybody's hard work. With over 100 entries, we were able to award the "Blue Ribbon" for best in show, which deservedly went to Judy Earl, for her display class entry. The judges said that each one of her individual honey products in the display would have been commended with an award had they been entered separately, so it was the worthy of the Blue Ribbon award, congratulations to Judy.

Not surprisingly honey sales differed this year as sales of the smaller weight jars were up compared to last year, the larger jar sales were down, resulting in the total weight of honey sold being less. This was to be expected as selling time was restricted to just the Monday afternoon. After taking into account funds raised and all expenditures, HBKA made a small surplus.

Although it is obviously crucial that HBKA raises funds to reinvest to the benefit of its members, it has also got to be remembered that holding an annual honey show is an important HBKA aim in "Educating and promoting the craft of beekeeping to the public", so making a profit is not the sole aim of the show.

Plans are already underway for the 2016 show; Sarah reported that the first meeting with the Barn management has been held recently, but the key decision about whether next year's show will be a one day or two day event has yet to be confirmed. If anybody has any feedback they would like to offer about the 2015 show, please email [sarah.sarahjames@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:sarah.sarahjames@dsl.pipex.com) Salmaan Hassanally has offered to help with next years show so he and Sarah

will be working together to plan things, if anybody else is keen, then please get in touch.

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## ***In the World News***

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<http://www.smh.com.au/technology/sci-tech/scientists-turn-to-beetags-to-help-halt-the-honey-bee-apocalypse-20150823-gj5xtx.html>

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<http://kjzz.org/content/216096/africanized-bees-become-problematic-arizona-after-multiple-hospitalizations>

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**NOTES:**

