

**Editorial:** At the Branch AGM several Committee members retired as David Welham mentions below. They were all very hard working members of the Committee and it was particularly sad to say goodbye to Jon & Sally Webber as beekeepers due to Jon's serious anaphylactic shock in the summer. They promised to visit us on social occasions. We congratulate the new Committee and wish them support and help from Branch members.

The speaker was great....Michael Keith-Lucas helps the police in their enquiries (often serious murders) in forensic science. Pollen can last for years in a corpse's nose which can help to pinpoint the exact time and place when this person last breathed. It was fascinating and gave us all the chance to stop worrying about dusting our homes...it isn't dust but mostly pollen and fungal spores which makes it so much easier to leave for another day!

Don't forget the Branch Honey Show on Feb 11 ...Tom Salter will talk through his judging for us.

My best wishes for a very Happy Christmas and a very good 2012.

Notes from the AGM 26.11.2011

David Welham

We agreed the new branch fees and I have sent out an email to all on my mailing list.

It was agreed that the Branch still needs to find a permanent apiary site of our own, nearer to the centre of our region, to this end we will open a restricted account specifically for this purpose.

Gill Sims made the inaugural presentation of the George Sims Cup to David Hounsell for most points at the Portishead Show.

A vote of thanks was given to Sally and Jon Webber for their work on the accounts, and we also passed a vote of thanks to Philip Clemente for his work - among other things being apiary manager for 6 years.

Ashley Grist was elected as Apiary Manager and asked for volunteers as assistant apiary managers.

Peter Carter was elected as Programme Manager.

Richard Ellis was elected as Hon. Treasurer



Gill Sims speaking and presenting the George Sims Cup at the AGM. The first recipient was David Hounsell. Congratulations David!

▲ Other views of the AGM 'tea-time'.

◀ Michael Keith-Lucas & his wife can be seen here speaking to Ian Preece. An 'old friend' of BCD.

**IBRA**

Ivor Davis

You may not have heard about IBRA. It stands for the International Bee Research Association. As an organisation it has been around for many years (I believe it was originally started in 1919) but has changed its name and some of its objectives over the years. Nowadays IBRA produce the International Journal of Apicultural Research, Bee World, publish a number of beekeeping books and run international conferences. It is run by a council of over 20 eminent international bee scientists and a few others including me who help to ensure the organisation is well managed. It has a small number of staff and Norman Carreck, who many of you have heard talk, is the Scientific Director and Senior Editor. It is supported by the Eva Crane Trust; Eva was one of the originators and left a large sum in her will to promote IBRA and other similar organisations. It promotes the wide circulation of the latest information in bee research and ensures that this information can filter down to amateur beekeepers.

Should you want to read more about the latest developments in beekeeping or want to buy some important beekeeping books please go to the IBRA web site ([www.ibra.org.uk](http://www.ibra.org.uk)) where all the information is available and you can join this important association and contribute to the dissemination of research results into bees and beekeeping.

**Chair's Letter**

As I write we are preparing for the branch AGM and the hope is that we shall have a couple of new committee members for the coming year.

Bee committees are not like other committees – we have a laugh as we plan the year's work ahead and try to keep things light, knowing from our own experiences how important it is to have up-to-date information on what's going on in the bee world. With this in mind I hope to see many more of you at next year's talks and social meetings. There really is something for every beekeeper, whether they are new to the craft or old hands with lots of experience. Why not make a New Year's Resolution to attend at least one meeting next season?

For now though, it's time for a rest (apart from a bit of hefting) and to look forward to the coming festivities.

So I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and happy New Year.

## Members' Corner

**Philip Clemente** is organising the Bath & West Show again (30/5-2/6 2012) and would love you to volunteer to man the stand for half a day and get in free so you have the rest of the day to enjoy the Show. Phone **Philip** 07957 855841 if you can help.

The Christmas Meal was enjoyed. Thanks to **Philip Clemente** for organising this and to **David Welham** for the photos below.

**Ivor Davis** has given the Branch two laptops (one needs a little repair) to use in training and study groups..

## Congratulations!



We had a baby boy 6lbs 4oz, 3 wks early on 27/10/11 and called him Teddy! He's gorgeous & getting loads of cuddles from his brother & sisters - Ian & I barely get a look in! He doesn't sleep much at night so we're lucky it's not high season for the bees!  
*Sandu Baker-Hellings*



*Fountain covered by moss and bees in Aix de Provence  
Photo by Amanda Banks*



## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS 2012

Sat 14 Jan 2.00pm Plastic Hives by Johannes Paul (Omlet Hives)  
*Churchill Memorial Hall, Churchill Shared Tea*

Sat 11 Feb 2.00pm Branch Honey Show, *see below*  
*Tickenham Village Hall Shared Tea*

Sat 17 March 2.00pm ABKA AGM hosted by Blagdon Branch  
*Shipham Village Hall*

*Efi: please contact Peter Carter 01934 820079*

## Branch Honey Show

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2012 Tickenham Hall**

*Tutored judging by Tom Salter, Senior Honey Judge*

The schedule will be circulated

## 2012 - the year for celebrations!

*Wendy Welham*

Next year sees two special occasions for the Branch. On 17<sup>th</sup> March we are hosting the ABKA AGM at Shipham Hall. As you know, each Branch in Avon takes it in turn to host this event and in 2012 it falls to the Blagdon branch. Our Speaker is Jane Memmott who is Professor of Ecology at the University of Bristol. There is a small sub-committee involved in the planning of this event and you will all receive further details - together with requests for help on the day! - after Christmas.

Our second celebration of the year is much more personal to the Branch - it will be our Diamond anniversary and we really **MUST** celebrate our 60<sup>th</sup> birthday! What I would really like to know is your ideas on the celebration: when, where and how? I shall be putting your ideas on the website later and would like you all to contact me with your suggestions and preferences. Please make your ideas known and have a look at the kinds of ideas that others are making. Thank you in advance!

## Oxalic Acid

*Ivor Davis*

Beware, this warm and extended autumn will mean that our colonies have continued to **raise** brood long after the normal time when the colony slows down and prepares for winter. The honey stores will be getting very low and because there is not much pollen about, the young bees will be undernourished. Unfortunately, these difficult conditions for the bees will provide good times for the varroa mites. They will have continued to breed a long time after you treated the colonies with Apiguard way back in August.

Control of varroa should be considered throughout the year and this year winter control will probably be essential if your colony is to be given a good chance to build up well in the spring. Oxalic acid treatment is ideally suited to controlling mites in winter. Oxalic acid will not kill mites that are breeding in sealed larval cells but is effective against mites on the adult bees (phoretic mites).

There are a number of pre-formulated solutions available and if you do not know how to obtain these talk to me, Phil Clemente or Ashley Grist.

*Remember that anything you apply to the bees is considered to be a medicine and you should keep records of the batch numbers, date applied and method of application.*

If you have never used oxalic acid talk to your mentor or assistant beekeeper who, I am sure, will help you. The best time to use it is just after an extended period of very cold weather (the cold weather will stop the queen laying eggs and 3 weeks afterwards there will be no sealed brood for the mites to hide in). It should only be applied once in the winter as the acid is corrosive and will damage the adult bees if applied more than once. Be careful not to get the acid onto you; wear protective clothing and rubber gloves. Use a syringe and dribble the solution along the seams of bees using the correct dose.

Finally, remember that the oxalic acid solution is harmful and should be disposed after use. It cannot be stored for long periods as it will become toxic to the bees once exposed to light and kept at room temperature for any length of time.

The 2012 programme will be on the web very soon.  
Programme cards will be available at Branch meetings.

## Apiary Notes

Hi all, by the time you receive this I will no longer be your Apiary Manager, but I would like to thank the following people who I forgot to thank in my report to the AGM.

They are those experienced beekeepers who came along on a Sunday, so thank you to; Stephen Brain, Bob South, Ivor Davis, David Welham, Tom Salter, Robert Francis and Ashley Grist.

Unless someone else wants to do it, I will be Swarm Liaison Officer for the next three years, if any of you would like to collect swarms in your area, please let me know.  
Philip