

## Conwy Beekeepers Keeping in Touch

Bees are with us again and it appears surreal to me going to the colonies on quiet roads and empty spaces, particularly here In Kinmel Bay where holiday makers usually arrive in droves for Easter.

I bought my first colony from Richard Morris one of our members who kept some bees in his small garden in Prestatyn. I remember going to collect the bees in August dressed in my new bee suit to find Richard in shorts sitting reading by his hives with his bare feet on a landing board, the bees landing and taking off from his toes. He must have had 20 colonies including many nucs in his garden; he cultivated a Himalayan Balsam in the garden just for the bees. Nice gentle man, I spoke to him a few days ago, hasn't been well but is thinking of getting back with bees and maybe getting a suit!



I started with bees when I retired at 64 and it changed my life in many ways, like a window on the world I had not looked through before. Now as a community councillor I try to promote biodiversity and I tend to think the current crises will compel us to take our environment not just seriously, it is already taken seriously, but intelligently elevated to supreme global priority.

At our apiary meetings we sometimes have visitors and on one occasion we had a group of Boys Brigade on a camping weekend from Liverpool. When we look at the photo, we see Peter and Kevin got them kitted in bee suits; some accepted our bee gloves, but others opted for their own black cycling gloves. As they got engaged with bees and handled frames, they started to get stung through the black woolly gloves, several of them were stung; but it did not deter them; they nipped out of the apiary and all came back with gloves from Peter a mark of their characters and respect – good experience to share.



Then there is the Conwy Honey Fair; will we have one this year?

Personally, I believe our raw Conwy honey is marvellous. I sent a sample to Cardiff Uni who said it contained all the ingredients to fight MRSA; in anticipation of the next obvious question I don't know; bees for millions of years have established some anti-viral measures in symbiotic evolution but it's not a Covid-19 vaccine.

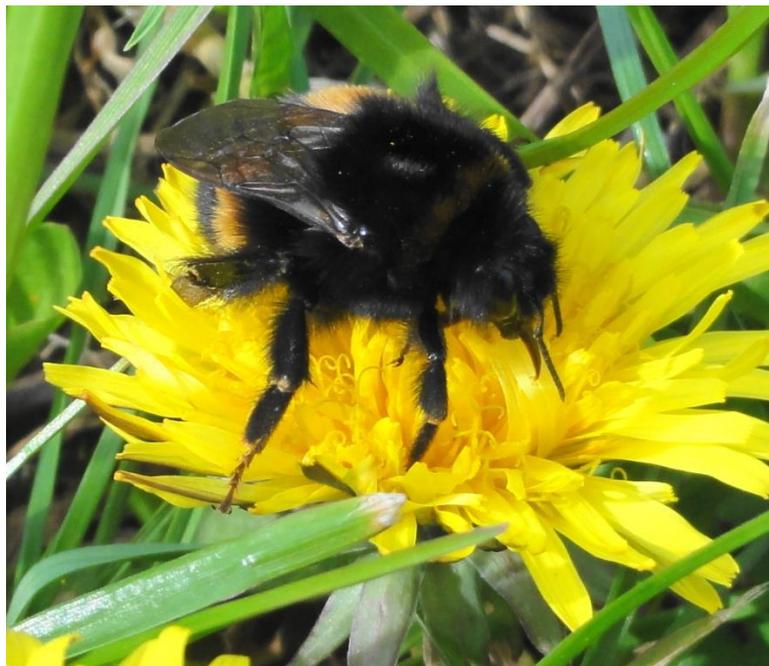
It must be said that some of our members are marvellous beekeepers, I get the feeling they are more than trained but intuitive in their knowledge and skills and it is the Honey Fair which demonstrates this by attracting great beekeepers and enthusiastic punters from far and wide.



One of the most memorable images for me is the candid photo of Dennis Pointon inviting a somewhat sceptical visitor to sample his honey.



We are amazingly fortunate to live here and to be keeping bees particularly at this challenging time of lockdown. We will emerge stronger and wiser and even more appreciative and protective for our environment. I have set the mower to its highest setting to conserve daisies and clover. I am also leaving regions of the garden uncut until the back end of the year to supply some habitat and forage for insects and birds – when did we last have to wash insects off the windscreen? Dandelions are rich food sources for foraging insects, I include them; not suggesting we let bramble take over and fortunately there appears to be plenty of that around us.



Kind regards – keep safe. Barry. 31 March 2020.

<https://www.conwybeekeepers.org.uk/>