

### **RBG Publicity Officer's Report, 2016/2017**

This past year has seen no requests for talks and only one for a school visit, though I have taken bookings already for 2017 and even 2018. At the school visit, which took place shortly after Major Tim Peake's momentous trip and return to earth, I turned up in my bee-suit and introduced myself as Major Tim Peake! Needless to say, they didn't believe me, though it did cause quite a stir, so we continued my visit talking about bees in the environment, covering not only honey bees but also bumblebees and solitary bees. The event took place after school and outdoors, which enabled the children to go looking for evidence of foraging by bees in general on the flowers that they had grown in their school garden. Great interest and enthusiasm was shown by the children and also by their parents, who were regaled with stories of what had transpired that afternoon at "pick-up" time.

The only CBKA Group that I have been involved with this year was Roseland at the Q&A session last September. Radio Cornwall and Pirate FM called me again for interviews on topics ranging from neonicotinoid spraying (again), to swarms and swarming, reducing bee numbers and beekeeping in general. It seems beekeeping is still the hot media topic it has been for the past few years! This is reflected in the courses I run, where there has been a maintained interest from the general public, though with only one course running in the autumn but with two running this term. The Saturday course has more than my normally accepted maximum of students (I don't like to turn people away but, on the other hand, if I have too many students it reduces the benefit to the individuals that can otherwise be obtained with fewer). For the first time, I also have more on a waiting list I am creating. Saturday is obviously very popular so it will be interesting to see whether there are any promising students (ie "obsessive" beekeepers) when the course starts this coming Saturday (21<sup>st</sup> January). Hopefully the courses will result in a boost to our membership numbers again, as I think it is important that we continue to have "new blood" in the Groups.

I still write my monthly blog for Roseland-online, though the winter months have again proved a challenge this year owing to the mild, though dry-ish, weather. The bees have not been able to do what they are supposed to do during the "winter" months, but hopefully that will change very shortly and I can get back to talking about what the bees are actually doing, since they are still bringing in pollen and water.

Colin Rees, Publicity Officer