

# BeePlus 2011 Report



**Photograph by Milly Field, a pupil in the reception class at Rolliston School  
Honeybee on a foxglove.**

## **Contents**

- 1 INTRODUCTION
  - 1.1 Summary
  - 1.2 Background
  - 1.3 Objectives
  - 1.4 What we did
  
- 2 FEEDBACK
  - 2.1 Feedback from Teachers
  - 2.2 Feedback from the Children
  - 2.3 Feedback from Soroptimist Clubs
  - 2.4 Feedback from Rowse Honey
  - 2.5 Feedback from BBKA
  - 2.6 Other Interesting Outcomes
  
- 3 EVALUATION
  
- 4 APPENDICES
  - 4A List of Schools, Girl Guide & Brownie Packs
  - 4B List of Participating SI Clubs
  - 4C Project Photographs and Press Cuttings

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped to make this project a huge success. They include the 90 schools that participated, their head teachers and staff, and the 42 Soroptimist Clubs who sponsored schools, worked with them, and helped to bring about some interesting outcomes.

We are also very grateful to our sponsors Rowse Honey Ltd for funding such a huge enterprise, and in particular Sarah Mitchell and her team, who apart from masterminding everything at the Rowse Honey end, also rolled up their sleeves and got stuck into the arduous job of boxing up the orders and making sure that all the resource packs arrived at the right place and on time.

Our partner the British Beekeeping Association, in particular Chris Deaves who is in charge of Education and Husbandry, kindly allowed us to use their educational materials and to improve them, and gave us support and guidance along the way. Throughout the country we are indebted to the many beekeepers who went into schools demonstrating the working of a hive and encouraging the children to dress up in the gear and to have fun.

We are grateful that Laura O'Brien allowed us to use the original BBKA teaching posters that she had designed.

Bill Turnbull, celebrated beekeeper, broadcaster and "Strictly" contestant was kind enough to write a foreword to the manual and words of encouragement to the children.

When we were wondering if we were actually going to hit our target of reaching 10,000 children, we were helped at the last minute by the wonderful Peter May (honorary project member) who with an employee friend at Rowse Honey, magically recruited a large number of schools in the Maidenhead area.

We were also helped by the publicity given to us within SI, by the inclusion in various publications, of articles we had written explaining all about the BeePlus project.

Last, but not least, as the Programme Action Co-ordinator for SI Virtual One (pilot), I would like to thank the small team of six (including myself), and several would be members, who have worked tirelessly and with enthusiasm and humour, to accomplish everything we set out to do. So thanks a million! We are:

Mary Stratton, SI Eastbourne & District, President Designate

Joyce Boorman, SI Ipswich & District, Organising Secretary Designate

Tracy Gardiner, SI Gosport, Fareham & District, Honorary Treasurer Designate

Liz McConnell, SI Stirling, Media and Public Relations Officer Designate

Carole Atkinson, SI Kingston upon Thames & District, Membership Secretary Designate

Sue Waters, SI Kingston upon Thames & District, Programme Action Co-ordinator Designate.

# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Summary**

This project, the result of collaboration between Soroptimist International (SI) Virtual One (pilot) Club, the British Beekeepers Association (BBKA), and Rowse Honey Ltd. has been successful beyond our wildest dreams. We reached our 10,000 children, in fact we have schools on the waiting list for 2012. We recruited not only schools but a few Girl Guide and Brownie groups with whom we hope to establish a longer term working relationship. The feedback from schools has been overwhelmingly positive and in some cases ecstatic. The teacher responsible at St Mary's School, Twickenham, had this to say:

*"I hope the forms do convey our pupils' utter joy at being involved in this project - some of them have mentioned the bee project in their 'end-of-year' learning comment that goes on their report - it had a big impact. There are also children every day outside at playtimes pointing out/ noticing/ commenting on bee activity!"*

The deputy head of another Twickenham School, Archdeacon Cambridge's, had this to say:

*"Having a beautifully presented workbook that is theirs has excited the children and made them motivated. Children don't often get excited by a workbook".*

Schools, SI Clubs, and our partners have all gained something from this, and hopefully the honeybees will also benefit.

## **1.2 Background**

In 2009 the embryonic SI Virtual One (pilot) club (SIV One), with 4 founder members, was looking for a project that would attract new members, was topical, fitted into at least a few of our programme areas, and could be easily replicated. Everyone was "buzzing" about the decline in the honeybee population. There was some serious research going on at Sussex University, partly funded by DEFRA, but most other initiatives were about raising awareness. We saw many possibilities in designing a project that was educational, aimed at young future beekeepers, and which might have an effect on the environment. We decided that whatever we did we would make available to other Soroptimist Clubs in the UK. After talking to the BBKA and getting their permission to improve and reproduce some of their educational materials, aimed at Key Stage 2 (ages 7 to 9 year olds), we ran a successful pilot project in 4 schools during the summer term in 2010. The funding for this was provided by Rowse Honey Ltd, who then agreed to fund the roll out across the country in 2011.

## **1.3 Objectives**

Our ultimate aims were to save the honeybee, or at least educate children and their parents and teachers about the small things that would make a difference, and stimulate an interest in sending hives overseas so that impoverished women in less developed countries would have a source of income. We hoped that along the way we would introduce the topic of bees and beekeeping to children at an age when they are curious and can get excited, and might eventually want to be beekeepers. We wanted them to be aware of the seriousness of the problem, and show them how little things such as planting a bee-friendly garden or window box, and gardening organically, might

help. We also wanted to raise the profile of our organisation through the contact between local Soroptimist clubs and schools, as well as make people more aware of our partners, Rowse Honey and the BBKA.

#### **1.4 What we did**

We took note of the feedback from the pilot project and made some small changes to the resource materials, the main ones being a rewrite of the material about pollination, some change in the order of some of the material, and a separation of the pupil information and activities into a separate workbook for the pupils. This was made possible because of the funding agreed by Rowse Honey. We agreed that each school would have a set of posters (original design courtesy BBKA), a CD with a master copy of all resource material as well as a PowerPoint presentation to complement some of the information, a manual for each teacher and a workbook for each child. Rowse Honey agreed to “brand” all materials so that there was consistency in appearance, and to provide a goody bag for each child containing a recipe card, a wooden spoon, a jar of honey, a packet of seeds, and a badge. We aimed for 10,000 children and reached that target. 90 schools and 42 SI Clubs were involved.

## 2 Feedback

### 2.1 Feedback from Teachers

Many teachers wrote to us with enthusiastic comments that were more enlightening than the information on the forms. A teacher who was also a Soroptimist had this to say about Cawood School:

*"You have caused a revolution at school, the children who were involved in the project were bee crazy! One of our parents is a beekeeper and he joined us on the first day of the project. We have identified ten local beekeepers, and at our local craft festival, two groups of beekeepers who were selling their honey, remarked to me how many local children were showing an interest in their display"*

From the forms we gained the following information:

Many spent more than 5 days on the project, and did not use the material in the order it was presented. This showed the flexibility of the materials really worked.

Aspects of the project that worked really well were as follows:

- quality of the resources in general
- workbook in particular
- cross curricula nature of the activities
- use of video
- active learning
- visits to and from beekeepers
- practical activities such as cooking and planting
- fit with the curriculum

Overwhelmingly teachers were happy with the content of the manual and commented:

*"Really good resources – I couldn't fault the quality."*

*"Detailed, thorough, easy to read".*

One person, however, asked that there should be cross-referencing of page numbers between the teacher's manual and the pupil's workbook. There was also a suggestion that we design a certificate for those who completed the project.

Much of the feedback about the information for pupils was positive, a typical comment being:

*"Very good – excellent booklet which encouraged pride in their work, and interest".*

One deputy head teacher from a Surrey school said:

*"The children were really engaged"*

There were also some suggestions for improvement of the pupil's workbook. These focussed on the need for more differentiation, easier reading, and perhaps having two workbooks, one for KS1 and one for KS2. The project was aimed at KS2, with a range of difficulty for that age group. Interestingly in many instances, teachers themselves chose to involve the entire junior school, including children

with special educational needs, and some infants. These points are worth considering however, because it would then be easier for schools to do the project again without repetition for the pupils. Video and website references were included in the manual, but maybe needed to be more explicit. Obviously the materials as they are at present proved to be versatile and adaptable, and many teachers used them in very creative ways.

There were some changes suggested for pupil activities including video links, more differentiation, more practical rather than workbook activities, and an interactive CD for the whiteboard. Overall the pupil activities were regarded as both fun and informative, and the cross curricula approach and the variety were appreciated. As always some creative teachers were able to take the suggested activity, and improve it themselves.

*"We made the recipe more child friendly, and laminated it!", and*

*"We used ideas, made whole school displays, researched, watched video clips".*

The follow up activities planned by the participating schools clearly show how this project has stimulated interest in bees, beekeeping, and the environment, and in some cases this has extended into the local community. Here are some of the comments:

- *"The Sustainability Coordinator will include bee related activities in the curriculum next year"*
- *"We have written persuasive letters to our local MP and the Mayor with ideas on planting more bee friendly plants"*
- *"A 'bee' drive was initiated as a means of including the community in school learning activities"*
- *"We want to involve the whole community through Friends of the Earth"*
- *"We would like to create a 'Nectar Bar' in our garden to attract bees"*
- *"Hopefully the Bee Guardians group set up within school will continue in partnership with the schools Eco committee. We then hope to raise awareness of the decline in bees throughout the school and into the community."*
- *"We will share our project with a school in Nepal once we get it up and running."*
- *"We have already planned to use the resources next year as we have been able to link it with science, maths, literacy, ICT"*
- *"The whole school has benefitted from this imaginative and creative project"*

The only negative, but constructive, comments were to do with differentiation between abilities.

## **2.2 Feedback from the Children**

Some of the children wrote individual letters to us about their experiences. One child with special needs, persuaded his father to investigate having a beehive on their small-holding. In his letter to us he said:

*"The bee book was fantastic because there were some really interesting facts and you could learn and have fun. It was also good because there were really hard word searches and crosswords. The goody bag was really amazing and fantastic too. Thank you for both things. We loved them".*

Another child said:

*"...the information was really fun and challenging. We learnt about different bees. We enjoyed the book. We liked the Bee Man, trying on the suit, and tasting honey."*

From the forms we gained a great deal of information. Not surprisingly **the range of favourite topics** was enormous, and summarising was difficult. Overwhelmingly however, learning about what goes

on inside a hive, and learning about the different kinds of bee, were top favourites. More surprisingly, many enjoyed learning about pollination. An SEN group were interested in what happened when a bee used its sting.

The **range of favourite activities** was also huge, and included drawing, designing, colouring, cooking, games, and visiting the apiary. This applied to all age groups.

The **important new facts** the children had learned included the following:

- *There is no king bee*
- *There are more girls than boys*
- *The life cycle*
- *Facts about colonies*
- *Boy bees don't sting*
- *About the varroa mite*
- *There are different types of bees and they have different jobs*
- *How to draw bees properly and scientifically*
- *How to make honey buns*
- *How much of our food depends on bees.*

In response to the question, “**what do they now hope to do?**”, the overwhelming number of responses was about caring for bees in a number of different ways, learning more about them, and becoming a beekeeper. Here are a few responses:

- *“Rescue tired bees”*
- *“Buy a bee house to encourage bees in our gardens”*
- *“Adopt a hive”*
- *“Don't use chemicals”*
- *“Try honey”*
- *“Plant lavender seeds, grow certain plants”.*

## **2.3 Feedback from Soroptimist Clubs**

Some clubs got more involved with their schools than others, but feedback (unsolicited) was generally very positive:

SI Whitehaven said *“Thank you for allowing us to take part in the project. The children delighted in dressing in the bee suits which the beekeeper had brought, and seeing all the bee paraphernalia. They were keen to be photographed by the local newspaper. It was also nice publicity for the club”*

SI Poole commented *“Many thanks indeed to you and your SI Virtual One colleagues for the BeePlus project.*

*The lead teacher working on the project is so impressed with the materials that she has recommended that the school incorporate BeePlus within the curriculum.*

*Given the success of the project at Broadstone First School, SI Poole would be only too pleased to continue support of BeePlus in the future should further funding become available.”*

## **2.4 Feedback from Rowse Honey**

Rowse Honey was thrilled BeePlus reached its primary target of getting 10,000 pupils on board with the project. It was such a fantastic project to be involved in as it enabled us to open up the world of



honey and the honeybee to schools throughout the UK, thanks to SI's ability to link into communities through a local network of clubs.

We were also delighted with the quality of the teacher's manual, the pupil workbook and posters both in look and content. The feedback we received directly from local schools was amazing, with many commenting on how wonderful the materials were and how they exceeded their expectations.

The project was a new learning experience for the company and we are delighted to have been associated with its success.

## **2.5 Feedback from BBKA**

The BBKA is delighted with the way SI and Rowse have developed the material for schools and been able to achieve so much success in its take-up. Bees and honey are intrinsically interesting to children, but this approach has allowed schools to build on this interest to create a much greater learning experience for children. It has provided a focus for a wider learning scope, about the environment, plants and the natural world we live in and has given an opportunity for engagement with the children's wider community. Every child has been able to participate in one way or another.

We hope that this interest will lead to an emerging population of young people with a greater appreciation for the importance of biological systems that we tend to take for granted. We are sure that at least some of them will become the beekeepers of the future. There has already been a surge of interest in the work of beekeepers up and down the country, and we hope this will continue.

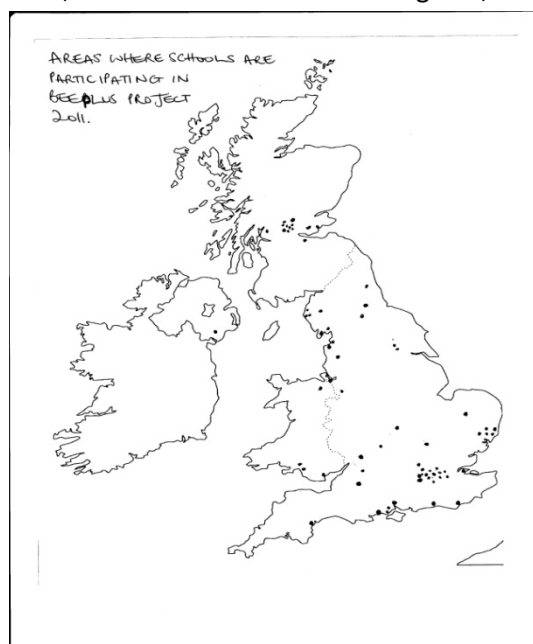
## **2.6 Other Interesting Outcomes**

Taking part in the project has inspired children from many schools to do a variety of new things from eating honey for the first time to taking ecological action in support of bees. Some facts:

- Only one third of the children in one school had tasted honey prior to the project
- One school was experimenting on the colour preferences of bees
- The children discovered that honeybees spend significantly more time on a flower than bumblebees
- One school built a bee friendly garden at RHS Wisley which they have since transferred to their own school garden
- One school is raising money from activities such as washing cars, selling cakes, holding jumbles sales in order to send hives to other countries.

### 3 EVALUATION

We were successful in reaching our target of 10,000 children. The spread across the UK was not even, but did include schools in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.



As far as the participating schools were concerned, this project was enormously successful, and for many is now embedded in their curriculum, and because of the CD they can go on using it as long as they wish to. A teacher from a Gravesend school had this to say: *"Our aim is to provide quality education with enriching memorable experiences for all children using the agenda of the document 'Every Child Matters'. The BeePlus project fits fairly and squarely with this ethos and it was a pleasure and privilege to be part of it with the support of the Soroptimists and the sponsors, Rowse Honey ... my thanks again for the opportunity to be part of something rather wonderful".*

One of our aims was to raise awareness of a problem, and to show children, their families and teachers, how they can make a difference to bees and the environment. That we have certainly done. The comments from the children show that they are much more aware of the problem. Many schools have taken the project into the environment. Again, judging by their comments, we may well have stimulated interest in beekeeping, but only time will tell.

We wanted to raise the profile of SI and individual clubs in their local communities. For some clubs this has definitely been a good outcome, particularly when club members have really got involved with the school. For example, SI Wrexham knitted bee brooches for the children to wear and also knitted larger bees to use on their displays. The SI Region of North Wales and the Wirral has a Friendship and Information Tent on the field at Llangollen International Eisteddfod and plans to have a display about the BeePlus Project. In Gravesend, a club member had this to say:

*"the Project was very worthwhile as it has increased our involvement with the school where one of us is a Governor and five members of our club go into classes once a week to listen to children read. In addition we are planning a special event at the school in conjunction with International Literacy Day".*

An SI member working with New York Primary School, Tyne and Wear, explained how they were involved in partnership planning of the programme before the commencement of the project.

*"The 10 days of support involved 5 Soroptimist members (F), the Head Teacher (F), lead Teacher (F), and Teaching assistant (F), as well as a whole school approach to the project including the Bursar (F) and Caretaker (M)."*

We hope that eventually schools will raise funds for hives to go overseas, but it is early days yet.

Did our partners benefit? We have no statistics but apiaries up and down the country must have had an increased demand for their services. The Education Officer at the Twickenham BKA was pleased

that participating schools were better prepared for their visit to the apiary. In a few years time we will be able to gauge whether the number of members of BBKA has increased.

Rowse Honey should be pleased to know that in one school one third of the children taking part had never tasted honey, but now positively liked it. In all schools, making honey buns was a favoured activity, and parents were very appreciative of the goody bag and its contents.

## 4 APPENDICES

### Appendix 4A List of schools and Girl Guide and Brownie Packs

18th Ealing Brownie pack	Killlearn Primary School, Glasgow
2nd Hinchley Wood Brownies	Killin Primary School, Killin
3rd Hinchley Wood Guides	Kingfield School, Woking
All Saints C of E Junior School, Maidenhead	Lakenham Primary School, Norwich
Allan's Primary School, Stirling	Larchfield Primary, Maidenhead
Alwyn School, Maidenhead	Murrayfield Primary School, Ipswich
Archdeacon Cambridge Primary, Twickenham	New Monument School, Woking
Ardross Primary School, Alness	New York Primary School, Tyne and Wear
Barnsbury Primary School, Woking	Newton Primary School, Dunblane
Barton Primary & Nursery, Torquay	North Cerney C of E Primary, Gloucestershire
Bawdsey CEVA Primary School, Suffolk	Oak Meadow C of E Primary, Fareham
Bealings Primary School, Suffolk	Oakwood Junior School, Southampton
Bell Farm Junior School Hersham	Oakwood Primary School, Cheltenham
Birchen Coppice Primary, Kidderminster	Ocklynge Junior School, Eastbourne
Bourne Primary School, Eastbourne	Orford CEVA Primary School, Suffolk
Braithwaite CEVA Primary, Keswick	Our Lady & St Patrick's RC Primary, Maryport
Bridge of Allan Primary School, Stirling	Peases West Primary School, Crook Co. Durham
Broadmere Primary, Woking	Pebble Brook Community Primary School, Crewe
Broadstone First School, Dorset	Port of Mentieth Primary School, Stirling
Broke Hall Community Primary School, Suffolk	Poultton Le Sands Primary School, Morecombe
Broughton Primary School, Cockermouth	Raploch Primary School, Stirling
Brynhyfryd Primary School, Neath	Rendlesham Primary School, Suffolk
Burhill School, Hersham	Rolliston C of E Primary School, Swadlincote
Cambridge Road, Ellesmere Port	Southdown Junior School, Bath
Cardenden Primary School, Lochgelly	Springfield Lower School, Kempston, Beds
Cardinal Newman Catholic Primary, Hersham	St Bees Village School, Cumbria
Cassop Primary School, Co. Durham	St Dunstan's Catholic Primary School, Woking
Cawood C of E Primary, Selby	St Edmund Campion Catholic Primary, Maidenhead
Chalfont St Giles Infant School and Nursery	St John's C of E Primary Silverdale, Lancs
Charsfield C of E Primary School, Suffolk	St Malachy's School, Newry, Co. Down
Chase Bridge School, Twickenham	St Mary's CEVA Primary School, Woodbridge
Cilffriw Primary School, Neath	St Mary's C of E Primary School, Twickenham
Clackmannan Primary, Clackmannan	Stanley Road Juniors, Twickenham
Clare House Primary, Beckenham	Strathdevon Primary School, Dollar
Coalsnaughton Primary School, Tillcoultry	Sully Primary School, Vale of Glamorgan
Courthouse Junior School, Maidenhead	Thames Ditton Junior School
Craigbank Primary, Alloa	The Hythe School, Staines
East Boldon Junior School, Tyne & Wear	Trafalgar Junior School, Twickenham
Furze Platt Infant, Maidenhead	Waltham St Lawrence Primary School, Reading
Furze Platt Junior, Maidenhead	West Rise Junior School, Eastbourne
Holly Mount RC Primary School, Bury	Westgate Primary School, Morecombe
Holy Family Catholic Primary, Barrow in Furness	Whitcross Primary, Falkirk
Holy Trinity C of E VA Primary Gravesend	William Gilpin CE Primary School, Lymington
Kennoway Primary & Community, Levin Fife	Woodbridge Primary, Suffolk
Kew Riverside Primary School, Richmond	Ysgol Rhostyllen, Wrexham

#### Appendix 4B List of Participating SI Clubs

SI Barrow-in-Furness	SI Ipswich & District
SI Barry & District	SI Kidderminster & District
SI Bath	SI Kingston upon Thames & District
SI Beckenham & District	SI Kirkcaldy
SI Bedford	SI Morecambe & Heysham
SI Bournemouth	SI Nantwich & District
SI Burton-on-Trent	SI Neath
SI Carnforth & District	SI Newry & Mourne
SI Cheltenham and District	SI Norwich
SI Cirencester & District	SI Poole
SI Cockermouth & District	SI Ramsbottom
SI Dunfermline	SI Selby
SI Durham	SI South Shields & District
SI Eastbourne & District	SI Southampton & District
SI Easter Ross	SI Stirling
SI Ellesmere Port & District	SI Torquay & District
SI Elmbridge	SI Tynemouth, Whitley Bay & District
SI Falkirk	SI Virtual One (Pilot)
SI Gosport, Fareham & District	SI Whitehaven & District
SI Gravesend & District	SI Woking & District
SI High Wycombe & District	SI Wrexham

A collaboration between Soroptimist  
International Virtual One (Pilot) Club, the British  
Beekeepers Association, and Rowse Honey Ltd.