

North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

Newsletter September 2016

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Calendar at-a-glance

21 st September	Talk – “Bees in the City”
25 th September	NBBKA & Bucks County Honey show
18 th October	Talk by Ged Marshall
25 th October	AGM
27 th to 29 th October	National honey show
Tues in November	Talk – Microscopy
3 rd December	Christmas meal (TBC)
2017	Talks

Editorial

An Apology

Writing August's notes whilst Elizabeth and I were incarcerated in or near Carlisle when the weather was windy and wet, it was all too easy to write off the season as a bad one, which you will recall I duly did. A rather stupid assumption on my part because as we all know, our bees have been working their "socks" off in these parts mid-July onwards in to August with a very good flow I suspect almost everywhere. I have ended up with an average of over 50 lb of honey per hive on an autumn 2015 count.

Mead Bar

Libby Culshaw informs us that London's first mead bar will be opening at Shakespeare's Globe and will have mead talks and menus – see <http://www.swanlondon.co.uk/mead-bar/>

End of season

Now in September (and note by the end of September) we must get our bees prepared for the winter ahead, and that includes all the tasks ably set out in the standard books. All I will do is to highlight a few thoughts: -

- a) Is the colony **strong** enough to get through winter? In particular, a colony on less than six standard brood frames in September may have insufficient numbers to survive, and if necessary it should be united to another stock.
- b) Make a point of getting your winter **feeding** done by 30th September or even earlier.
- c) Be ever watchful for **robbing**. It is often difficult to detect the robber bees, but the robbers look furtive, prowling around outside waiting to make a quick entry. Wasps are rather more obvious. The trouble is that once inside a hive, these robbers go almost unchallenged and even a strong colony can be wiped out in days. All stocks, whatever their strength, should be reduced to one bee space from the time the season's flow slows down (say beginning August) until the spring flow is well under way.
- d) Are your hives **secure** and wind- and watertight? A damp roof will soon kill off the strongest stock. Damp in winter, even damp conditions around hives is a far bigger winter killer than cold. September is the time to ensure your hives are wind-, weather- and robber tight, and placed in airy conditions but do protect from prevailing winds.
- e) And get ready for the **shows**. Read on!

Honey shows

Bucks County Combined Honey Show.

Once again this is on Sunday 25th September at Buckingham Garden Centre, Tingewick Road, Buckingham, MK18 4AE (one mile west of Buckingham on A 421). You can pull down entry forms/details from North Bucks BKA website (and see August newsletter). This is the year when NBBKA hosts the other Bucks County district associations, and we are also inviting entrants from outside the County. Please do come to the show: there is a lot happening.

Things to remember: - entry is free; Andrea Woolley is giving a talk about anaphylactic shock (entry again free) and you will get lunch if you state on the registration form (see August Newsletter) that you want it. Lunch costs £6 - you pay on the day. And a discount on plants you buy!

What if your mother-in-law demands your presence on show day? Please do still enter the show. It is easy. Get your exhibits ready, and either ask another beekeeper to deliver them to the show and later return them to you, or failing that please give me a call/send an email : 01525 240 235 or ae@thebeers.org and we will get that business done for you.

More help for show. I am still needing two strong men/women on Friday, Saturday and Monday, 23rd, 24th and 26th September. Also helpers for the stands on Sunday 25th. Help please! Thanks.

National Honey Show

Thursday 27th to Saturday 29th October. This is your chance to enter your honey/hive products and have these judged against the very best from the UK and overseas. As usual there will be many lectures/workshops to attend, and many of the well-known bee equipment suppliers will be present. A real day out not to be missed: a chance to meet up and make new friends. Please get on to the National Honey Show website for more details - and make a note of the new venue: Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ. See you there.

Coming events

Talk - 'Bees in the City'

21st September, organised by Mid Bucks BKA. To be given by Elizabeth Samuelson ,a PHD Research Student, from Royal Holloway University. She will be considering in particular foraging behaviour, disease pressures and pesticide exposure. Venue. Church of the Good Shepherd, Churchill Avenue, Southcourt, Aylesbury HP218NH. Time 7.30pm. Incidentally do get on to the websites of Chalfont Beekeeping Society and those of High Wycombe and Mid Bucks BKAs as well as Beds BKA in particular: you will find a whole host of activities covering all a beekeeper needs to know and normally if you ask you will be welcome to attend meetings.

Talk by Ged Marshall

18th October. Ged is probably the best known beekeeper in Buckinghamshire, and like so many beekeepers very generous with his time. Ged runs a commercial beekeeping business and specialises in raising Buckfast queens. It would be true to say that Ged is a no-nonsense and pragmatic beekeeper. His talks are very popular and an inspiration for beekeepers new and not so new. This talk is being arranged by Buckingham and District BKA and is primarily for its members. If anyone would like to attend, please call me on 01525 240 235 and I will try to secure a place for you. Time 7.30 pm in Checkmore.

NBBKA AGM

Tuesday 25th October, 7.30 pm at the **Shoulder of Mutton, Calverton**. Please do come to share your thoughts about our association after the formal business. We have organised some light refreshments afterwards.

It will not be possible for me to remain as Chairman or serve on the Committee after the AGM. When I took the post as Chairman in 2014 I undertook to do that for two years, and now circumstances on the home front require me to be more of a supporting husband. I can think of at least three members who would make brilliant chairmen, but as far as I know we have had no volunteers. Please seriously consider if you would like to put yourself forward for Chairman - it is not a difficult job: we have a lovely committee, this is a very friendly association and you do not even need to be a beekeeper. We also need a new Secretary, someone to write the Seasonal Notes and an Events Secretary, so please consider these roles too.

Improvers' Group

Andrew and Fiona Eelbeck have for some years run an Improvers Group, which has advanced the beekeeping skills of many of our members, and I would like to record our gratitude to them for doing so, with both great expertise and humour. Their discussions with members and activities undertaken during 2016 have included: -

22nd May - Making a swarm box and grafting

25th May - Queen-rearing methods

29th May - Assessment and evaluation of queen cells

5th June - Grafting queen cells

12th June - Evaluation of queen cells.

They are running a **Disease and Bee Health six-week course**, beginning in late September (time 7.30 to 9.30 pm; dates to be fixed) for the BBKA Module 3 exam, and three members are already enrolled for it. Other members are invited to join the course. There is no obligation to take the Module 3 exam at the end of the course - but you can if you wish! The meetings are likely to be either at Western Underwood Village Hall, High Street, Western Underwood, Olney MK45 5JR, or at the Eelbecks' home in Stoke Goldington depending on numbers. Please contact the Eelbecks at a.eelbeck@btinternet.com

The course might be especially helpful to 2016 Beginners, whose Disease Recognition course at Cosgrove had to be cancelled.

Our **congratulations** to Sarah Mist, John Bussey and Robert Poole for passing BBKA Modules 2 and 6.

Christmas Knees-up.

A provisional booking for a Christmas Dinner on 3rd December has been made at the Shoulder of Mutton. The new Committee will no doubt deal with this as it thinks appropriate.

If I may come back to the Bucks Combined Honey Show, on Sunday 25th September, this is undoubtedly our biggest event since we last entertained the County Show - and the Autumn Gathering - in Stewkley, in 2012. Please, please do come if you possibly can come with your friends, and best of all get some entries into the Honey Show classes. See you and your exhibits there!

Best wishes,
Andrew Beer