

North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

Newsletter October 2016

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Calendar at-a-glance

18 th October	(Buckingham BKA) Talk by Ged Marshall (<i>new venue</i>)
18 th October	(Beds BKA) Talk by Prof Robert Pichard
25 th October	AGM – Shoulder of Mutton
27 th to 29 th October	National honey show
22 nd November	Talk – Microscopy – Shoulder of Mutton
3 rd December	Christmas meal (TBC)
2017	Talks

Editorial

Honey Show

Congratulations to everyone who supported, participated in or attended our Honey Show shared with Bucks BKA and Buckingham and District BKA. An immensely happy event, top quality entries (and some fierce competitions in most of the classes) – it was a delight to observe members from the various Bucks associations intermingling so enthusiastically – that is what being beekeepers from Bucks and its surrounds are all about. Our presence at Buckingham Garden Centre was enthusiastically welcomed by the general public who came up with some of the usual questions raised on these occasions like “Why does your queen have a white spot when last year it was blue...?” Those entertaining the public with the Bee Quiz and the “Bee Hive Games” had a very busy time. And, Sue Lang, as you would expect, controlled the whole show immaculately.

I cannot finish this section of the newsletter without expressing specific thanks;

- To Sue Lang for being a wonderfully organized and calm honey secretary;

- To our stewards Bill Fisher and Sue Carter from Chalfonts and our own stewards/treasurers Sandra and Stuart Knox - difficult to believe they have been beekeeping for only just over a year.
- To the North Bucks 'heavies' (NB not by weight, but strength) Phil and Jenny Mander, David Warren, Jess Lines and Nick Hinson happily for bringing to the show some 25 tables from around Stewkley plus supporting chairs and car/van loads of needed kit – and getting it back!
- To the marvellous Pauline Brown and Ed Beach of Buckingham Garden Centre and their marvellous staff for welcoming us, setting up the show and being always on hand to meet every need.
- Special thanks to the cooking staff for the fabulous side-splitting laid on lunches.
- To Martin Buckle for bringing along his fabulous skeps and skep making, timeless attractions to the general public.
- To the Buckingham and District for bringing along an incredible variety of hive products, and manning their attractive show stand.
- To the Ladies who entertained the visiting public and fielded question after question about bees and beekeeping and probably, resulting in the addition of four new members.
- To the entrants in the various classes and for the quality of their products.
- To Phil Gabel, our master signmaker, for the new show signs, and finally,
- To you, for attending. If you did not; you missed in the words of our Buck's chairman "a wonderful day out". Well done. If I have missed out anyone on the thank you list, - I do apologise – you know full well who you are.

Our relationship with other BKAs

North Bucks BKA is affiliated to Bucks BKA as are Chalfonts Beekeeping Society, High Wycombe BKA and Mid-Bucks BKA all in turn being affiliated to British Beekeepers Association. Buckingham and District stands alone, not affiliated to any other groups and I know are very happy to do so. For years, Bucks County has organized the Spring convention covering a host of topics always with nationally known speakers and this is a top-class event. More recently, the County has played a major and increasing part in advancing bee health, a role which is likely to become ever more important as the services we can expect to receive from NBU, whatever NBU may say, are reduced.

NB: for this year, I attempted to arrange through NBU a pest and disease day – it did not happen – no one was available. More recently, I have learned through Northants BKA that NBU will only send a Regional Inspector to do a talk – we are in the South Region – if we can guarantee an attendance of at least 100. We could not get that number even if we bribed you to come!

The County also represents us at British Beekeepers BKA meetings. Why am I telling you all this? Well, for some this may come as news. My own view is that it is essential we retain a strong vibrant County link for all the services it can offer and which on our own we cannot provide. But our relationship with County has come to this head. For years the sole funding of Bucks BKA has been Gift Aid Tax recovered from the district associations (apart from North Bucks). North Bucks can't do this because it is not (unlike the other associations) a charity. As you can imagine this has caused a quibble or two in the past but matters are now coming to a head because without further sources of funding County

would eventually either go broke or be unable to play a meaningful role. The County has suggested for its future funding each affiliated District should pay a sum of £2 to £2.50 each year for each of its members. North Bucks along with the other affiliated associations has been asked to consider this – hence this note – and its inclusion in the agenda below, so you may all start thinking about this issue. As matters currently stand, NBBKA in 2017 will be required to pay to County so that each full NBBKA member obtains BBKA affiliation and with that BBKA benefits including BBKA News and BBKA insurances, a sum of £19 which means that if and when County charges NBBKA members £2-£2.50 the total payment to County will be £21- £21.50. As to NBBKA funding, we charge for full NBBKA membership about £4 - a mere pittance you might say - and this is only possible because of the generosity of committee members and the very successful beginners course NBBKA runs. At the AGM, you will be asked to comment on the proposed payments to Bucks County BKA. It would be good, I think, to discuss the NBBKA subscription rates.

(The 2015/16 rates are listed here: <http://www.nbbka.org/about/join.aspx>)

Asian Hornet – note from the NBU

There has been a confirmed finding of Asian hornet north of the Mendip Hills in Somerset. As with the first sighting, work to find, destroy and remove any nests is already underway, and includes:

- setting up a three mile surveillance zone around the location of the initial sighting
- opening a local control centre to coordinate the response
- deploying bee inspectors across the area who will use infrared cameras and traps to locate any nests
- readying nest disposal experts who will use pesticides to kill the hornets and destroy any nests

Bee inspectors in Somerset will be supported by nest disposal experts who will use an approved pesticide to destroy any hornets and remove any nests.

The first Asian hornet confirmed in the UK was discovered in the Tetbury area. A nest in the area has since been found, treated with pesticide and destroyed. No further live Asian hornets have been sighted in the area since the nest was removed.

Husbandry Advice:

It is very important that beekeepers remain vigilant and monitor their apiaries and surrounding forage for any Asian hornet activity. At this time of the year, Asian hornets can be seen foraging on the ivy for nectar and preying on other foraging insects for protein.

Traps should also be hung out and closely monitored. When using bait, please refrain from using light beer or lager mixed with sugar as this does not work. In France a Dark

beer, mixed with 25ml of strawberry syrup and 25ml of orange liqueur has proven to work well.

Additionally, a protein bait of mashed fish e.g. prawns or trout, diluted to 25% has also proven effective. Anyone wishing to make their own traps may find the following factsheet useful: How to make a homemade Asian hornet monitoring trap.

Further guidance on identifying the Asian hornet can be found on the Asian hornet pages of Beebase where you will find a very useful Asian hornet ID sheet and Asian hornet poster. All of this information can be found on the Asian hornet page of BeeBase: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageId=208>

Any suspected Asian hornet sightings should be reported to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

If you are not sure, please still send in a sample for ID or report any sightings. When emailing, please include your name, the location of the sighting and if possible, a photograph of the hornet. Please do not put yourself in any danger of getting stung when trying to take a photo.

Events

As you will remember, Ged Marshall was due to come and speak to us on 18th October, until he realized that he had already committed himself to Buckingham on the same night! Buckingham will be happy to have our members there, providing you say you are coming – please call Jane Woodbridge on 01280 847236 and bring a raffle prize.

Also on 18th October, Beds BKA have Professor Robert Pichard speaking about “Energy, Honey Bees and Humans” in Flitwick Village Hall, 11 Dunstable Road, Flitwick MK45 1HP at 7:30pm. I shall be going to the Professor’s talk.

Just to remind you, North Bucks are very welcome at all Beds BKA meetings so do take advantage of this.

22nd November “Introduction to Microscopy” Fiona Eelbeck, 7:30pm, Shoulder of Mutton, Calverton MK19 6ED. This is a completely new subject for many of us - come and listen to an expert!

AGM

Tuesday 25th October, 7.30pm

Here is the Agenda:

1. Chairman’s and Secretary’s reports
2. Treasurers report.
3. Apiary Manager’s report
4. Honey Secretary’s report
5. Election of offices
6. Any Other Business including County payment and subscriptions

NOTE: I am standing down as Chairman and Secretary. Those offices need to be filled. Please, we also need secretaries for Events and Beginners' Course and someone to write the Newsletter

All are welcome to stand for one or more of these posts or as General Members.

The AGM will be at the Shoulder of Mutton, Calverton MK19 6ED, and kick-off – as I have already said – is at 7:30pm to be followed by light buffet. See you there.

Seasonal Notes

Feeding should be complete but however diligent you are there may be a hive or two which still need autumn feeding. Try to get the job done in the first 10 days of October adding insulation over the feed to keep the temperature in the hive as high as possible.

The fact is that with late feeding, there is a general risk of the feed fermenting and if we get a cold snap the bees will stay put in the cluster and ignore the feed however much they may need it to survive.

The next job for me at the end of the month will be to place an eke immediately above brood chambers, coverboards above ekes. This will provide the necessary space for any fondant feeding. At that time of the year bees will not build wild comb in an eke, the coverboard will not be propolised down which means you can have a quick peek at the bees by lifting the coverboard say every 3-4 weeks in winter (or at once in event of suspected emergency) for 5 seconds at the most to see all is well. All is well? Yes, you want to see a nice large still cluster looking dead to the world and with no faeces or signs of dysentery on frames or boxes. Always take a torch on the inspections as the cluster may be below top frame and not readily seen.