

North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

Newsletter September 2011

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Calendar at-a-glance

Thursday 1 st September	Bucks County Show, nr Aylesbury
Weekend of 10 th & 11 st September	Heritage Weekend, Bletchley
Saturday 24 th September	Bucks County Honey Show, Wendover
Sunday 25 th September	Your NBBKA Honey Show, Woburn Sands
Wednesday 5 th October	NBBKA AGM, Bletchley
Tuesday 18 th October	Ged Marshall lecture, Houghton Conquest
Thursday 27 th to Saturday 29 th October	National Honey Show, Weybridge
Wednesday 2 nd November	Bucks County AGM, Chalfont St Peter
Wednesday 16 th November	Nigel Semmence Lecture, Bletchley
Tuesday 22 nd November	Peter Tompkins Lecture, Houghton Conquest
Tuesday 17 th January 2012	Bob Sibley Lecture, Bletchley

Articles

Editorial

It seems, at least to me, only a day or two since the August issue of our letter was offered to you, but much has been happening down in the apiaries. Colonies should now be clear of supers, and any varroa treatment well under way. This year I am again using Apiguard, but it is as well to remember that there are alternatives on the market, and new ones likely to emerge. Some, of course, argue that it is best to leave bees to fend for themselves – the pros and cons will no doubt be addressed in the interesting collection of lectures we have planned for the months ahead. Do please come to them. Impudently, I suggest that you can't afford not to!

Last week I had a delightful long lunch with Roger Lacey of Devon BKA among the guests, and Roger said forcefully that down in Devon many colonies (and that especially means nucs, too) don't survive the winter months because they are only half-fed. Please do remember that each colony needs at least 40 lb of good sealed stores. Feeding, too, should be well under way; if not completed by the end of September then your bees may have insufficient time to reduce the water content of feed and get it sealed. Occasionally late feeding is unavoidable, e.g. for a late nuc – here you can help matters by slightly thickening the feed to, say, a 7/8ths pint of water mix to 2 lb of sugar and/or adding thymol to it (for quantities, see various text books). If bees are wintered on a single National or WBC Deep Brood box then limited capacity may lead to bees going short later, especially in the hungry months of February and beyond, despite best management.

It's showtime!

Here in North Bucks you are spoilt for choice. What could possibly be more exciting than proudly showing off the honey you have produced and having it judged against the products of fellow-beekeepers?! Nothing can match it, so here are the choices!



THURSDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER

Bucks County Show (off the A413, 2 miles north of Aylesbury). There are honey classes this year, and it may not be too late to get late entries in (ring 01296 680 400, the Show Office, and plead!) At least have a look at the classes. This year there is, once again a very special attraction. Your Association is 'on display' in the Waitrose tent, so please come and see us. Better still, give Libby Culshaw (01908 375 968) or

me, Andrew Beer (01525 240 235) a ring and come and help on the stand for an hour or two. We have arranged entry passes for helpers.

SATURDAY 24TH/SUNDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER

Honey Shows weekend! Yes, not one but two honey shows to urge your attendance.

NORTH BUCKS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION HONEY SHOW, SUNDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER

Note the date, NOT Saturday 24th September. This is YOUR Association's Honey Show. It will take place at Wyevale Garden Centre, Woburn Sands. Entry forms were issued with the July newsletter. In case you mislaid your copy, here is another one. Our very own Martin Buckle will be show judge. This is an event which all members should attend, and better still, enter. Give Nicola Smith (01280 88860 102) a ring if you have any worries or concerns. Whatever you do, take part!



The 2010 NBBKA honey show

BUCKS BKA COUNTY HONEY SHOW, SATURDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER

- NOT Sunday 25th September! This is the COUNTY Honey Show, at Wendover Memorial Hall, Wharf Road. (If you use a SatNav, it's HP22 6HF). Judging starts at 10 am, so all exhibits must be in place by 09.45 am. This year the Show is being run by Mid-Bucks BKA, so that will be an opportunity to meet up with beekeepers from right across the county. For more details, look at the accompanying Honey Show schedule. It would be marvellous if NBBKA could provide a large number of entries. I shall be going to Wendover on the day, so feel free to leave entries with me. Sorry about the closeness of the dates of the above two events (- I believe NBBKA settled its date first....).

A special plea from, and thanks to, Nicola Smith. Please, if you possibly can, get your entry forms to her for our Association show by 18th September at the latest. There is lots to get ready on the day, things get hectic and you may miss out if you arrive with a form then! Secondly, many thanks from all of us to Nicola for taking on the Honey

Show, one of the most important events on the NBBKA calendar, and is "what we are all about".

NATIONAL HONEY SHOW, 27TH – 29TH OCTOBER, WEYBRIDGE, SURREY



This is a mecca for beekeepers from across the UK and abroad. Lectures and workshops on many topics. Attended by some of the equipment and other suppliers, with no 'Stoneleigh rush' to sweep you off your feet. And of course there are classes for us to enter our produce. I am hoping to put in entries, and will again gladly deliver any from you if you wish. Entry forms from srhoneyshow@googlemail, telephone 02033 558 716. No entries after 1st October (ie. You need to enter before that date.

Annual General Meeting

A formal Notice and Agenda for the AGM on Wednesday, 5th October are attached or enclosed. (Daniel please.....) We do hope members, particularly beginners, will put themselves up for membership of the Committee, because as an Association we are only as good as our parts. I am delighted that Dave and Ruth Hewitt and Ken Neil, beginners who have splendidly supported the Beginners classes and helped out on some of the 'grunt' tasks in the apiaries are standing for election. We need at least two more, please! Liz Parsons, after sterling service as Association Secretary, for which thanks from us all Liz, is now standing down, so if someone could offer to be Secretary that would be very helpful. Failing that, we shall have to persuade someone to do it. Liz, with more time now, will be able to concentrate on her experience of the Bee Haus, and tell us all about that, please Liz.

Yearbook

Some good news. As announced earlier, as from 2012 we shall have a yearbook. No, not one of those glossy handbooks to be admired and then perhaps to be put on one side, but straight nuts and bolts, so to speak, to be carried with you at all times! Little more than names and your other relevant details including those of beginners and useful contacts, e.g. NBU and the like. If you want to withhold some of your information you can, but I hope you will do that only if confidentiality is a serious issue because, believe me, trying to help an organisation such as North Bucks if you do not know who everyone is – and they you – is a nightmare. I dread to think how the general membership copes if it does not know "who's who". Beds BKA, with whom I've been involved for 39 years more or less, have since – well, time began, always had a yearbook containing members' details and no problem has ever arisen, so far as I know (and of course their members can be, and are, in regular contact with each other with their yearbook in hand!) A few of them for good reasons have wanted some of their details withheld, or to be contactable only through another member. Libby Culshaw is going to put the yearbook together for us, and we're delighted that Libby, with her considerable skills, has returned fully to the fold (we hope!) I plan to have the yearbook issued in February, well before the spring rush.

Bradwell Abbey

Now some bad news. Three times during the summer we have had to cope with hives being tipped over by vandals, despite our suggesting to the Abbey owners security measures that should be taken. By the time you read this, those hives will be safely re-located to a site south of Calverton, at least for the winter, and we will be reviewing matters for the longer term. We all have our views on vandalism. Mine, for what it's worth, is that rather than condemn, we have to search out a way in which the offenders' lives can be made so fulfilling (in beekeeping, perhaps?) that there will be no inclination to offend. Incidentally the move under the expert 'baton' of our leader, Bob Sibley, went without a hitch (except for a few escapees from the WBC hive), but then what else would you expect!



A photo of one vandalised hive



The new location is idyllic



The early-morning bee-moving team

Apiary Notes from Andrew Beer

I'm again keeping these quite short, as you can access the "Out-of-Season Bee Notes" (http://nbbka.org/newsletters/archive/files/NBBKA.org_Newsletter_2011_07_Beekeeping_Outside_the_Season_June_2011.doc) Here are just a few.

1. As mentioned earlier, feeding and any varroa treatment should be well under way now, all to be completed by the end of September if not sooner.

2. We are having another terrible wasp year, so please keep entrances to hives at 1-inch settings (weak stocks/

nucs: keep at one bee-space) to keep out these fiends, and other bees. Seal over any cracks in hives, including imaginary ones, and regularly check for 'leaks'. Don't forget that a threatened stock can be helped by tilting a sheet of glass against the front of the hive and loosely putting grass at the ends of the 'tunnel' you have created. Alternatively, get your 'mother-in-law' to hold and look after your charges until the threat has passed.

3. Be careful where you store equipment. Except in the securest of sheds, I guarantee wasps will enter any storage area. You can improve matters by putting parcel tape



around all gaps in stacks of hive boxes and washing down equipment with soda crystals. Put a queen excluder under each stack to keep out other fiends, such as rats and mice! Ideally, the shed should be well away from humanity, so that flying entrants can buzz to their hearts' content without doing any real damage. Delay doing such things as rendering down old wax combs until winter, and give yourself a break from anything which excites your bees, or wasps. Once December and colder weather arrive, the tasks can be undertaken with impunity. Incidentally, if the place where you store combs is exposed to severe frosts and cold weather, wax moth will be considerably discouraged if not destroyed. If you do have any combs damaged by the moth but capable of re-use, leave them in the freezer, or outdoors in really cold weather for several days.

4. Is your apiary, are your hives, fit for winter? I've never understood why a particular hive roof, for no apparent reason, may be as dry as a bone for months, even years, and then for a month or so or longer, it leaks, before coming good again. Of course any roof out of repair must be repaired. The answer is always to have at least one sound spare replacement roof available. With household good-quality materials I paint all roofs once they have become weather-worn, but not other body parts. Some of my cedar hives (roofs apart), now at least 50 years old, have never had, or needed, any preservative treatment. Painting them with an exterior paint may keep the wet out, but will also keep the damp in. If you wish to paint any external parts, apart from roofs, e.g. to lessen drifting, then use insect-friendly emulsion paints.

5. If you use them, get ready to put mouseguards in place, and prepare your armoury against woodpeckers. More of that later, but needed preparations start now!

Future Events

Bucks County Show

1st September. Again, we shall be in the Waitrose tent. Our attendance caused considerable interest from the general public, many of whom were clearly aware of the problems affecting bees and wanted to learn more. Again an opportunity for members to sell honey, and "sell" North Bucks too!

Heritage Weekend at Rectory Cottages, Bletchley

Saturday/Sunday, 10th-11th September. This nationally-led event will be taking place at various venues in Milton Keynes (in addition to Rectory Cottages) and will be a repeat of last year's very successful one. Again, an opportunity for members to sell honey and meet the public.

Volunteers are still needed, please.

Bucks County BKA Honey Show:

Saturday, 24th September, Wendover Memorial Hall, Wharf Road. Note: This is a County, not an NBBKA event, but our entries are welcome (and expected!). Please refer to County entry form.

North Bucks BKA Honey Show

Sunday, 25th September, Wyevale Garden Centre, Woburn Sands. Please refer to NBBKA entry form.

North Bucks BKA AGM:

Wednesday 5th October, 7.30 p.m. at Rectory Cottages. Yes, it's now getting close! This is your opportunity to play a more active part in the Association affairs and get yourself elected to the committee. It's quite hard work, but fun. To find out more, call me on 01525 240235 (or any other committee member). The meeting will be followed by a talk by Roger Patterson entitled "**My Simple Approach to Bee Improvement**"

Talk by Ged Marshall on 'Queen Rearing'

Tuesday, 18th October, Houghton Conquest Village Hall, 7.30 pm. By invitation of Beds BKA.

National Honey Show

Thursday – Saturday 27th - 29th October, St. George's College, Weybridge, Surrey.

Bucks County AGM

Wednesday, 2nd November, 7.30 pm at the Parish Centre, St. Joseph's Church, Austenwood Lane, Chalfont St. Peter, SL9 8RY

Breeding varroa-free bees: Ron Hoskins

Lecture in conjunction with Northamptonshire Beekeeping Association. Saturday 12th November **3.00 p.m.** at the Abbey centre, Overslade Close, East Hunsbury, Northants NN4 0RZ. This should be a very interesting talk by an acknowledged expert in the field by kind invitation of NNBKA. Tea/refreshments will be provided. Entry £2.00 per person. Let's have a torrent of North Bucks members!

Disease and Pest Update: Nigel Semmence

Wednesday 16 November at 7.30 p.m. at Rectory Cottages, Church Green Road, Bletchley.

Just another reminder about this talk. I do hope you will make a particular effort to attend, given the vital importance of the subject.

Plants and Bees: Bob Sibley

Wednesday 17th January 2012. Bob who is a highly experienced gardener is planning a talk with bees in mind. This will be a departure from the normal "bee" format and perhaps we can develop it into a "start of the season" Social Get Together.

Until Next Month

This newsletter has probably gone on as long as it should. But at the risk of repetition, see you and your entries at the NBBKA Honey Show on Sunday 25th September, and you at the NBBKA AGM on Wednesday 5th October.

Regards,
Andrew Beer

ATTACHMENTS OR ENCLOSURES

Bucks County BKA Honey Show Entry Form
NBBKA Honey Show Entry Form
NBBKA Notice of AGM
NBBKA AGM Agenda