

## North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

# Newsletter September 2014

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### Calendar at-a-glance

11 <sup>th</sup> October	Bucks county autumn gathering, Aylesbury
14 <sup>th</sup> October	NBBKA Annual General Meeting
16 <sup>th</sup> October	Beds Co talk
27 <sup>th</sup> November	Beds Co talk

### ***Queens and Nuclei for sale - member advert***

Introductory offer - **queen** bees. British Black reared locally. Limited numbers; first come, first served.

- Mature queen bee cells - £5 per queen cell
- Virgin marked queen bees - £10 per virgin queen bee
- Mated and marked queens - £23 per mated queen bee
- Clipping £2 per queen bee

Pick up from postal address below or for mated queens postal delivery by Royal Mail 1st Class for £4.50.

Five-frame 14x12 **nuclei** for sale (in polystyrene). The price is £195 each nuc, which comes with mated marked queen. Available now. First come first served. Reservation for £50. Please get in touch, should you have any questions. Place your order via email. Contact Details: Bertalan Lorincz, 07589714764, [lorinczbertalan@gmail.com](mailto:lorinczbertalan@gmail.com), 173 Windsor Street, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5DP

### ***Annual General Meeting***

You are formally requested to attend the Annual General Meeting of NBBKA, to be held on 14th October. The venue is likely to be Rectory Cottage as usual, but this will be confirmed

nearer the time. Your presence is needed to ensure quorum, and your votes will be needed for the election of a new management committee.

### ***Social Events***

We would like to hold a social event at the Shoulder of Mutton pub in Calverton on a Monday evening towards the end of the month. More details to follow.

Andrew has generously offered to host a small pre-Christmas gathering at his house in Stewkley. More details to follow.

### ***Equipment, books and trophies***

Please could all members holding association property kindly return it. Specifically: cups and trophies from last year's honey show, library books, and beekeeping equipment. We know who you are, but a note in a circular is easier than many individual chasers.

### ***Basic Exam Success***

Congratulations to all the successful candidates in the BBKA Basic Assessment this year. They were:

Michael Robinson, Karen Glasse, Carol Gale, Cynthia Smith, Colin Middlemiss, Nicola Smith, Patrick Hunter, Kathleen Hunter, Adam Garrett, Sarah Mist, and Terry Lock. Well Done. Suze Phillips of Herts beekeepers also passed as part of our assessment group.

### ***Bedfordshire Events***

The following events are hosted by our friends at the Beds county association, and will be held in Flitwick village hall. North Bucks members are welcome.

#### ***Beeswax - 16th Oct***

The talk on "Beeswax" arranged for Thursday 16th October at Flitwick Village Hall at 7.30pm will be by Scott Rutland of High Wycombe Beekeepers Association.

Scott will give a practical demonstration using his own beeswax and will show us his methods and pass on tips he has found work well when making his candles and other products from beeswax. This should prove to be a very interesting meeting and Scott comes highly recommended by Bucks BKA.

#### ***Navigation and Foraging - 27th Nov***

On Thursday 27th November again at Flitwick Village Hall at 7.30pm we have Pam Hunter coming along to talk to us on the subject "Navigation and Foraging".

Pam is a microbiologist who has worked in the pharmaceutical industry for many years. Her particular interest is in all aspects of natural history and a love of plants and all creatures. She has kept bees for over 30 years and is a Master Beekeeper, a Chartered Biologist, Fellow of the Society of Biology and a fellow of the Linnaean Society. Her talk will outline the dances and various factors important in navigation. What bees forage for and how they have adapted for pollinating plants. She will have slides to illustrate her talk and tell us how our knowledge of navigating and foraging can be put to use.

## **September Seasonal Notes and Editorial**

I am sure that wet weather over the August Bank Holiday will have ended any remaining flow for the year, so it is time for winter preparations. And time is short – the work needs to be completed by 20th September, 30th September at the very latest. Of course, there will be other steps to take during the autumn; these notes concentrate on September's tasks. What are they?

### **Health & Well-being Checks.**

If you only have a few colonies it is best to carry out these checks on a good flying day at about midday. What are you looking for? Healthy brood in all stages but do not be too alarmed if you find none. The queen may have stopped laying for the year and all may be well if the colony seems happy and content. If in doubt you can offer a frame with day old larvae from a healthy colony and check a week later. If normal sealed brood is seen there will almost certainly be a good queen to take the colony through the winter. Regard, too, the demeanour and attitude of the colony; if all seems serene then, again, the colony is probably alright. The important things to remember is that too much disturbance will more harm than good. Your aim should be to get the colony through the winter – problems like poor queens are best solved in spring. Never forget, queens can't mate without drones; my impression is that the boys were pushed out rather earlier than usual this year. What I am saying is that if you are queen-raising now, just make certain drones are still around.

### **Food checks.**

A colony needs 40lbs of stores. Check the combs and check the stores. Manky, unoccupied combs (not combs in a cluster of bees) are best placed against the side walls to ease removal in spring. Measure the quantity of food in the hive. Work out how many full National deep frames there would be if all the sealed stores were stored in those frames and multiply the resulting number of National deep frames by 5 and deduct the total from 40. For example, if the colony were to have 23lbs of stores then you need to feed 17lbs of sugar made into a syrup. Feed as fast as the bees will take it within the above deadline, because food offered post September may not be sealed in time for winter and thus cause dysentery. Feed fast because fast feeding will prevent the queen going into heavy lay and depleting the colonies winter food.

**Ongoing Protection against Robbing.**

This topic was covered last month but from September until winter heavy frosts, wasps and other bees will be on constant look-out for a free meal. Once they get into a colony in a big way they will kill it off, even the strongest hive, within a few days. If you have a colony under attack the best course may be to close it up for 36-72 hours (but ensure it has sufficient ventilation to avoid suffocation) or move it about 3 miles to a fresh site until things settle down in the apiary. Another course is to "barricade in" the bees in trouble with, say, a pile of grass at its hive entrance for the inmates to struggle through, but to deter robbers.

**Varroa Treatment.**

Carry out any advised treatment.

**Wind- and Water-tight?**

A damp hive is the best way to write off your bees (an investment of £150.00?) Carry out essential repairs now.

***Editorial from Andrew Beer***

I want to draw your attention to the important honey show and AGM meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October but, first, a moment of reflection. It has been a very sad thing, in my view, that we in NBBKA have not had regular meetings this year, for which there may be good reasons. I sincerely hope that we can now put behind us this trend, not only because I think it is fun to meet (I hope you feel the same!), but perhaps more importantly so that we may better face up to what I will loosely call the changing face of beekeeping. What is changing?

1). The excellent services of our national bee inspectors will largely be withdrawn, for example, and in particular the regular health checks carried out with great skill, good nature and patience by our inspectors will no longer be available, being restricted to actual health problems or teaching.

2). Bucks County Committee considers it is timely to review our relationship and affiliation to the British Beekeepers Association. Currently, our North Bucks association, like others, pays what many consider to be a hefty capitation fee to BBKA so it is not unreasonable, and indeed it is very sensible, to consider the benefits and burdens to Bucks and its associates.

3). With the restricted service now available from the National Bee Unit and, indeed, the passing down of some services which BBKA has hitherto provided, it seems inevitable that each local association, North Bucks included, will have to play a more regulatory role.

So, this meeting is as much about the role of North Bucks as it is about that of Bucks BKA, BBKA and the National Bee Unit. It is also a meeting about YOU and the support there will be for you and your bees! Can I ask you to put the date in your diary now. The meeting also includes the Bucks County Honey Show, so this is a perfect opportunity for you to show off your hive products from the very splendid season we have enjoyed.

If you have any queries, please call me on 01525 240235.

Best regards,

Andrew Beer