

North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

Newsletter May 2015

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Calendar at-a-glance

9 th May	Basic assessment training, Stoke Goldington
20 th June	Anaphylactic course
7 th July	Honey show preparation, Rectory Cottage
9 th August	Stewkley Bee Safari
27 th September	Honey show
6 th October	NBBKA AGM
20 th October	Lecture
17 th November	Lecture
19 th January	Lecture
16 th February	Lecture

BBKA Basic Coaching in North Bucks

It is not too late to undertake the BBKA basic assessment as North Bucks are starting their basic assessment training on Saturday 9th May at 2pm in Stoke Goldington. For further information please contact Fiona and Andrew Eelbeck tel: 01908551886 andrew@eelbeck.fsnet.co.uk. The only cost is the £15 for the BBKA assessment.

Honey Show

North Bucks will be teaming-up with Buckingham Beekeepers for a combined honey show on Sunday 27th September at Buckingham Nurseries. Full details, including schedule, (new) classes and rules are available on the NBBKA website document library (address <http://www.nbbka.org/members/Documents.aspx>).

All queries to Sue Lang, honeyshow@nbbka.org.

Event report – “Extracting the crop”

At the end of last month at the Rectory Cottages Bletchley there was a talk given by Richard Smith, *writes Terry Lock*.

Richard Smith has been keeping bees for about 30 years and is a member of Bedfordshire Beekeepers Association.

He spoke about how to identify what honey crop you have in your supers, i.e. rape or other flowers, and how to check if it ready for extraction.

Then it was on to how to double strain your honey and how to use the ripening tank to let the air bubbles come to surface of the honey. Then on to jarring up and things you can do to save money on equipment by buying strainer and muslin cloths from regular shops.

There were a lot of questions from the floor about the use extraction including the pros and cons of using plastic verses metal lids on your jars. We touched on about the use of Porter escapes and how to make sure they are correctly set.

Richard spoke about wax melting and filtering and about sell your reclaimed wax to be exchange for fresh foundation.

The subject of labelling, the things that must be on the label, not mis-representing the description about the contents.

There were about twenty association members present and a very good night was had by all.

New website features

Login

Members of NBBKA may now log into the website using their registered email address and password, in addition to BBKA membership number and password. This is to make it easier for member who have misplaced their details to log in. The exception is if your password, which until you change it is your surname, is contained in your email address (e.g. john.smith@example.com must use his membership number, and his not email address, if he has not changed his password from “Smith”).

Yearbook

As promised last month, the yearbook has been released. The yearbook is a page showing names, contact details and photographs of NBBKA members who have consented to the sharing of this information among the members. You may also via a “printer-friendly” version if you want to print to paper to pin to the fridge. The data is not made public.

You may visit it at <http://www.nbbka.org/members/yearbook.aspx>

Swarm Receivers

If you have opted-in to be a “swarm receiver”, i.e. you have stated that you would like to be given an unwanted swarm by another member who’s caught one, your details and geographical position are now visible to other members. We’ve converted your postcode

into longitude/latitude coordinates and displayed your details on a map, so that other members who want to give away or sell an unwanted swarm can find you. The map shows the ten nearest receiving members. Here's an example, showing the 10 nearest members to me, with details of Rod (personal details have been obscured in this newsletter because the newsletters are eventually made public).

North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association
Swarm Receivers - who will take my unwanted swarm?

You have caught a swarm but you want to give it away These are the 10 nearest members to you (yearbook consent) are included. Distances found by postcode. Distances are approximate and as the crow flies. Green

Distance (mi)	Name	Home Phone	Mobile Phone	Email
0.78	Simon	01908	07792	@yahoo.co.uk
1.15	Karen	01908	07798	karen
1.53	Roderick Pakes	01908	07786	rod@pakesfamily.co.uk
1.73	Cynthia	01908	07930	@tiscali.co.uk
2.14	Terry		07980	terry.
3.42	Kenneth	01908	07798	ken
4.60	Fiona	01908	07599	fiona
7.32	Jane	01280	07800	jane.
8.90	Philip	01525	07976	philip@
11.43	Tania	01280	07821	tania

The map shows the locations of these members in the Wolverton area. A callout for Roderick Pakes shows a photo of him and his location is 1.53 miles away.

In the future we MAY expand this idea to make the details of swarm catchers and/or honey sellers visible to the public.

N.B. Andy Fenner is going to co-ordinate a swarm catching service this year and will be contacting members shortly.

Anaphylactic course 20th June

This is provisional and will not go ahead probably unless we have a minimum of 10 booked in. We are willing to subsidise partially the cost of the course offering NBBKA MEMBERS a special rate of £25 down from £38. Several have said they wish to participate - cheques for £25 payable to NBBKA to reach me by 20th June please.

Seasonal Notes

We are evidently now in the swarming season. Milton Keynes "kicked off" around 1st April, and it has now spread to all areas. The message simply is do your seven-day inspections, and at those inspections carry out any necessary swarm-control measure, otherwise a swarm will get away. That means of course that for each colony requiring swarm control, you need to have extra equipment immediately ready in your apiary to carry it out. For the benefit of beginners can I make some observations:-

a) The most popular swarm control is the artificial swarm already described, for example, in your Haynes Beekeeping Manual.

b) The nucleus method is also effective, and requires less equipment. As perhaps a reminder of it, proceed as follows:

i) Open the colony and find the queen. If you can't find her after going through the combs twice, adopt the "no-see queen" procedure below.

ii) Put her, and the frame she is on, with all adhering bees, having destroyed all and anything that looks like a queen cell, in a separate hive or a nuc box (- If you don't, you may get a swarm!)

iii) Add one further frame of brood, and one of stores, having for each taken the following steps. Give each frame a light shake to shake off most adult bees from the frames, but so as to retain young bees. NOTE Young bees do not budge if lightly shaken, and it is YOUNG BEES you want. NB. You do not have to be too precise.

c) Take two further frames, well covered with adhering bees; shake as above and then shake the remaining bees INTO THE NUC BOX. Return those frames, without bees, to the ORIGINAL BOX.

d) Now close down the nuc box, including its entrances, and place elsewhere in the apiary; in shade, or if there is no shade there, put in a cool dark place. The nuc box must have ventilation through an open-mesh floor or top screen. This is very important.

e) Leave for 72 hours and then place the nuc elsewhere in the apiary - at least 10 ft away from the original colony; open entrance at least 90 degrees turned away from the direction of the original colony's entrance.

f) Do not feed the nuc for 48 hours. This is to allow any adult bees to return to, and remain with, the original colony. NB. If you give feed straight away, the returning adults tell their mates about it, and return with them to rob the nuc, with only young bees, out.

g) With steady feeding (I always use a 2lb sugar to 1pt water mix), the nuc will quickly build up; and if created now, and with luck, it may get a surplus later in the year. The nuc, too, will be available if it is needed elsewhere: e.g. to re-queen the original colony (or another colony) if it fails to raise its own queen.

- h) This system works even better if you can move the nuc at least three miles to another apiary, perhaps to the apiary of another beginner you met on the course! If so, there will be no need to close up the nuc, because there will be no danger of bees from the original colony robbing it out.
- i) Until established on at least five brood frames, any nuc entrance should be limited to one bee space. Yes, there may be a bit of a log jam at the entrance as a result, but that is needed to keep marauders out.
- j) Can't find the queen? Move the original colony to one side, at least 10ft away, entrance turned at least 90 degrees away from its original orientation. Use a deep brood chamber and a nuc box, and put one frame of brood with adhering bees into that box, and fill with frames of foundation, and place it with a new floor on the site of the original colony. Put a queen excluder, and any supers, above the box. Add a roof.
- k) Go back to the original colony later in the day or early on the following day. The flying bees will have gone to the new box, and only gentle young bees should be in the original chamber. The queen should be easy to find, after which you make up the nuc and rearrange the original colony and nuc as suggested earlier. If by any chance the queen is found in the new brood chamber, you have done an artificial swarm and nothing needs to be done!
- (l) What about the original colony now less its queen? It cannot swarm immediately because it has no queen but it could do if two or more queen cells are left and more than one queen is allowed to emerge. If your aim is simply to let it re-queen reduce to one open queen cell with a lot of larval fluid. Why open? Because a sealed one could be a dud. But if it is or was a stock whose characteristics you like and it is really strong leave two open queen cells of similar good size and go back when each is about 12 days old and take a frame of brood and one of stores with covering bees and if the frames do not have one of the queen cells you want carefully cut out one of the good cells with a generous amount of surrounding comb and attach the comb in the middle of one side of the brood with a bit of wire. The two frames are then best put in a separate box taken to an apiary at least 3 miles away opened up and the nuc kept fed with small amounts of feed for at least two months or until it is fit for winter meaning it is populated by mostly young bees occupying 5 or more brood frames. The remaining queen cell is left with the original colony to emerge, mate and be its new leader. Forget the split unless you have a really strong colony to work with.