

North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

Newsletter August 2016

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Calendar at-a-glance

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| | |
| 25 th September | Honey show |

Editorial

I am fearful that the hot, steamy July I promised you in the July's notes has not really come about which probably means that 2016 will go down as the worst summer for our bees for some time. We beekeepers are always an optimistic lot, and it is the time for really thinking about, and more important, getting ready for 2017- officially the beekeeping year starts in September: all I will say is that every timely step we now take for our colonies can be pretty critical. More of that later.

You will all be sorry to hear that the association's enormously good friend, Gunter Weber, has gone down with cellulitis, you might say an unfortunately fashionable infection which seems to be affecting far too many in Buckinghamshire just now. In an all too brief discussion I have had with Gunter, he tells me he has not been able to get to his bees for weeks, particularly serious when your living is bees. It strikes me that it would be an enormously kind gesture if one or two of us could give up time to help Gunter in his hour of need- Gunter is one of the top beekeepers in the County- a visit to Gunter's apiaries will be an education not to be missed.

Beekeeping Initiatives

I must tell you about two beekeeping initiatives:-

Possible BBKA Insurance for equipment and bees

For some time, BBKA has been considering offering an insurance scheme covering bees and equipment. Under its initial proposal, BBKA was considering introducing a compulsory scheme- but this proposal was withdrawn. The latest proposal may go ahead if BBKA receives sufficient support from its members. In the interests of brevity, I am attaching a note from the Bucks County Chairman, Derek Atkinson, together with its attachment. What do you think? Please let me know by 20th August as I shall pass on the gist of responses received.

My own personal view is that equipment, even in out apiaries, can be covered by a suitable extension to household insurance. As to loss of bees, I have always taken the view that if loss is attributable to anything other than a notifiable disease or pest, e.g. AFB or small hive beetle, then you just accept that as a fact of beekeeper life and always have enough bees to 'ride' the losses.

(See document on the website under the [Private Docs](#) heading)

Bucks County Bee Health Mentors' Scheme

Although in constant denial, National Bee Unit has progressively attempted to pass down some of its inspection activities to local associations. With this in mind, NBU sought to set up in 2015 a local bee health advisor scheme, upon which I threw an amount of cold water as I pointed out that advisors might incur liabilities for which they had no insurance. BBKA did look at the insurance angle, but then dropped the idea. In the meantime, I was told I was an 'idiot' (or words to that effect) making all this fuss about insurance only to learn that the NBU lawyers were worried about the liability risk and the possibility that aggrieved beekeepers might sue NBU!! Forgive me if I say 'Ha! Ha!'. Anyway, Bucks County BKA through Frank Rickett is now offering a no legal liability inspection service- basically if a beekeeper inspects another's bees, he will not give advice, but only express a view on what he sees. Again in the interest of brevity, may I send you a note from Frank Rickett, President of the Bucks BKA. Andy Fenner is involved with the scheme- please speak to Andy or to me if you have any worries. *(See document on the website under the [Private Docs](#) heading)*

For Sale

Kath Hunter has some equipment for sale – please see the list at the following location:

<https://tinyurl.com/hdbm9ay>

Seasonal Notes - In the apiary

Just to repeat, we now have to get ready for 2017 and here in brief are some of the things we must do:-

- Watch the bees (and the wasps) and as soon as the honey flow slows down, put entrance blocks in place. Providing colonies have sufficient ventilation, all my hives are put on entrances 1" wide, and 3/8" in height. If you use standard floor blocks, you may need to cut the above opening in the block. For the same reason, seal over / block up any holes or imaginary holes in boxes, coverboards etc. to stop intruders.
- Remove the crop as soon as ripe. It does not have to be sealed- providing it stays put if you apply the 'shake test'.
- Remove supers for extraction as soon as ready. Use Porter or Canadian bee escapes- don't start shaking combs clear of bees- it could start robbing, and once started, robbing is almost impossible to stop.
- Once supers are removed, 'heft' for stores. If necessary before Autumn feed give feed of say 10-15 lbs of syrup (1 pint water to 2lbs of sugar mix).
- Do an 'end of season' health-check. Take advice if worried.
- Consider Varroa treatment and arrange as appropriate.
- Do colonies/ nuclei evaluations. No stock should go into winter occupying less than 6 national standard frames, or have less than 40 lbs of stores, which may well be impossible to achieve in the case of nuclei. All you can do in these situations is to feed the bees as much as they will take with their September winter feed and be ready to give fondant as soon as cold weather sets in. N.B. A stock even with plenty of stores will starve to death if not in actual contact with stores when a cold period sets in.
- Lastly, and most important, get your entries ready for the honey show on 25 September.

Events

Honey Show: 25 September

A number of people have gone to enormous lengths to make this a very memorable and successful show. All we want is you and your products and remember the show this year is not just for North Bucks and Buckingham and District members- but beekeepers across the county and neighbouring counties. We will need help setting up, running and dismantling the show. Please look at the form below and complete and return to me.

See <http://www.nbbka.org/honey/honeyshow/howToEnter.aspx>

A really big thank you!

We had a marvellous party at Steve and Debbie Snooks' house on 13th July and anyone who did not come missed out on a really lovely evening. As someone said later, 'We ought to have more of these socials'. Hear, hear! And thank you Steve and Debbie!

Well that, I think, is your lot for now.

Bucks County Combined Honey Show 2016**Helpers form**

I can help at the following times (either the whole of the specified time that day, or part of it would be very much appreciated):

- Friday 23rd September

Moving show equipment from Stewkley and setting up the show at Buckingham Garden Centre

Time 9 am to say 12 noon (part or all of this time)

- Saturday, 24th September

Further setting up- receipt of show entries

Time 9 am to 4.30 pm (part or all of this time)

N.B. We may be able to delegate in part to the Garden Centre

- Sunday, 25th September

Receipt of show entries

Setting up Honey Show

Running stalls

9 am to 4.30 pm (part or all of this time)

THIS IS A CRITICAL TIME WHEN WE NEED HELP, PLEASE

- Monday, 26th September

Clearing up

Return of equipment and entries as appropriate

I want to help. I will help at the following time(s) on the following day(s):

Time

E.g. 9-11am

Day

E.g. Saturday 24th September

Name:

Telephone/ Mobile number:

Thanks for agreeing to help

Many thanks.

Andrew Beer