

# North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

## Newsletter July-August 2017

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### Calendar at-a-glance

18 <sup>th</sup> August	Bee-Be-Cue summer party, Far Bletchley
22 <sup>nd</sup> August	Committee meeting, 19:30, venue TBC
Saturdays	Saturdays in May Apiary sessions, Cosgrove Apiary, 12.30
24 <sup>th</sup> Sept	NBBKA honey show
13 <sup>th</sup> October	AGM and Fish & Chip Supper Friday. 19.30pm. Venue TBC
21 <sup>st</sup> November	Celia Davies talk “into spring”
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Celia Davies talk “World of the honeybee queen”

### Beekeeping News

#### Committee

Nick Hinson has volunteered to be the chairman for the next period. We still need a permanent chairperson, if you would like to join us on the committee please let us know. The role is not too onerous and includes:

- Chairing the Bi-Monthly Committee Meeting

- Representing North Bucks on the Bucks County Committee (4 meetings a year in Wendover)
- Answering Queries from the public – or passing them onto other committee meetings.
- Attending the NBBKA Honey Show, presenting the trophies.
- Chairing the Annual General Meeting.

Nick Hinson now has quite a lot of the association equipment that Andrew Beer used to look after (Table, Publicity material, Extractor, Feeders). If you wish to borrow them, please contact Nick direct ([chairman@nbbka.org](mailto:chairman@nbbka.org)).

Next Committee meeting Tuesday 22nd August 2017, Venue TBC, 7.30pm.

### ***Bee Buddies***

If you are a more experienced beekeeper, please consider buddying up with a newer beekeeper to help them during their first season. Let Fiona Eelbeck know what area you are in, and we will try and link you up with someone local to you.

### ***Bucks County Honey Show***

This is on Saturday 23rd September in High Wycombe. All members are welcome to put in entries. The best entries will also be judged in the 'Federation Cup' (across Beds, Bucks, Cambs, Hunts) on the same day, also hosted by High Wycombe Beekeepers.

### ***North Bucks Honey Show***

This is being held on Sunday 24th September, Buckingham Nurseries as part of their Apple Day event. The updated schedule and entry form are on the NBBKA.org website, go to *Members' Area > Private Docs* in the navigation tree or click here: <https://www.nbbka.org/members/Documents.aspx?DocumentType=Documents>

There are no changes to the classes, however there are two new trophies reflecting the contributions of Andrew Beer and Ken Gorman. Please let [honeyshow@nbbka.org](mailto:honeyshow@nbbka.org) know which classes you plan to enter in advance. There's no penalty if you don't wish to enter a class on the day, it just allows for labels to be produced in advance.

### ***Swarm List***

We are almost at the end of swarming season. Many thanks to Andy Fenner (who is based near Buckingham) who has maned the Swarm Line again (07342 930851). He does work full time, so if there are any beekeepers who can collect swarms around the eastern half of Milton Keynes, Bletchley and other areas, please let Andy know directly – he can then pass calls onto you. At the moment, he is wasting lots of timing phoning around. To make this easy for Andy, Login to the NBBKA Website Members Area. In the 'Edit Profile' section, ensure that you have ticked the boxes where appropriate, for 'I want

a Swarm' and 'I can collect Swarms', and also the 'Opt into Yearbook'. This means your info will be visible to Andy and other members (not the general public).

If you are a beginner looking for your first lot of bees, and have time in an evening to collect a swarm with Andy – again please let him know. He will help you to hive them if you live within a reasonable distance of Buckingham.

## ***Bucks Buzzing***

Sue Lang is currently helping to promote a county-wide campaign, Bucks Buzzing, which encourages residents, organisations, and community groups across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to take action and help boost pollinator populations. To help things get started, we're offering free wildflower seeds to participants.

You can view the Bucks Buzzing website here: [www.bucksmknep.co.uk/bucks-buzzing/](http://www.bucksmknep.co.uk/bucks-buzzing/)

The Bucks Buzzing website asks visitors to:

- Sign up, show support and register for free wildflower seeds
- See how you can help with useful links to further information and inspiration
- Look at what other people and organisations are doing in Case Studies – Your Projects
- Download a certificate to celebrate their contributions

We're also collecting case studies that demonstrate good practice and/or celebrate the contributions (large and small) that everyone can make to help rebuild pollinator habitats. If you have a project that you think might be suitable to feature, please let me know.

## ***Herts Microscopy Courses***

From Mike Goodhew: "I'm very pleased to report that we are repeating our very popular and very well received Microscopy courses.

Microscopy Appreciation Day Sunday 1st October 2017

BBKA 4-Day Microscopy Training Course 3 Sundays in November and a follow up Sunday next April.

Both courses are held at the University of Hertfordshire's Bayfordbury Campus near Hertford with Lewis Woolnough. Anyone interested should apply to [training@hertsbees.org.uk](mailto:training@hertsbees.org.uk)

## ***BBKA News***

Gloucestershire BKA is hosting the Beekeeping Conference this year (15-17 September) on behalf of the Midlands and South Western Counties Convention – but anyone can come. We're told it is super value, with accommodation and meals included in the price. You don't have to come for the whole weekend – you can attend just for one or more day.

Booking is open on-line at <http://www.mswcc.org.uk/products-page/>

Schools membership of BBKA. If you know a school that keeps bees, they may be interested in joining.

[https://gallery.mailchimp.com/231962cc46de2c60ff68e8a12/files/75c32039-7c7b-4480-ba23-c59005223eba/Schools\\_Leaflet\\_v2.pdf](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/231962cc46de2c60ff68e8a12/files/75c32039-7c7b-4480-ba23-c59005223eba/Schools_Leaflet_v2.pdf)

## Education

### ***Improvers Group and Module 6 Studying***

Message from Fiona Eelbeck. Thanks to everyone who has attended the Improvers Group sessions this season, especially the 15 people who came to the Social evening on 31st July. More sessions will be set up in the future.

If you wish to study for BBKA Module 6 Honey Bee Behaviour (exam in November), can you please let Fiona know ASAP via [eelbeckbees@gmail.com](mailto:eelbeckbees@gmail.com)

Congratulations to Steve Snook (passed Basic Exam), John Bussey (passed Modules 1,5) and Sarah Mist (passed Module 1).

## Upcoming events

### ***Summer Bee-Be-Cue party***

Steve Snook is hosting the North Bucks Bee-B-Que on Friday 18th August. 7.30pm. Costs will be calculated and disbursed on the day, likely around £5 per person. Please confirm with Nick Hinson on [chairman@nbbka.org](mailto:chairman@nbbka.org) that you plan to attend, then the right amount of food can be purchased. Please also let him know if you are a vegetarian. Please bring your own drinks. The location is in Far Bletchley, the exact address sent to you by email.

### ***AGM***

Friday 13th October 2017. AGM and Fish & Chip Supper. More details will be in the next newsletter.

### ***International Meeting of Young Beekeepers***

A note from Fiona and Andrew Eelbeck.

"If you have watched Country file on Sunday evening, you would have seen the young beekeepers event in Wiltshire at Marlborough college. We were fortunate to be referees and it was great! If anyone knows of young people between 12-16 years who are

interested in beekeeping, might be good to train them and hopefully if they are very good, they could represent England next year in the south of France”.

### ***Committee meeting***

As above.

### ***Cosgrove Apiary***

Saturday sessions at 12.30 are still going. Whilst these are intended for those who have been on this year's Beginners Course, all member are welcome to attend sessions.

A working party is still needed to lay paving slabs and erect the new shed. Please contact Terry Lock if you are able to help.

## **Apiary Notes for July & August from Andrew Beer:**

Late Swarms: A suggestion from the great R.O.B. Manley. Hive on drawn out super frames using one super box, then put a queen excluder above, more supers above as necessary. The point is that you do not want masses of young bees in July when hopefully there is a large crop to collect. Last year I hived a whopper swarm on 12 July in this way, later taking off three full supers.

Once the flow is over and the stock has been reduced to the single super serving as a brood chamber add a one and a half inch deep eke over the super with a one bee space entrance cut into the eke the bee space entrance to face in same direction as the original entrance of the hive which should now be blocked.

Next put a deep brood chamber complete with deep frames with undrawn foundation above the eke and now start feeding using a 2lbs of sugar to one pint of water mix until the new frames are drawn out.

With a hive in this formation, the queen will naturally gravitate upwards but once the deep box is becoming well populated with a good amount of stores but the queen is not in it go to the super now at the bottom of the hive, find the queen and put her and frame she is on into the deep box. That frame LESS queen can be removed a week or two later.

As soon as the queen is in the deep brood chamber, place a queen excluder BELOW the eke (remember a new queen will need to go out to mate and the workers will need to be able to push out the 'boys' to die so the queen excluder must go BELOW the eke).

Once the queen excluder is in place and with no direct entrance to the outside world the old super which served as a brood chamber is a bit of a 'no go ' area for the bees.

You can make it even less inviting if once the queen is in the deep brood chamber you place a cover board above the super and below the queen excluder having reduced access through the cover board to one bee space. Bees in winter like stores to be on the sides or above the cluster not below it and this step will encourage the stock to remove any remaining stores up into the deep brood chamber and to desert the super.

During winter, it should be a simple matter to carry out any necessary treatments and feedings accessing the deep brood chamber alone and in Spring at first full inspection the super can be removed and the hive restored to its normal order.

NOTE. If you have a box of crystallised super frames and disease is not an issue, try de-capping these frames and put the box with frames below a brood chamber of a strong colony using the technique described. The bees may do a marvelous clearing job but any stores obtained in this way should be wholly disregarded in assessing a colony's winter feed needs.

2018. It is time to think of next year. It is a fact that winter losses are soaring generally worldwide. It is for the experts to say why, it is our job to keep our colonies in the best possible states. Our hallmarks should be colonies in April each occupying a minimum of eight deep brood combs bustling with bees of all ages ready to take advantage of any crops that come their way. Instead, we so often come across colonies in Spring (if not already dead) being no more than fists of bees which at best will recover but not before the season has ended. Sadly, no one is quite sure why these and similar troubles are happening but here are some of the best possible defenses it would seem to whatever it is we are trying to beat!!

Good queens. It is not too late to raise your own. Or you could buy in from a respected source.

Colony numbers: My personal view is that each beekeeper should go into winter with a minimum of five strong colonies to counter a bad winter of losses.

August health check: Open up all colonies to check health and wellbeing. Don't know what to look for or if in doubt, ask an experienced beekeeper to help.

Feeding: Try to finish by 20 September, 30 September at the latest. Don't scamp on the feeding. It has been said that overfeeding will simply produce more bee and more heads to fill. My feeling with current devastating winter losses and the fact, acknowledged by the experts, that bees lives are shortening for a variety reasons is that the longer by feeding we can induce queens to lay later in Autumn and earlier in the Spring increases the chances of a healthy well populated colony in April.

Robbing: I never cease to be surprised by colonies left with too wide entrances as the 'flow' slows down, often without any entrance block. You are inviting trouble and even the strongest stock can be robbed out in days. Reduce entrances to one bee space- bees will wait their turns to get in and out, an additional defence in itself against robbing.

Provided your hive is fitted with an open mesh floor, ventilation should be sufficient to prevent suffocation.

Hives fit for winter? If they are not, get them fixed now. Nothing kills bees more quickly than a damp hive.