



Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

Collecting Swarms

It's getting towards that time of year, the bees are thinking about reproducing, it's swarming time. Any of us could find ourselves in a situation where we need to capture a swarm.

Clive Joyce has kindly offered to share his knowledge of swarms and the best ways to ensure a happy outcome for both the bees, the collector and the public. He will be discussing the best methods of collecting swarms and may well pass on some tales from his own experience. Everyone is invited.

When: 9th May at 19.30 - 20.30 **Where:** Kings Hill Nursery (CV3 6PS)

Some of you have volunteered to be local swarm collectors, thank you, and there is still time to get your name on the BBKA database. If you would like a swarm to help you increase your apiary you can add your name to the local list by contacting Swarm Co-ordinators: swarms@warleambees.org.uk

Beekeepers at Kings Hill Nursery.

On Wednesday 17th April the branch reached the stage of hosting its recently joined members to the first of the season's weekly apiary sessions. This was the culmination of a considerable amount of work done by many of the members in moving our training activities from the BBKA Apiary at Stoneleigh over the winter as the space was now required for their "Showcase Apiary". Our new landlords, Kings Hill Nursery, have been very accommodating in allowing us to build a secure fit for purpose facility which we use out of hours from their normal trading activities. Kings Hill Nursery is itself a charity which supports people with learning difficulties in the Coventry area and where we now hold the majority of our branch meetings.



David Phillips, the Apiary Manager, welcomed all and set out the safety and bee hygiene protocols. Then Jane Medwell, Maggie Curley, Barry Meatyard, Nicki Maritz and Richard Mourtney were allocated groups of 2 or 3 new beekeepers to venture into the new level apiary. To aid the "who was who" when veils were in place the trainers were issued with florescent armbands (a first for many).



At hand was Steve Pointer, the apiary quartermaster, with smokers, tools and the other necessities of beekeeping, including the register (school revisited for some) operating from his resplendent shed.



The first task of the night for many was the art of safely lighting a smoker, with the added challenge of keeping it alight for the duration of the evening's training (note no veils or gloves). Not all were successful.

This was the first inspection of the year for many of the hives transferred from BBKA. In addition, four Nuc boxes procured to meet the training demand following our successful Introduction to Beekeeping Course in February were to be transferred to National's during the evening. The first involvement for many of working with bees with a purpose.



The experience for the new beekeepers was enhanced somewhat by all the bees in the hives opened on the night or being transferred from Nucs being of a good temper which aided the trainers in both explaining and encouraging a “hands on” experience.



The evening flew by and the all present were very pleased with the outcome of the move to our new home and were able to compare notes on the evening in the adjoining mess facilities of Kings Hill. Are we being spoilt in our new location? Yes.

Return of Bee Vacuum

Last summer I lent my Bee Vacuum to a member who wished to remove a feral colony from a bay window recess ahead of some building alterations. Unfortunately I do not recall the members name and have no contact details. They promised the return of the equipment but that has not happened.

With swarming already started I would be grateful if that member or any other who knows the whereabouts of the equipment would contact me as soon as possible to ensure its return.

Thank you

Steve Sidaway

07884 000923

Top Tip

Take a cocktail stick with you when inspecting your bees they are ideal for exploring any suspect cells.

Roger

It's.....SHOWTIME!!

They say the season will be early this year and this is certainly borne out by our May public display programme which sees 5 events with only one weekend free to mow the grass. By then, it will probably be a case cutting the hay!! But May's events are just the fore-runners of the two major **June** events held on the consecutive weekends of:-

Saturday 8th June – Kenilworth Show

Saturday and Sunday 15th/16th June – Leamington Peace Festival



The Kenilworth Show

The Kenilworth Show is the closest thing we have to a County Agricultural Show and we can expect it to be both well attended and very fruitful in terms of interest in our training courses and for bee hive hosting (out apiaries). For WLBK, this is a major show at which we put in our maximum effort deploying most of our display kit including a beekeeping display with live bees. This is a day-long show opening at 9.00a.m. and closing at 5.00 p.m. and as a result we man the stand in three shifts:-

9.00a.m.- 12.00p.m.; 12.00p.m. – 2.30p.m.; 2.30p.m. – 5.00p.m.

but of course, we have to be there at 8.00a.m. to “dress” the stand. Rather than denying us our beauty sleep, we load up the kit and set up the marquees on the day before so we are also asking for volunteers to help with this set up on Friday 7th. We start loading up at our former Dalehouse Lane apiary at 2.00p.m. on the Friday afternoon and, as the showground is only a mile or so away, we should be done erecting the marquees etc by about 4.00p.m. So, if you can possibly spare a couple of hours on either the Friday or on the Saturday at the show itself, please complete the form at the following link:-

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOhPwu0qhxibpAEL9c3kNV2aVG11HvTHlxAfXiUFg7zuE3eQ/viewform>

Leamington Peace Festival

With Extinction Rebellion so much in the news the Leamington Peace Festival, held in the newly refurbished Pump Room Gardens at the bottom of The Parade, should be even more popular than ever and, with the environmental threats to our girls, is a particularly apposite opportunity for us to promote our craft. The festival is a two-day event held in the heart of the town and is aimed at people of all ages wanting to find out ways of living life in a more harmonious way with each other and the environment. It provides a mix of family friendly activities, including workshops, talks, free music and other entertainment, vegetarian food stalls, environmentally conscious stands and some “interesting sights and smells” This opens at the far more comfortable time of 11.00 a.m and we usually steward the event in two shifts. In the past our stand has been frenetically beezy and thus, as far as the mantra “Peace and Love” is concerned, although we can expect very little “Peace” for our stewards rest assured, that the “Love” is unaffected.

The link to volunteer for the Leamington Peace Festival is:-

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdnu_14cQShS8isx_VgNJ7Kv_g6cISUHS2dT3T9LfWtirBlcg/viewform

or by e-mailing me at bernardnbrown@outlook.com or by telephoning 01926843416 for either of these events.

All these links can be found on our website.

Helping on the stand is great fun and involves sharing our knowledge and enthusiasm with the public whilst making sales of honey and wax products, demonstrating various aspects of beekeeping and answering queries from the public. This is well within the capabilities of anyone who has been on our introductory course. Volunteering for a couple of hours on our stand entitles you to free admission to the show and, as we arrange our stewarding in shifts, there is time to sample the wider delights of the event should you so wish.

Whether or not you can volunteer, why not just pop along and chill out.....and, of course, swing by our stand for a chat.

The Public Display team

a...a...a...TISHOO!

With the Hay fever season upon us does honey help to ameliorate the symptoms?

Hay fever is an allergic reaction to pollen in the air. About 20% of the population have, or will, develop hay fever. Symptoms characteristically include itchy eyes, sneezing and a runny nose. Anti-histamines, either prescription or over-the-counter, help prevent the allergic reaction from occurring. Usually this is sufficient to make the symptoms bearable.

Severe hay fever symptoms, where anti-histamines or other preparations are insufficient, can be treated by immunotherapy. Over several months, the patient is exposed, to low and increasing doses of the allergen (the compound that causes the allergy) either by injection or orally to help develop immunity. Full desensitisation takes about three years.

Honey contains small amounts of pollen. This is probably where the 'honey prevents hay fever' stories originate. It's this small amount of pollen that is supposed to stimulate the immune system of hay fever sufferers. A sort of DIY desensitisation course using toast or porridge to help deliver the allergen. Tasty!

All this seems pretty logical and straightforward. Honey contains pollen. Low doses of pollen are used to stimulate immunity that, in turn, stops hay fever from developing

Unfortunately, there are a couple of irritating facts that scupper this nice little theory.

Honey certainly does contain pollen. At least, real honey does. The vast majority of pollens in honey are from the flowers and trees that they visit to gather nectar. These pollens are usually large and sticky so they adhere to the passing bee and are then transferred to another plant when the bee moves on. Almost all pollens that cause hay fever are from grasses and other wind-pollinated species which don't need to generate nectar to attract bees, so the bees don't visit. So, there's little or none of this type of pollen in honey.

In a scientific study, groups of a dozen hay fever sufferers, pre-screened for reactivity to common wind-borne allergens, were randomly assigned to receive local raw honey, filtered non-local honey and honey-flavoured syrup (the placebo group). They took one tablespoon of honey, or substitute, a day and recorded their hay fever symptoms. The results were that *neither honey group experienced relief from their symptoms in excess of that seen in the placebo group with the conclusion that the study did NOT confirm the widely held belief that honey relieves the symptoms of hay fever.*

So if you are asked to confirm that honey will prevent hay fever, don't.. I think it's in order to say that there is there's no **scientific** evidence that it would but that some people claim, anecdotally, to find it effective. Any improvement after consuming local honey is probably entirely coincidental

So why risk the charge of misrepresentation by claiming something that's probably not true?

Far better to claim the things that are true, some of which are also clearly demonstrable such as:-

- It's local, from the hedges and fields within 3 miles of the apiary. It wasn't imported by the tonne from a location or locations unknown. The UK is a net importer of honey. 95% of the honey eaten in the UK is imported – 50% of the 34,000 tonnes imported in 2012 came from China. Most honey on the supermarket shelves contains some rather vague term like *Produce of EU and non-EU countries*. You don't know where it came from, and probably nor does the supermarket
- It's a very highquality product – clearly to claim this you need to ensure it looks wonderful and that there are no legs or antennae lurking in the jar.
- It hasn't been excessively heated before jarring – all the goodness is still present, including pollen, just not the sort of pollen that will prevent hay fever.
- The honey hasn't been micro-filtered, pasteurised or tampered with in any way.
- It varies during the season as the forage changes – a jar of spring OSR honey is very different in flavour from a jar of mid-summer floral (hedgerow) honey. It's a wonderful edible snapshot of the changing seasons.
- Buying it supports a local cottage industry.
- It tastes fantastic – clearly demonstrable.

The 'taste test' is usually the deciding factor. A couple of tester jars – clearly labelled – a limitless supply of wooden coffee stirrers and a discard pot will allow customers ample opportunity to 'try before they buy'.

Which they surely will ...

Ivan A Perry

Co-operation is the Name of the Game

As beekeepers, it is difficult not to be amazed at the benefits of co-operation exhibited by our bees. So, when the Co-operative Society invited applications to its "Co-op Local Community Fund" we detected a certain synergy.

The Co-op Local Community Fund helps to support local projects and since its launch in 2017, Co-op members have raised **£39 million pounds** for over 12,000 local causes.

We're delighted that, following our bid to raise funds for additional marquees to promote the cause of the honey bee, WLBK was one of three selected to access to this funding opportunity.

The scheme operates like this:-

Every time a Co-op member shops at the Co-op, 1% of what they spend on Co-op branded products and services helps fund community projects such as ours. These members can choose which causes to support by signing into their membership account or by calling the membership helpline on 0800 023 4708. The Co-op displays the Projects in store and online on its website, so its members can choose which Project they want to support in their community.

Members can shop at any Co-op Group stores across the UK to raise money for our cause. Our local community is mainly centred on the Co-op Store on Leamington's Parade:-

Our cause will be available for members to select until November 2019 and can be viewed on a dedicated page on the Co-op's website:- <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/22003>

Under the scheme, we have an opportunity to raise awareness of our cause in store in collaboration with the Co-op. So, if you are a member of the Co-op, by choosing our cause you are contributing towards our goal. Thus far, this scheme has raised £371.34 towards our target of £1000 and there is still 7 months to go.!

For Sale

A complete Bee Hive all sterilised ready for the new season (Just add foundation)

Open mesh floor with slide. Entrance block and mouse guard. Or solid floor if preferred.

Brood Box complete with 12 Hoffman frames.

Queen extruder. Metal or plastic whichever is preferred.

2 Supers complete with 12 Hoffman frames in each

Crown board with 2 porta bee escapes

2 inch feeding eke.

Roof.

All for £120, Thorns price £204 and you get the advantage of a used hive which a swarm or nuc take more readily to.

National Brood Boxes complete with 12 Hoffman Frames £30.00.

Swarm catcher £25.00 Just add a long pole.

Description copied from Thornes web site

Ideal for those just out of reach swarms. Made from strong canvas and plated steel with nylon rope pull cord for closing the top. Place the bag underneath the swarm and gently ease the bag upward to enclose as much of the swarm as possible. Pull the cord and shake gently.

370mm diameter top ring. 750mm sack length. Pole (not included) should be 30 mm diameter, approx. Length to be determined by user.



Roger - 017926 852076 - roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk

News from the Co-op

We now stock unwired deep wax foundation suitable for candle rolling. To order, go to the co-op purchasing section of the website



Top Tip

If you find a wax moth trace across the frame of wax break this and you will probably find the wax moth grub will appear you can then do the necessary, if it doesn't then tap the side of the frame with your hive tool being nosy it will probably appear then.

Hints and Tips

This winter has been a mild one and swarming preparation is likely to be early... in fact today i have just performed an artificial swarm (29th April). So be prepared and here are some tips to help with thanks to Clive Joyce.

- When carrying out your weekly inspections in May, June and July keep a close eye out for the signs that may indicate swarming preparations are taking place. Look out for these signs and you will be better prepared:-

1. An increase in the number of drones or drone cells.

2. Play cups (vertical, empty hemispherical wax cups) suggest the colony is practicing the art of making queen cells.

3. During swarm preparation the young bees stay in the centre of the frame and the older bees collect around the outer parts.

4. The number of bees around the queen increases as she is fed more. This leads to increased egg laying and eventually the space is not available so possibility of swarming increases.

5. Scout bees will be out about 14 days before a swarm. They will be looking for a favourable site for the swarm to go to. Look out for bees with no pollen doing a waggle dance on the comb, these will be the scout bees communicating their findings.

6. Set up a bait hive and look for interest being taken.

7. Look out for bees zig-zagging across the comb. This recruits bees and stirs up the colony to prepare for swarming.

..... BUT after all this, if they still swarm then collect them up and rub carbolic soap on the area they chose to swarm to. Then they will not all abscond back to that place as soon as your back is turned!



After all that running around it is time for a nice glass of mead..... but don't forget to keep the best bottle for

THE BRANCH HONEY SHOW on September 12th
and if it is a winner you could always try for the
COUNTY HONEY SHOW on September 28th



CHEERS!

If you have any hints or tips that you would like to share, please send them to h.essex@virgin.net...
Thank you Helen Essex

Editor Roger Wilkes, email address is roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk or hard copy can be posted to him at:
12 Mercia Avenue, Kenilworth CV8 1EU. **Content to him for next month by May 28th latest.**

Please send in plain text, unformatted, using Microsoft Word or another common program.

BeeTalk is: Designed, produced, printed and distributed by Roger Wilkes

Warwick and Leamington Branch
of Warwickshire Beekeepers Association
Reg Charity No. 500276 www.warleambees.org.uk