



Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

AGM Report

The 81st AGM of the Warwick & Leamington Beekeepers Association was held on Thursday 27th February at which the outgoing Chairperson Bernard Brown gave a very comprehensive report on his last 2 yrs. The branch now owns its own 'show equipment' such as Marquee's, Microscopes, Banners, and Stands etc. Added to this, we have acquired land at Dalehouse Lane (known as DHL) for an out apiary and with much discussion and hard work Roger has moved the training apiary from Bubbenhall to DHL. This is mainly due to Bernard's hard work in obtaining the relevant licence and legalities to make this happen. Bernard also thanked Mick Smith for his input into DHL.

Val gave out the Accounts with explanations where needed, and has kept the branch viable over the past years, and we look forward to the future of the branch continuing in the same way financially thanks to her hard work. Steve Bates stood in for our Secretary Tim Foden who is in Australia at this time on holiday.

Mary presented Bernard with Port & local cheeses, which I know he will enjoy at leisure, and his wife Jane with a basket of flowers.

Mary Pemberton took over as the 4th woman chairperson of the WLBA, and her first pleasurable duty was to announce that Clive Joyce be made an Honorary Life Member of WLBA, and Eileen his wife was recognised for her support with a basket of flowers.

With the official AGM over, we then had a talk from Doug Nethercliffe from Shipston on Stour branch on his 'Apimondia Experiences' from the world conference in Kiev.

Mary Pemberton

Our New Honorary Member

It is not often I find myself speechless, and I feel sad that last evening I really should have shown more appreciation for the honour you gave me. However I am now composed and would like to say to all members thank you so much for allowing me to join some of the really great characters that have proceeded me to be made an honorary life members of our brilliant branch.

The achievements you attributed to me really are not down to me, but to all who enabled them to happen. Yes, I am proud that we as a branch do have a co-op that is able to supply members with let's say consumable at a slightly better price because we pool our buying power.and yes, we do have an extraction unit that enables us to keep out of the kitchen and keep the bedroom door handles free of honey..... but I was only a very little cog in the instigation of these projects and the full team that runs them are the real stars.

I am not going to go on but I must say that the thing that really stopped me in my tracks was the fact that you recognised what a dependency I have on Eileen. She was extremely touched by the recognition of her role and with the presentation. Thank you all for making my year.

Clive.

Membership Renewal Reminder

Things are beginning to stir in the hives so if you haven't already and still intend to renew your membership, the form is on the right hand side of the home page of our website –www.warleambees.com. This is very quick and easy to complete and contains all you need to know about 2014 subscriptions and methods of payment

Spring Walk

Will be on Sunday 23rd March, talking a 3-4 mile easy walk around Kenilworth Castle. Meeting time 11 am from the bottom of the Castle at Purlieu Lane. Parking in the Queen & Castle car park is easy and your fee will be refunded, when we have lunch in the Clarendon Arms after. Please email mary.pemberton@hotmail.co.uk if you wish to reserve a place for lunch (around 1 p.m.)

I look forward as to seeing many of you as possible, especially if the weather is nice and sunny !!!!! If it is raining really hard and not very nice at all, then some of the more hardy of you may want to walk, but the rest may meet up for lunch.

Mary Pemberton





Unstable Hives

Why would any Beekeeper balance two hives precariously on bricks like this.

Find out later in Bee Talk

Kit Building Time –Open to Anyone in the Branch

We have just completed a very happy and successful Introduction to Beekeeping course, and now have lots of enthusiastic budding beekeepers keen to get started. We have organised a **Hive and Frame Assembly Workshop on Saturday March 29th** starting 10.00am and going on until we have each made a hive - or we are at least well on the way to completion.

This activity is open to everyone - so if you fancy communal hive-building, particularly if you would like some support, do come along with your flat-pack hive kit. If you are coming, please let me know. It will help with tea/coffee/biscuits arrangements. If you think you'll be working into the afternoon - please bring a packed lunch.

Liz Bates (liz.bates@virgin.net).

Taster Day

May we enlist your help in promoting our 2014 Taster Day amongst your friends, neighbours and work colleagues? This course will take place on Saturday 17 May 2014 from 10.00am until 4.30pm approx. at Bourton Hall, Bourton-on-Dunsmore, near Rugby and will cover safety aspects; where bees can be kept; the equipment, cost and time involved; the annual cycle of husbandry; and advise the best way to become a beekeeper and the qualification structure. Subject to the weather, delegates, if they so wish, will have the opportunity to handle bees under close supervision.

The course fee of £18.00 per person will be donated to a beekeeping/environmental charity. To book, follow this link

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?usp=drive_web&formkey=dHV2Q21YN3JXbFNfWGd1cldaSUXlUGc6MQ#gid=0 which can also be found on the home page of our website. Here you can also find out how to book a place for someone as a somewhat different but interesting gift.

Nosema and Microsporidia

A fascinating talk on Nosema and Microsporidia was given on 23 Jan by Scott Campbell from the Department of Biological Sciences at Exeter. We learnt how these microsporidian parasites manage to infect not only honeybees, but salmon and silk worms suffered too. We did our best to absorb the latest scientific activities and revelations as Scott took us through life cycles and explanations, with a certain amount of cell biology and genomics thrown in.

Attendance was excellent on a blustery very wet evening. Indeed so engrossed were we that the after questions kept on coming until we were finally prised off our chairs for coffee and cookies. I think I can speak for all who were there that it was a most riveting and enlightening evening that we thoroughly enjoyed.

Honeybees spreading disease to bumblebees.

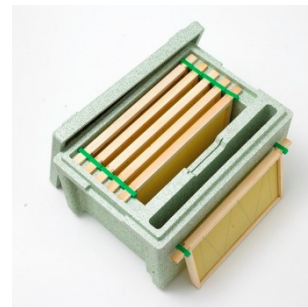
There is now widespread acceptance by many scientists that deformed wing virus (DWV) and *nosema ceranae* are being passed on from honeybees to bumbles at an alarming rate. Increased pathogen and parasite control is needed to protect wild pollinators, such as bumblebees. Insects pollinate a large proportion of the world's crops with bumblebees providing £1.8 bn worth of flower pollination while honeybees provide £12 bn in the US. Very interesting, but although we cannot control honeybees and bumbles visiting the same flowers, as honeybee keepers we must remain ever vigilant and be continually on the lookout for disease in our hives.

A reminder for you

Be	Warned	You	Require	Gloves
Blue	White	Yellow	Red	Green
0	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9

Improving a Paynes poly nuc

A short article this month – lots to do before the season starts. Paynes sell a polystyrene nucleus box which, with a little modification, can be significantly improved. As sold, the box takes 6 National frames, has an integral feeder, a mesh floor and top bee space (mine are version 1, the newer model has a different entrance but otherwise appears the same). The box is light and reasonably strong. With a couple of coats of masonry paint it should last many years. You **must** paint the inside of the feed compartment with several coats of paint or the syrup will soak in and the poly will go mouldy.



However, the feeder is too narrow and can't be emptied without tipping the box upside down. Tricky if the box is full of bees. If the syrup isn't used quickly it rapidly becomes a fermenting bee graveyard. 'Adam' on the BBKA and SBAi beekeeping discussion groups described conversion into an 8 frame nuc box.

Using care and a considerable amount of brute force, a bread knife, a Stanley knife and a small saw it's possible to remove the wall of the feeder completely. You'll discover that the (inevitable) blood cleans off the poly relatively easily. By butchering the removed poly you can then rebuild the 'lug rest' region, sticking everything in place with one of those space-filling glues (I used Mega Grip – just make sure it doesn't eat polystyrene). The poly is tough enough to withstand coarse sandpaper to make everything nice and level again. Remember it doesn't have to be pretty ... just functional. I smeared the inside joins with wood filler to try and exclude any crevices that could harbour pathogens and to discourage the bees from nibbling the exposed, rough, polystyrene.



You now have a very practical 8 frame poly nuc box. It's spacious enough to accommodate all but very large swarms (right) and light enough – at least while empty – to hold with one hand when precariously hanging off a ladder.

If you add metal or plastic runners to the box (use Gorilla glue and gimp pins, left) you convert it to bottom bee space and save getting the frames propolised to the lug rests. You can then use either 2mm Perspex or a sheet of thick plastic as a 'crown board'. You do need something to stop the roof being propolised in place. The roof is weak – both physically and in design. I've often overwintered bees in these boxes but snow and frost on the roof soon melt

indicating the heat escaping. To prevent this build a wooden eke and fill it with a block of 5cm thick Kingspan. This will also accommodate a 'carry-out' plastic container with 2-3 lb. of fondant to keep the bees going through the winter. It might feel a bit drastic to carve up a shiny new box, but the resulting 8 frame nuc is much more practical ... and you can always use a frame feeder if you need to feed syrup.

Next month – stuff for queen rearing

Dr. Bodgit



Unstable Hives

As you can see they would have been floating otherwise, so it was a case of putting a brick in as the waters rose in the floods

Roger



Swarm

Spectacular formation of a swarm taken by member's friend Hugh Tottle in Sri Lanka.

Coming Up

March 20	Honeybee Brood Diseases	Clive Joyce, Brian Kimberly	BBKA	7.30
March 23	Spring Walk	Mary Pemberton	Kenilworth	11.30
March 23	Advanced Microscopy	Tim Foden	BBKA	7.30
March 26	County AGM		BBKA	7.30
March 29	Hive & Frame Workshop	Liz Bates	BBKA	10.00

Wanted / For Sale

Wanted - Polystyrene nuc box 01926 512653

For Sale - 2 buckets of honey, one 14kg, other 11kg 01926 314651
- 2 mouse guards, never used 01926 512653
- Frame rest for wooden hive, never used 01926 512653
- 12 Potrabee escapes 01926 852076
- 2 Uncapping forks 01926 852076
- Queen marking plunger 01926 852076
- 4 x 10 Wired Super foundation 01926 852076

In the Branch Apiary

Not much happening this month just a matter of ensuring they have plenty of food, one of the hives was very light and they were not taking the fondant down so decided to try giving them Ambrosia putting on a litre, they took that down overnight so have since put on two more litres which they have consumed, this is not really the best thing to do at this time of the year it was only because it has been so mild that I tried it.

All of you please be on guard with the food March can be a dangerous month if the hive has no food as the queen starts to lay they can easily run out this can then lead to loss of hive through starvation, you cannot over feed the bees they will only take what they need to survive.

Roger

Hints and Tips

Just as the addition of the word 'wedding' to a simple cake multiplies its cost beyond reason, so it seems to be with marking pens and the word 'Queen'! The water based 'Queen Marking Pens' from bee suppliers are all over £4 each - identical pens bought from art suppliers cost around £2.60! A set of all 5 can be had for £12.60 (including delivery) - Thorne's price would have been £24.96. Just search online for 'uni-posca pc-5m' Barney Ward

If you are blessed with long arms then the chances are that you have a particularly vulnerable wrist area! Take those old socks, cut off the holey foot end and use the remaining part as a cuff for added protection. Always light your smoker before putting on your suit. You'll recognise me- I'm the one with the duct tape over the hole in my veil!

Get organised this year! Sort out 2 plastic pots with lids. Use one to store clean wax that you remove from the hive, probably in the form of brace comb, and the other for the discoloured scrapings. Freeze the collected wax for a couple of days to kill any wax moth. Pine cones can be dipped into melted discoloured wax, left to set, then used as fire lighters. Purify all the cleaner wax collected along with capping in September to make that perfect beeswax cake ready for the Honey Show!

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 Christine Kehrer, email address is ckehrer@gmail.com, or hard copy can be posted to her at: 13, Brookside Avenue, Kenilworth, CV8 1ES. **Content to her for next month by March 27th, latest!** Please send in plain text, unformatted, using Microsoft Word or another common program.

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