



Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

WLBK AGM

The Branch held its AGM on Thursday 16th February at BBKA and there was a very good turnout of 32 members, with a further 15 tending their apologies. Paul Kerr, our Chairman, ran through the highlights of the year and made particular mention to our ever-growing membership.

Introduction to Beekeeping, our Honey Show, Branch Meetings, Co-operative Purchasing; Public Education Initiatives, beekeeping good practice training; certification of beekeeping at various levels; branch apiary management etc etc. were all highlighted, as were the individual branch members who had taken the lead responsibilities were thanked for their essential involvement. Paul did request that more members become involved with the running of the branch, whether by active participation and/or the contribution of ideas.

As in previous years the Finances were of particular interest with our accounts being signed off by the Independent Examiner; our reserves policy being restated and provision for an increase in subscription for the 2018 (yes that is correct) in the unlikely event of this being necessary. Yes, our finances are in a very healthy position.

At the AGM the Executive for 2017 was approved and two of our new members to become part of our executive. Matei Bolborea and Ulyana Lalo will join the executive. Stephen Bates, Steven Cox and Tim Foden stood down and Paul thanked them for their valuable contributions.

May Taster Day

This year's May Beekeeping Taster Day will be held at BBKA, Stoneleigh Park, on Sunday 7th May and we need your help in promoting this event far and wide amongst your friends and neighbours, relatives, work colleagues etc.

We have promotional leaflets should you have the opportunity to post one on a notice board, or to hand out which can be obtained from Bernard Brown (bernardnbrown@aol.com). With Easter in mind, we are also providing "Taster Day Gift Certificates" for those who would like to make an original and unusual present of it for that special person.



Aimed at helping delegates decide whether they would like to take up beekeeping, a very popular part of the day is the opportunity to get up close and personal with some live bees and to do this we are looking for members to come along and open some hives. So if you would like to volunteer to help with this demonstration and to interact with the delegates, please contact Bernard.

The cost for the Day is £25 per delegate and they can enrol by going to our website and following the "Taster Day" link on the right hand side of the home page.

Bernard Brown

New Service To Members Launched

For several years now, we have been conscious that the proximity of neighbours, the size of modern gardens and competing uses for the limited space they provide has been an obstacle to some members in practising our craft and thus we have been taking every opportunity, mainly at our public displays, to promote the idea of hosting beehives by land owners who do have suitable sites. This has provided a steady stream of offers of such out-apiaries so we have now created a new “**Available Apiaries**” page in the members’ area of the website to advertise vacant ones to members.

Every site has been assessed for its suitability against the criteria of location, accessibility, aspect, terrain, neighbours, security, forage, number of colonies that can be accommodated and any land owner imposed conditions so, if you are looking for an out-apiary, go to the web page and, if the summary there is of interest, contact the member listed for further details and for an introduction.

Coming to an apiary near you??

This little critter, found near Tetbury, last year created a search lasting 10 days until a nest was found and destroyed. This was the first time that *Vespa velutina* (Asian hornet) had been found in the UK although it had been in many regions of France since it was first discovered in 2004. Tetbury is only 50+ miles away and is almost on our doorstep!



In spring, the queen, usually measuring up to 3 cm, will emerge and seek out an appropriate sugary food source in order to build up energy to commence building a small embryonic nest.

From July onwards, Asian hornet predation on honeybee colonies will begin and increase until the end of November and hornets can be seen hovering outside a hive entrance, waiting for returning foragers!!

As Spring is not far away we ALL need to be prepared

So, what are we going to do about it??

WLBKA is holding an
ASIAN HORNET AWARENESS session
On Thursday March 16th at BBKA HQ at 19.30

Dave Bonner will discuss their habits, what to look out for, what we can do and what to do if you find one.
Dave was involved in the hunt to find the nest, so has first hand experience of how we can all be on the lookout.
This will be followed by an Asian Hornet trap building demonstration.
ALL BEEKEEPERS WELCOME

Any queries please contact Paul Kerr (kerrbees@gmail.com)

Warwickshire Beekeepers Association – AGM

The 137th AGM of the Warwickshire Beekeepers Association is to be held at BBKA on the 22nd of March 2017 with a start time of 7.30pm.

This AGM will be taking as one of its major tasks the approval of a revised constitution. This is the culmination of the work initiated by Tim Foden, of our branch, at the previous AGM to bring the whole document, currently on our branch website, up to date.

The new constitution took as its starting point a “model constitution” provided by the Charity Commission. After a number of iterations with involvement from the various branches of WBKA a final version was approved at the Trustees at their meeting last September. Following a favorable response from the Charity Commission the WBKA Trustees “signed-off” the revised constitution to be brought forward for approval at the coming AGM.

If you wish to have sight of the new constitution this is available on the members area of the Warwickshire Beekeepers Association website (www.warwickshirebeekeepers.org.uk).

Chris Cox

WLBK secretary

Are you a competent beekeeper?

I'm sure I'm writing this to a branch full of competent beekeepers but there is a difference between thinking you are one such beekeeper and having BBKA give you a certificate to prove it.

If you have been keeping bees for a year or more BBKA offer a practical assessment of your basic skills. Over 2000 BBKA members have already passed and a considerable percentage of the members of this branch have "done their basic". All reported it as a wholly positive experience that boosted confidence. The assessment is a one – to – one discussion over a beehive, during which you will be asked to open and describe aspects of the colony and maybe do a simple manoeuvre. One aspect of having a Basic Certificate is that it gives both yourself and your fellow beekeepers confidence in your skills and, if you are offering bees for others, confidence in your bees.

The Branch plan to run several learning sessions to cover the topics that form the assessment on 7th, 14th and 28th March 2017 at Stoneleigh. Jane Medwell, one of our Master Beekeepers will be doing tutoring and she hopes to include a mock exam at the training apiary as part of the course. If you are interested in either attending the session or helping to run them, please fill in on line form on Branch website or get in touch with Gill Grimshaw (gill@gillgrimshaw.com), who will be happy to give you more information.

Hints and Tips

The bees will be flying every day, when weather allows, and there is a great temptation to have a look at just what is going on! Don't be too hasty -wait to see the flowering redcurrant (*ribes sanguinum*) come into bloom and then you should be able to safely carry out your first inspection. Opening up too early could jeopardise the queen.

March is the month when bees can die of starvation. The brood is beginning to increase as the days lengthen. This puts extra demand on the food sources and if the weather doesn't allow for the foraging bees to get out and the stores are depleted then the future of the colony is compromised. If you think your bees are in need of a boost then feed a 1:1 (1kg to 1 litre) warm dilute syrup to help them through what is forecast to be a cold start to the month.

If there is no activity observed, on a warmer day, lift the crown board and have a look down between the frames to see if there is any sign of life. If all seems ok then put the crown board on again and the lid as quickly as you can to minimise heat loss. If it appears that the colony has died then have a closer look to see if you can decide why this may have happened. If you are concerned then seal the hive up, to prevent any robbing occurring, which may spread disease and seek further advice either from an experienced branch member or from the Regional Bee Inspector.

Have you decided what you are going to buy at the Spring Convention?.... not long now!

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 March 27th latest.**

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

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