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## Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

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### Bee Keeper's Spring Walk Sunday April 3rd at 11am

All change! The spring walk will be changed from the previously advertised venue because of flooding damage to the Red Lion at Hunningham. A new walk is now starting from Kenilworth.

I am now proposing a 6 mile circular walk starting at Kenilworth castle and walking to Meer End and back. Meeting at the castle car park opposite the Queen & Castle CV8 1ND, same time 10.30 for a 11o/c prompt start on April 3rd. Meals available at the Clarendon Arms as shown on the web site <http://www.clarendonarmspub.co.uk/>

If you are interested please contact Keith Henry, on 01926 632076 or email [kp2henry@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:kp2henry@yahoo.co.uk) as we need to know numbers for the Pub. Hope to see all the walkers amongst us there, members and partners all welcome.

Keith Henry

### Hive Building Workshop

BBKA reverberated to the sound of hammering and the whizzing of cordless drills the other Saturday as 12 or so aspiring new bee keepers from our recently concluded Introductory Course applied themselves to the task of assembling flat pack hives under the guidance of a recently surprisingly "un-jet lagged" Tim Foden. To novice and expert woodworkers alike, Tim dispensed wisdom and practical tips whilst assembling yet another hive destined for the Training Apiary. Amply sustained by drinks and biccies throughout the day, those with hives to assemble made a start and, observed by those still to acquire their kit, went away to complete their tasks safe in the knowledge of how to avoid the indignity of having to prise apart incorrectly assembled yet, annoyingly tenaciously nailed and glued hive components. All in all, it was time well spent and what's more, all was cleared up so we even got away in time for the Rugby.



### Swarm Prevention and Collection Workshop Monday 18th April at BBKA 7.30pm

Honey bees are social insects. They are unable to survive unless they live collectively in a colony. In order to maintain the species they have to reproduce by colony division. A large part of a colony will exit the hive together with the queen, set up home elsewhere and form a new colony. This is known as swarming.

If swarming does occur, it means the beekeeper may lose a large part of his colony and also a large part of his potential honey crop. Swarming is a very basic instinct in the honey bee and therefore is difficult to control. Even in the best managed colonies, swarming will occur. However with appropriate measures, the proportion of hives that swarm can be minimised. Clive Joyce, who has dealt in this field for many years will discuss the various dynamics of a swarm that will aid in their control. He will also go into detail of the collection of swarms.

The branch has also developed an organisation whereby volunteer branch members collect swarms when notified of their presence, often by members of the general public. Barney Ward will discuss its organisation and how the swarm is then offered to other branch members.

The programme for the lecture:

- 7.30pm Swarm prevention and collection – Clive Joyce
- 8.30pm Branch swarm collection organisation – Barney Ward
- 8.45pm Refreshments
- 9.00pm Questions

This lecture will include many slides. It has been given over several years and has proved extremely popular. It is aimed at all levels and will be of interest to all beekeepers.

Peter Stanworth

## Branch Library

I will be at the swarm control and collection meeting on Monday 18 April and ask any members who wish to return books to bring them to that meeting. The library will probably not be "open" but I will have it with me. This will be the final formal meeting before the summer, and assuming you have finished with the books you have borrowed, the last chance before September to return them at a meeting. Thank you.

Jane Rigby

## Improvers' Group Meeting

Our Improvers' group met on Tuesday 22 March primarily to discuss training plans. However, as serendipity would have it, we found ourselves having three very interesting hive types available to view without the inconvenience of occupants.

Our first hive, provided by Jon Harrison was a "Flow Hive" which was developed by means of crowd funding in Australia (I think). With more or less a standard brood-box, the Flow Hive has about five plastic units in its super in which the cells will mechanically divide, whilst remaining in the hive, allowing honey to flow out into a suitable container through a tube. We look forward to learning how well this works in our climate and with our mix of forage.



Tim Geater brought his new top bar hive in to show us. This type of hive is simple in operation with the bees allowed to behave much as they would as feral colonies. The bees produce their own comb, in the right place with a bit of luck, but the hive does have the disadvantages that the colony is harder to examine and the honey cannot be spun out. It is an interesting thought that we might have such a hive at our training apiary in due course to play with, but I think we have enough on our plate to keep us occupied this year already!

The Apimaye hive was brought along by Di Hetherington and Pete Benson. This hive was like a National, Commercial, Langstroth etc in general configuration. It was of double walled plastic construction with the particular benefit, it claimed, of being particularly well insulated giving the bees a warmer than normal environment. It seemed very robustly constructed and I like the clips which hold the whole unit tightly together.



Also I took a Langstroth and Commercial hive along so that their much larger frames could be observed.

When the Beehaus, Rose, Dartington, Mann Lake hybrid and Warre hives are added to the mix, there is certainly a wide choice to go at.

The skill and knowledge that a novice beekeeper needs to acquire during the first and second year is considerable. I am quite sure that experimenting with different hive types is an enjoyable dimension to beekeeping. However for price, simplicity and very importantly, interchangeability, I always recommend a novice to get initial experience with a bog standard National so that he or she can keep life simple to start with and to be able to make an informed choice of hive to maintain into the future.

Tim Foden

## Branch Improvers' Group – invitation to join

Last year, we formed an "Improvers' group" comprising members who had passed their Basic and were keen to develop further their beekeeping knowledge and skill. This initiative fully recognised that we already have in the branch some highly experienced/qualified members, members who would like to spend more time beekeeping, but can't because of other commitments and those content with the level of knowledge and skill they already have.

Several "improvers" studied together over last Winter and we have now had three meetings to discuss training plans, which will include practical training at our training apiary this season.

If you would like to join this group, would you email Tim Foden please – [tim\\_foden@hotmail.com](mailto:tim_foden@hotmail.com)

## Practical Beekeeping Training Course 2016

We will again be providing practical beekeeping training for novices or near novices at our Dalehouse Lane training apiary, situated at the junction of Dalehouse Lane and Stoneleigh Road near Kenilworth.

Subject to demand, we will provide training from 7pm until approx. 9pm every Tuesday and Thursday for separate groups commencing Tuesday 26 or Thursday 28 April

The training will involve:

- carrying out the necessary seasonal husbandry as the colonies require,
- addressing fundamental manipulations eg opening, examining and closing a hive, queen marking & clipping, comb changing, queen introduction, swarm management, adding and removing supers, disease inspections and much more,
- a series of short discussions about key aspects of beekeeping eg hygiene, safety and protective clothing, swarm control, diseases, managing a smoker, beespace, types of queen excluder etc.

Participants will be encouraged to attend our branch-wide presentations on swarm control and honey processing. There is a great deal to cover and those joining us are expected to attend most weeks in order to get the most from what we offer.

This training complements the knowledge acquired on an Introduction to Beekeeping Course. Attendance on such a course is not a pre-requisite. Anyone attending who has not acquired the fundamental theory will be directed to text books.

This training is available to all Full, Partner and Junior members with no fee being payable.

Please enrol for this training by completing the booking form on the home page of our website [www.warleambees.org.uk](http://www.warleambees.org.uk)

Tim Foden

## Volunteers required to staff the BBKA "Swarm Line"

The British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA) headquarters is situated at the National Agricultural Centre at Stoneleigh. During the swarming season they receive many telephone enquiries from the general public about bees and insects in general. The BBKA administrative staff would welcome assistance from Warwick & Leamington Branch members during weekdays in dealing with these calls. We have some past experience in dealing with these enquiries which has been very interesting and enlightening.

You may remember that the Branch agreed to assist last year by manning a telephone at the Headquarters and dealing with all enquiries relating to swarms ('swarmline'). It was extremely successful, we covered 63% of the sessions, and BBKA have asked if we would do the same again this year.

To do this we require volunteers who would be prepared to spend a half day, morning or afternoon, sitting at BBKA HQ taking telephone calls from the general public and advising accordingly. We are also approaching the County. It is envisaged that we would be required from the beginning of May until mid July, but this will be dependent on the weather.

Please do volunteer if you feel that you have the time. Identify a vacant half day slot from the diary accessible via the link on the home page of our website [www.warleambees.org.uk](http://www.warleambees.org.uk) and email Peter Stanworth, who will make an entry in the diary – [peterstanworth@btinternet.com](mailto:peterstanworth@btinternet.com) or Tim Foden - [tim\\_foden@hotmail.com](mailto:tim_foden@hotmail.com). **We only have one volunteer at present. Please do help if you are available.**

The BBKA staff will be very grateful for our assistance, which will go some way in thanking them for the help they give us.

Peter Stanworth

## **Making an Exhibition of Ourselves.....Again!!**

Spring is in the air. The bees are stirring. Summer is surely just around the corner and our programme of displays at various public events around our patch is firming up.

Bringing awareness of bees and beekeeping to the general public is part of our charitable remit and we have the kit to mount a range of different activities so we will be seeking volunteers to help man the WLBK displays. Helping on the stand involves sharing our knowledge and enthusiasm with the public, making sales of honey and wax products (playing shop), demonstrating various pieces of beekeeping equipment and answering queries and is well within the capabilities of anyone who has been on our introductory course. We usually arrange the help in shifts and volunteering for a couple of hours on our stand usually entitles you to free admission to the show and so there is time to sample the wider delights of the event.

We seek volunteers a few weeks before a particular event and publicise this together with the arrangements for registering your interest in Bee Talk and by e-mail. Here you will be able to find a link to enable you to volunteer on line. You can also find these links on our website along with my contact details should you want further information.

These events range from village shows to those on a regional and national scale but all provide a thoroughly enjoyable day out in this delightful County of ours and, of course, plenty of opportunity for "Bee Talk". So, if this prospect appeals to you, please note the dates of events that interest you in your diary now. A full list of these events is included in the Branch Diary section of our website but coming up in May and June are:-

<b>Date</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Organiser</b>
5th – 8 <sup>th</sup> May	Weds - Sun	Malvern Spring Show	BBKA
14 <sup>th</sup> May	Saturday	Mollington Village Fete	WLBK/
31 <sup>st</sup> May	Tuesday	St John's Museum	Mike Townsend
4 <sup>th</sup> June	Saturday	Kenilworth Agricultural Show	WLBK/
12th June	Sunday	Hatton Country Fair	WLBK/
16-19 <sup>th</sup> June	Thurs- Sun	Gardeners World live	BBKA
18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> June	Sat - Sun	Leamington Peace Festival	WLBK/

Bernard Brown  
Public Display Co-ordinator

## **Administrative help wanted Please**

Among our well established program of annual events is our honey and wax processing presentation given by Mike Townsend and Clive Joyce, which, this year, is likely to be held on Saturday 16 July. Our experts, who give presentations such as this, are hard pressed and we would like a member to offer to provide them with admin support in the form of organizing the room, projector, catering and ensuring that the event is well publicized. Clearly, if you take this on, you will need training in how our systems work, which we will be very pleased to provide. If you would be so kind as to join our team of helpers, please email Tim Foden – [tim\\_foden@hotmail.com](mailto:tim_foden@hotmail.com)

## **For Sale**

Polystyrene National bee hive empty £45

4 poly supers £8 each. 2 ekes £2 each,

frames with drawn wax for supers, honey buckets, nylon double strainer sieves, rhombus bee escape, contact feeder, mouse guards, other bits & pieces make offer 01926 512653

## Hints and Tips

Being able to pick up a queen is a very useful thing to do. Practice by picking up drones in the hive or better still, practice by picking up workers from inside a window when they become trapped in the house. When you pick them up by their wings, their abdomens curve away from you so that worker stings are out of harm's way! (Thanks to Tim Foden for this contribution)

Colony development is really increasing this month. Supers need to be added to prevent the hive becoming overcrowded. This is best done when the brood box is about three-quarters full of bees. As with many aspects of bee keeping there are divided opinions on how to add successive supers. However if they are added just above the queen excluder then the young bees will be able to occupy this space more readily and thus relieve the pressure in the brood box.

On fine days the bees will be collecting early spring pollen. Without it the colony cannot expand and will not be able to take advantage of the approaching spring blossom. Crocus, snowdrop and willow are the principle sources. Remove the mouse guards to assist the pollen delivery!

Make hygiene a priority this year! Always take a bag or box with you during an inspection to put those odd bits of comb, lumps of wax and propolis in.

If you have any hints or tips that you would like to share, please send them to [h.essex@virgin.net](mailto:h.essex@virgin.net)...

Thank you Helen Essex

Editor Roger Wilkes, email address is [roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk](mailto: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 April 27th, 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](http://www.warleambees.org.uk)