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## Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

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### Could this be YOU.....?

Summer fun and frolics are just around the corner and what could be a better way of indulging in these than volunteering for a stint on the branch's display stand promoting our craft at one of the forthcoming events?

Helping on the stand involves sharing our knowledge and enthusiasm 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 so there is no need to be shy. We arrange the help in shifts and volunteering for a couple of hours on our stand entitles you to free admission to the show and as a result there is time to sample the wider delights of the event should you so wish.



We are currently seeking stewards for the following events and you can register your interest by clicking on the link associated with each and completing the on-line form :-

The first of these, is the **Hatton Country Fair on SUNDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> June**. This is a quintessential "English" village show held at **Hatton Country World**. with the usual village show attractions of sideshows, plant and cake sales, face painting, fancy dress competition, and fancy dress and some less usual ones such as a companion dog show, dog agility demonstration, beagles, rabbits, cats, greyhounds. **PLUS** their now traditional fresh egg throwing and catching competition!!! .....could get messy!. If that is not enough to keep you entertained then the delights of Hatton Country World itself are on hand to sample.

Please follow this link to volunteer for Hatton Country Fair:-

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSenaVhc8uh9M0otflj40NTuhTvBaDqg\\_SdvO\\_IGSJNWbDfUag/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSenaVhc8uh9M0otflj40NTuhTvBaDqg_SdvO_IGSJNWbDfUag/viewform)

This is followed by the **Annual Kenilworth & District Agricultural Society Show**.

Held on **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June** in a field immediately opposite the entrance to Stoneleigh Park, this is one of the more significant events in our programme. Consequently, we are pulling out all the stops this year, providing the full range of our activities with which to wow the public. So we need plenty of stewards to deliver our message. The gates open at 0930 and so we are seeking help not only on the day itself but also on the afternoon before to set things up.

Please follow this link to volunteer for the Kenilworth Show:-

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScDmORVxhiNEF7vjPd14pLhUerrcwrlY9O5TlqYKlb0CkRYIQ/viewform>

The following weekend of the **17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> June** will see us at **The Leamington Peace Festival** held in the Pump Room Gardens. Described as an event 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, - obvious synergy with beekeepers - this Festival provides a mix of family friendly activities, including workshops, talks, free music and other entertainment, vegetarian food stalls and environmentally conscious stands. With the hay fever season in full swing, our stand proved very popular with the visitors last year and we were struggling to cope so, please, spare a couple of hours if you can.

Please follow this link to volunteer:-

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdsr2Mrgid4LxWgZaCnu6vnkJgoB\\_1wxY9seCS2D-ru3XiVg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdsr2Mrgid4LxWgZaCnu6vnkJgoB_1wxY9seCS2D-ru3XiVg/viewform)

These links are also featured on our webpage

Hoping to see you there.

Bernard Brown

P.S. We will soon be inviting members' honey and wax products to sell at these events so please keep an eye on your inboxes for detailed arrangements

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

The administrative staff at the British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA) Headquarters are inundated with the calls during the swarming season and are constantly being interrupted in their work. They would welcome assistance again this year from Warwickshire members in dealing with these calls ('Swarmline').

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. There is a folder kept at BBKA that advises on the procedure.

The calendar is set up on the Warwick and Leamington branch website from Monday, 8th May to Friday 7th July. Go to the home page of the website, click on the swarmline calendar on the right hand side and follow the instructions. Identify a date and time and then let me know your choice – [peterstanworth@btinternet.com](mailto:peterstanworth@btinternet.com) or Chris Cox - [secretary@warleambees.org.uk](mailto:secretary@warleambees.org.uk) and we will make an entry in the diary.

Please do volunteer if you feel that you have the time. Even if you are working take a relaxing morning or afternoon off! We have 260 members and if each covered one session we would have the whole period filled.

Our experience in the past has been that it has been interesting and good fun. The BBKA staff are very grateful for our assistance and it will go some way in thanking them for the help in return that they freely give to us.

Peter Stanworth  
April 2017

## Bee Keeping Taster Day May 2017

There are still a few places left on our Beekeeping Taster Day on Sunday, May 7<sup>th</sup> at BBKA so if you know of any friends, relatives neighbours or work colleagues who may be interested, please direct them to

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfbMNEeluyQmznVKPPoUrm3V8CYK5EG-QvZUUGUNv1JwJOiIA/viewform> or our website [www.warleambees.org.uk](http://www.warleambees.org.uk) to enrol. The cost is £25.

If you are feeling generous and would like to make a present of this event to someone, why not take advantage of our Gift Certificate Scheme?

We are still looking for a couple more members to volunteer to meet and greet and generally interact with the delegates during the day so, if this appeals, please contact Bernard Brown on [bernardnbrown@aol.com](mailto:bernardnbrown@aol.com), or tel 01926 843416

## Back to the Steam Age



An old hive roof and solid floor, a wall paper stripper (steam generator), a roll of oven foil, a length of garden hose and a few miscellaneous plumbing fittings all went into the Heath-Robinson effort, pictured, to test the efficacy of the principle involved of using steam to melt old comb from frames and to recover the wax. And, whilst volunteers toiled at the tidy-up at Dalehouse Lane, our own Heath and Robinson were found lining the hive floor with oven foil, adding a brood box with some old comb full of honey, pollen, dead brood and one or two other undesirable residents, filling the wall paper stripper with water and connecting it to the roof with the garden hose and, having switched the whole thing on, retiring to a safe distance taking a well-earned coffee break whilst waiting to see what befell.

After about 10 minutes, some condensed steam trickled out of the entrance and into a hastily placed receptacle. This turned into a steady flow after 20 minutes as the honey melted and after about 30 minutes we saw the first evidence of melted wax trickling into the pan and solidifying on top of the honey and water mix. This turned into a constant flow which subsided after 50 minutes when we switched everything off, lifted the roof and observed a great pile of hot and steaming detritus detached from the frames and slumped on the floor which, when wrapped up in the baking foil lining, was ready for disposal. So with little more effort than lifting a coffee cup, we had successfully removed the bulk of the comb from the frames and recovered some wax for further refining.

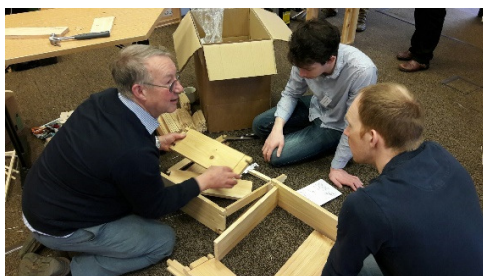
The frames weren't squeaky clean and still needed a quick swirl in the burco boiler before being ready to receive new foundation but, the ability to do something else whilst the steam and gravity removed the comb which otherwise would have to be cut out and the wax scraped from the frames and then rendered down, was a significant time-saving benefit thought worthy of sharing with members.

Now, ever mindful of members' interests, your committee, whilst impressed with the efficacy of the device, were not so enamoured by the engineering methods adopted in the home-built prototype, so they elected to invest in a proprietary off-the-shelf version. Facilitated by the generous donation of the required funds, the Thornes's Easi-steam was ordered and as can be seen from the pictured, has arrived. It will be available for use by to members shortly so keep a look out for the details of how to access it.



As for the precision engineered prototype? ....well, this has been handed back to its fabricators with the advice "not to give up the day jobs just yet".

## Hive Building Day 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017



Around 12 of our new members who had joined the branch after completing the Introduction to Beekeeping course this year, attended the workshop to begin constructing their hives.

I don't know how much some of them expected to achieve during the 3.5 hours, but there were packs of wood strewn all around the hall and most were able to put together a brood box and at least 1 super during that time. If they had also expected to assemble and wax the packs of 50 brood and super frames which most brought along too, they were probably very disappointed, but everyone went home with some completed boxes and hopefully the knowledge of how to assemble roofs and floors too.

There was a lot of hammering and banging with a lot of people spending more time putting things together on the floor than working on the tables (and often taking them apart again).

It was pleasing to see the number of volunteers who turned up to help our newbees, and it was also fun to listen to the arguments of how to assemble everything even though they were all working from the same handout! But then we're beekeepers and the old saying about 'if you ask 3 beekeepers a question, you'll get 5 different answers' applied as usual.

Coffee, tea and Easter biscuits were consumed while everyone was working and the atmosphere was one of lively banter along with a 'hive of activity'.

Val Dillon

## For sale

6 BN supers, made up and with steel runners. Used only one or two sessions but I'm converting to polyhives. Offers accepted, contact Gill Grimshaw [gill@gillgrimshaw.com](mailto:gill@gillgrimshaw.com)



## Tools not Fools – WLBK Hive Building Day

It's April 1<sup>st</sup> and a swarm of new and emerging beekeepers are arriving at BBKA HQ in Stoneleigh, their cars filled with aromatic Cedar panels and tools (*but no yardsticks - they are not making them any longer*). Right from the get go it was a convivial occasion with the buzz of friendly chatter and many hands making light work of carrying the stacks of wood inside. The lovely people at WLBK had already set up the room with tables and tools provided for all. A real sting operation one may say.



The event kicked-off (actually that should be tapped-off) with a frame building demo. “And this is how you secure the wax into the frame with a wedge” said the tutor, directing three nails at right angles to the foundation sheet. “Ahem... I don't do it like that” came a second voice, “the gimp pins should be at an angle to catch the loops”. Then a third voice, “No, no ,no... you must leave the pin head out to make it easier to remove in future”. So there you have it folks – proof indeed that beekeepers just can't agree on a single approach!



The room quickly filled with the satisfying tap-tap-tap of nails. Old hands were happy to impart their knowledge. “The best way to secure the roof is silicon” a wise man told me. Moments later a different voice of experience “always use screws on the roof or you'll never be able to repair it”. I'm still deciding!

More WBLK hospitality followed with tea and cakes (thank you!!). Then, quite contrary to the headline above, I realised I'd played an April Fool's joke on myself by building half of my roof upside-down. I only noticed AFTER I'd glued and nailed it. I was just thinking about whether to hide my mistake to save the embarrassment when someone came to my rescue with nail pullers and it was fixed before the glue had set. Phew! Another good reason for building your first hive in good company I thought to myself.

The day ended with a procession of proud new beehive owners - more hives than a dermatologist's waiting room.

Thank you everyone at WLBK who made this such an excellent day for us beginners.

Daniel Badcock

## DHL Tidy-Up

Pictured above are just a few of the members who endured the early spring sunshine and temperatures approaching 18 degrees at the DHL Training Apiary the other weekend on the apiary tidy-up. Some 15 members, armed with brooms, shovels, strimmers, and rakes and, most important of all, good humour and enthusiasm, tackled the accumulation of leaves, twigs and the odd branch to smarten up the appearance of this treasured facility in readiness for the culmination of the year's Introduction to Bee Keeping Course – the first opportunity for delegates to get “up close and personal” with live honey bees. Apparently they were well impressed. Many thanks to all who helped.



## Hints and Tips

Many thanks to Bernard for the following valuable contribution

### Safety at Out-apiaries

Beekeeping is a pretty safe hobby. Of course there are incidences of burns sustained when lighting smokers, often from ignited plastic veil mesh, or rubber gloves and then there is always beekeeper's back which can strike when you are least expecting it but in compensation, this may be due to full supers (I wish). Occasionally there is an adverse and previously unexperienced reaction to a sting and then there are trips and falls often associated with traversing uneven ground, particularly if peppered with rabbit holes and bramble snares. But on the whole these are rare occurrences.....which is really the whole thing about accidents - they crop up and catch you unawares.

If tending to your bees, alone, at an isolated and unfrequented out-apiary you would be wise to consider what would happen should an accident **beefall** you and you were incapacitated or injured. You could well be unlocatable or unable to raise the alarm. This situation is akin "Lone Working" in health and safety parlance and there are some well-established, easy to follow recommendations which will help to ensure that, when you leave home in your beesuit, you do, in fact, return to take it off!!!. So here are a few tips:-

- 1) Check that you can get a mobile phone signal at your apiary
- 2) A charged mobile phone is essential, pre-programmed with emergency contact numbers and preferably located in one of your beesuit pockets
- 3) Leave word with someone that you are going to the out-apiary and at what time you expect to return.
- 4) Make sure that someone has your mobile phone number, knows the location of the out apiary and the contact number of the land owner in case you are overdue so that they can alert the emergency services
- 5) Be aware of any emergency procedures associated with the wider site of the out apiary
- 6) Be aware of your increased vulnerability of "lone working" and do not take unnecessary risks

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

### National Bee Hive for sale

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

Open mesh with slide. Entrance block and mouse guard.

Brood Box complete with 12 Hoffman frames.

Queen extruder.

2 Supers complete with 12 Hoffman frames in each

Crown board with 2 porta bee escapes

2 inch feeding eke.

Roof.

All for £120 negotiable, Thorns price £155 and you get the advantage of a used hive which a swarm or nuc take more readily to.

Contact Roger 01926 85076 or [roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk](mailto:roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk)

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12 Mercia Avenue, Kenilworth CV8 1EU. **Content to him for next month by May 27<sup>th</sup> latest.**

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

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