



Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

If at First you Don't Succeed

We have to thank Gill Grimshaw and the amazing power of our Branch network for alerting us to the possible availability of a portable (well sort of!) classroom/store at the Canley Food Project which would be ideal for our new Dalehouse Lane teaching apiary.

Actually achieving possession of said unit has been quite a challenge let alone the organization of its transport.

I think the story rivals another. A few years ago now, a member advertised in Beetalk, three (I think) standby generators, which were free to good homes. The only snag was that they had to be collected – from the roof of a tall office block near the Parade in Leamington. Anyway someone knew someone who could provide a crane etc etc, and the result was three happy new owners.

When Mick Smith, who deserves a great deal of credit for his tenacity, told me about the events on “transportation day” of the class-room unit I thought it was a saga worth sharing!

The morning of Wednesday 30 April was beautifully sunny and Mick Smith and Roger Wilkes arrived in good time to meet the lorry in Charter Avenue, Coventry. Mick tried to be there before Roger but Roger was there first as is normal. There was the suggestion that Roger must sleep under a nearby hedge prior to events as seldom does anyone arrive before him! Our Chair, Mary Pemberton, and a representative from the Council duly arrived by the due time of 09.00 after which it was increasingly obvious that the absentee was the haulage company, which when telephoned, informed the assembled multitude that they had the move booked for the following day.

They did concede to a recce though, which concluded that the access might not be viable, but a lorry would be available for 13.00 hours that day. This time it did turn up and the assembled crowd watched as the lorry proceeded to get stuck long before reaching the unit. Many would have stormed off with serious depression at that point, but as Mick casually put it “an obliging local farmer was summoned”, who with an enormous tractor managed to pull the lorry to where it was required, but only after one failed attempt when the chain snapped. The farmer waved good-bye with the line “if you need me again just ring”.

Having loaded the unit, the lorry refused to move so Mick “just rang” and within fifteen minutes, the lorry with unit on board was towed to where it could move under its own steam.

Apparently, delivery of the unit to Dalehouse Lane was fairly straightforward, thanks to the careful preparatory work that had been carried out.

I am confident that a great deal of use will be made of this class-room/storage unit in the future for all sorts of training activities, so perhaps when in there, we might spare a thought for those involved in the traumatic events leading up to its arrival. A big thank you to all concerned.

Tim Foden

Bee Safaris 2014

Two bee safaris this year. For those who are new to WLBK Safaris we have two of our Regional Bee Inspectors visit members apiaries. We are talked through an inspection by the real experts and there is something to learn for everyone. Each safari is restricted to 12 people so all can see what is happening. As with many WLBK events there does seem to be an association between bees and cake.

This year our first safari is taking a different form. There will be less safari but as many bees as the whole event will be held at the Dalehouse Lane Community Apiary. [\charles](#) Millar, our Regional Bee Inspector will lead this event on 5th July. This will be followed the Branch BBQ at BBKA Stoneleigh and, non-traditionally, the cake will be for pudding.

The second safari is on 26th July and will be in the south of our district and lead by our new Sessional Bee Inspector Keren Green. There will be cake.

PLEASE SIGN UP ON THE GOOGLE FORM ON THE BRANCH WEBSITE.

Gill Grimshaw

Beekeeping Taster Day – Saturday 17 May

Some 22 delegates joined Mary Pemberton, Paul Kerr, Ann Foden and me for this year's Taster Day. Ann had help with the catering from Colin Spraklen and we were later joined by Mike Townsend, Rod Smith, Fiona Brookes and Andrew Brookes who assisted with opening hives.

As a point of detail, we started these events about five years ago, when our Introduction to Beekeeping course was over-subscribed and it became obvious that there was demand for a short event aimed at helping people decide whether beekeeping was a hobby that they wished to pursue. On the day we covered the basic equipment required and its cost, where one can keep bees and the amount of time it takes, the best learning processes and finally we provide an opportunity to open up hives to experience being among bees.

We had more delegates this year than in the past two, which is evidence that interest in taking up beekeeping is continuing.

This year we were lucky enough to be able to use Bourton Hall at Bourton on Dunsmore as our venue, which proved ideal, especially as we had fine weather on the day.

Some 14 delegates asked to be informed of the details of the 2015 Introduction to Beekeeping Course, when these have been established. The £360.00 proceeds of the event have been divided between Bees Abroad and Practical Action – a charity based at Bourton Hall.

My thanks to everyone who helped on the day.
Tim Foden



Leamington Peace Festival 14th & 15th June 11am – 6pm



Volunteers are needed to help spread the Bees and Bee Keeping message at WLBK's stand at the Leamington Peace Festival, held in Pump Room Gardens, just off the Parade, Leamington, CV32 4AA. On Saturday and Sunday 14th & 15th June 2014. 11am – 6pm

The Festival is very much a family orientated event but also 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. This Festival provides a mix of family friendly activities, including workshops, talks, free music and other entertainment, vegetarian food stalls and environmentally conscious stands.

To register your offer to help please click on the following link;

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1q86hC4tHm-2-b5nJa0wUOazQBpIWPU3J2bLoylR7Tgw/viewform>

This link can also be found on our website;

www.warleambees.com

Just a reminder

If you're a novice Beekeeper and have burning questions but you don't know who to ask (and you don't want to bother your mentor again) then remember, Warwick & Leamington Novices' Forum.

https://groups.google.com/forum/#forum/wlb_novices

A perfect place to get your questions answered by experienced beekeepers. Any problems just email me directly and I will send you an invitation to join the group once I have verified your membership.

ticklemonster80@outlook.com Many thanks

Rich Carribine

The tale of a psychedelic green queen

The queen's tale

My landlady is a twit – she calls herself a beekeeper. In the course of just 24 hours, I have been covered in green paint, had to flee from one nuc to another, I've been moved with this bunch of workers around the garden, been thrown out again, and I've escaped back to what I think is my original home. Next time she comes poking her nose into my colony, I'm going to hide in a very dark corner where she will not see my lovely psychedelic, green designer stripe. I do hope she doesn't notice all the eggs I've laid in the meantime!

The beek's tale

The queen's right – May 22nd was not my finest! I had done an artificial swarm on April 16th creating two four-frame nucs, placing them adjacent to the original hive. One nuc appeared unsuccessful, although crammed full of stores. The other nuc had lots of eggs, and there she was, a lovely dark new queen....time to get out the marking pen.

Using my new all-plastic push-on cage, I dotted gently through a hole, but the holes were too narrow to let the felt nib reach the queen. Without thinking, I must have pressed lightly – and promptly drowned my beautiful queen in a big blob of green ink. Hastily removing the cage, I tried to catch and clean off the wet paint. She dodged swiftly into the nuc box.....I was dismayed – what would they do to her in there?

Later that day, I used the food frames from the adjacent failed nuc to reinforce a different colony – shaking off the bees on the frames into the nuc, and moving it, full of bees, to another site in the garden, hoping they would fly back and be accepted into other hives.

Next morning they were still there....Had I been wrong? Had there been a queen there all the time – a slow developer? I shook a few bees off the inside roof to see if they went back to their original site. A couple of minutes later, noting a heap of bees on the ground, I moved them gently. Away flew my psychedelic green queen...she was alive...but gone.


The other bees flew back into the nuc – but still no sign of her. Despondently walking away, a sudden thought struck me, and I went back to her original nuc. At the entrance was an enthusiastic circle of bees fanning furiously. Next week I'll take a peep – very, very carefully.

50 Queens come to live in Kent

After a steady decline in the 1980's the short haired bumblebee (*Bombus subterraneus*) soon became extinct in Britain. Last week new queens arrived from Sweden to boost the struggling population of these bumbles. The first queens arrived in 2012 but did poorly after the wet summer and while 50 more came last year they have not been seen this year. Their home in RSPB's nature reserve at Dungeness has 7 species of rare bumble bees and glorious meadows of wild flowers. Hopefully, the latest queens will thrive in this rich environment and proliferate. The devastation of wildflower meadows after WW11 is still impacting our wildflower and insect life but fortunately Sweden is a great place for many types of bumbles to survive. Fewer people live there and farming practices are more bee friendly.

Co-op Stock

The club is really pleased to stock the following commodities for members to purchase at extraordinarily favourable prices:

 Wax - Glass Jars - Apiguard - Fabispray - Ambrosia - Honey Buckets
 Nitrile Gloves - Fondant

To purchase these goods, members need to go to the WLBK website and click on the link marked Co-op Purchasing. Select the goods you want to buy and fill in the appropriate order form. Instructions on how to obtain your goods will appear when you submit the form.

Please pay for your goods (preferably by BACS) before you collect them and please follow the collection instructions to the letter!

Please don't ask for special treatment – our wonderful stockholders are doing a sterling job on your behalf and we don't want to make their jobs more burdensome than we can help. And please don't ask for goods without filling a form in – we need to keep track of goods and the order form is an integral part of our record keeping!!

Going to the Heather

For some years' members have had the opportunity to take their bees to the heather moors of the Derbyshire Peak District. This pilgrimage usually takes place during the first week of August with them brought back about a month later.

A great deal has been written about preparing bees for the heather but essentially you need to consider the strength of your colony; it must have bees over every frame, and I do mean a good covering of bees over each one, be queen right of course, and have at least two full brood frames of stores and I suggest feeding them. A high proportion of young bees are ideal.

You need just one super, ideally drawn comb, but foundation will do. Thin unwired foundation is best as it allows you to make cut comb. The usual way hobby beekeepers extract heather is by cold pressing so thin unwired foundation is also more economical and we are very fortunate in having a heather press in our extraction room. In fairness to other beekeepers you need to be satisfied your bees are disease free and understand they will be placed on the moor amongst bees from other places with the risks associated in doing this.

The farm we go to is about 1000ft up so the lighter coloured Italian bees and variations of them may not be suitable because when we are enjoying refreshing warm light rain at home up on the moor it is cold horizontal stair rods.

Your hive will need to have a travelling screen and be secured with two proper hive straps or ratchet straps. The floor, particularly the Thornes budget varroa floor, needs to be checked for leaks (of bees) with the entrance blocked with a strip of foam; not tape or wood etc.

In the past we have taken members bees for them. This is no longer practical but as in the past members are able to take their own hives.

The site is secure with reasonable access along a track to a field at the edge of the moor. However the last part of the track is steep and rough leading to the field where we keep the bees which can sometimes be rather soft.

Taking this into account the arrangements will be as follows.

- Inform Mike Townsend michaelatownsend@hotmail.com that you want to take bees.
- He will liaise with heather goers to see if vehicle sharing is practical.
- You will be informed of when Mike and Roger will going so that they can assist in getting your hives across the field to the apiary.
- We are hoping to leave a barrow on site to make it easier for members who do not have four wheel drive/high ground clearance vehicles to carry their hives the short distance where ground conditions may be difficult.
- You will be given contact details and map. The 'rent' paid directly to the farmer is one 1lb jar of honey per hive taken.

I hope I have not been discouraging and more of you will want to try heather going; at the very least you will be able to use the trip as an opportunity to explore this part of the Peak District which includes Chatsworth House just a few miles down the road.

Mike Townsend

Hints and Tips

Don't forget to take extra care when visiting a shared apiary. You may know your bees really well and consider them well behaved but other hives may contain more aggressive bees which may delight in reminding you of their species potential!

If you wear contact lenses it is a good idea to carry a pair of glasses with you. Should you get stung around the eye area swelling can occur pretty rapidly. This may result in the difficult decision to either take your lenses out promptly and not see so well if driving home or leave them in and perhaps struggle to remove them later at home when the swelling maybe even worse.

Honey for Hangovers

Honey contains 40% of fructose, which is known to speed up oxidation of alcohol by the liver. Honey also contains the enzyme catalase which further aids the removal of alcohol. Some people recommend eating honey before drinking alcohol as a preventative measure against a hangover. Drinks that are high in congeners- substances that give the drink its distinctive aroma and flavour- cause worse hangovers. Fructose and vitamin C help eliminate congeners from the body. Well that's the theory, and the practical is.....To cure or prevent a hangover take 2 tablespoons of honey with as much lemon juice as you like. Let me know how you get on! 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

Hive barrow

Beekeeping involves a lot of lifting and carrying. In a good season this hopefully includes removing supers full of honey for extraction, each weighing perhaps 35 lb or more. Carrying these any distance is hard work, and carrying them over rough ground in a full bee suit on a hot day is crippling. Carrying a full hive, alone, any distance is also a thorough test of back, shoulder and arm strength. To make these tasks easier you could:

- avoid apiaries you can't get near to in a car
- buy a Landrover
- recruit a strong friend to help

All highly commendable, but not necessarily achievable. An alternative is to build a **hive barrow**.

Beg, borrow or steal a wheelbarrow (or even buy one, in which case get one with a galvanised frame). The condition of the tray is immaterial, but the frame should be sound. For rough or muddy ground a wheelbarrow with a large pneumatic tyre is preferable – a wheelchair might work in beautifully groomed and manicured apiaries, but a hive barrow can cope with very rough terrain ;-). Finally, if you have a choice, get one in which the attachment points of the tray are horizontal when the barrow is standing (why will become obvious later). I bought a galvanised one with a plastic tray from B&Q for about £40.



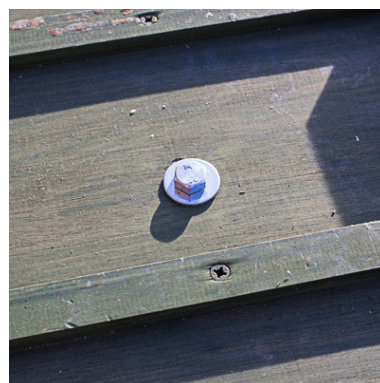
The precise construction details are dependent upon the wheelbarrow frame you've acquired. I built the platform from a single piece of 18mm thick exterior plywood, 52cm x 52cm. I braced this underneath using two pieces of 46mm x 21mm softwood. You should only fit a 'lip' at the front - to stop boxes sliding forward when it's in use - omit them from the sides and the back as this makes lifting boxes on and off easier and allows you to transport items wider than the platform (such as paving slabs). Finally, I

fitted four pieces of 9mm stripwood on the top - this again makes lifting boxes easier and means you don't have to recess the heads of the bolts holding the platform to the frame. Over time I expect these to get damaged but they can easily be replaced if necessary.

I bolted the platform to the frame using M8 bolts, with large washers to spread the load and standard **and** nylon lock nuts so they don't shake loose over time. I then gave it several coats of preservative and, before use, took the axle apart, greased it well and reassembled it.



You **will** need to use ratchet straps to stop hives or stacked supers from shifting during transport. Use two, front to back and side to side, and strap them down tight. Believe me, over rough ground, one is not sufficient! Finally, for those "*more than three feet but less than three miles*" moves (such as across the garden) you can use a hivebarrow with a horizontal platform as a temporary stand, simply moving the colony a few feet every few



days.

Oh yes ... I've named my hivebarrow Buster after the Viz cartoon character, Buster Gonad. If you know this individual, you'll know why. If you don't know him, I suggest you don't look it up on the internet.

Next month ... a honey bucket tipper to make bottling much easier.

Dr. Bodgit

Taster Day for those considering taking up beekeeping as a hobby.

Thursday July 10th (10:00 - 16:00hrs) Charlecote Park, nr Wellesbourne. Programme includes opportunity to look inside a working hive, understand what skills and equipment are needed plus a tour of the park to see the local plants the bees forage on. Cost £18. Contact David Blower or Bernard Brown for more information.

Coming Up

JUNE

7	Kenilworth Agricultural show		
12-15	Gardeners World Live	NEC	Clive Joyce
14-15	Leamington Peace Festival	Pump Rm Gardens	Richard Carrabine
21	Honey Processing talk + cream tea	BBKA	Mike Townsend, Clive Joyce

JULY

5	Bee Safari 1		Gill Grimshaw
10	Taster Day	Charlecote Park	David Blower
26	Bee Safari 2		Gill Grimshaw

For Sale / Wanted

6 pairs of unused 11 slot, galvanised metal, castellated spacers for supers. £2.30/pr from supplier, a snip at **£1.50/pr**

Contact Bernard Brown, 01926843416.

Table Top Extractor very good condition hardly used £200.00. - Thornes price new £224.00.

Uncapping knife brand new £12.00. - Thornes price £15.00.

Uncapping knife electric new £80.00. - Thornes price £90.00

40k polythene settling tank with valve new £20.00. - Thornes price £27.00

40lb bucket £4.00

15lb bucket £2.00 – Thornes price £3.24

Half gall contact feeder £3.00. – Thornes price £4.90

Jar feeder £2.00 – Thornes price £2.20

Uncapping fork £4.00. – Thornes price £6.00

Porter bee escape £0.50 – Thornes price £1.00

Stainless steel honey strainer £20.00. – Thornes price £24.00

Frame spacers £1.00 for 10

Roger Wilkes 01926 852076 – 01785535488 roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk

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 June 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.com