



## Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

### Branch Web Site

Have you visited the Branch Web Site yet ? All the information about the Branch is on it we now have a Members Area to access this the password currently is: mandible.

You will need this for access to all Coop purchases

### BRANCH BBQ

**SATURDAY 27<sup>th</sup> JUNE**

At BBKA 5 p.m. onwards

**We would welcome you all together with your family.**

**Come along and chat and get to know each other**

You just need to bring whatever meat/fish you want to eat the rest i.e. Salads, (hopefully a variety of) Baked Potatoes, Bread will be provided on the day.

**We would love to see as many of you as possible**

### Kings Hill Nursery

Gill and I have moved our hives to Kings Hill Nursery (Garden Centre for the mentally handicapped) in Coventry, and we helped out on Saturday 23rd May with the 'open day' – hence the picture taken by Bernard Brown. We borrowed from the branch the net tent for Bee displays and I did my 1st demonstration, fortunately all went well. Thanks to Clive Joyce in advising us how to get rid of the flying bees in readiness for the demo.

It is one of those times, when the more you put into something, the more you get out of it – although hard work, it was well worth the effort, not to say the sales gained via our sales table.

I would advise anyone who has not done a display, to join in with the branch and have a go. Over the summer months there will be plenty of opportunity to do this.

Mary & Gill



### Dalehouse Lane Training Apiary

Well it has been quite a year so far! Between a nominal group of up to 30 plus 8 instructors, we are managing 9 colonies and a nuc at DHL over Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Despite the weather we have managed to meet every week, with learning activities taking place in the new cabin on evenings unsuitable for opening hives. We are very much learning from what needs to be done each week and slotting in formal training sessions as time permits ie the focus is on practical aspects of beekeeping to compliment the theory covered by the introduction to beekeeping course held earlier.

The evening groups are working together in terms of sharing the available equipment, but separately in regard to the order in which we are covering our "syllabus"

Key areas we have focussed on are ensuring all attendees become confident at opening, examining and closing hives and recognising all that they see in the process, changing combs as necessary by the various means, ensuring our colonies are healthy and controlling swarming.

We have emphasised that planning ahead is key to successful beekeeping. The general turn of events is largely predictable so anticipating the next steps and being equipped for them is really not too hard.

Our priority areas at the present time are checking for swarming intentions, looking at our forthcoming equipment needs and deciding whether to allow any early honey to set in the comb and face the consequences or extract as we go along.

Our trainees are increasingly "owning" their hives and the instructing team are grateful to those taking equipment away for cleaning or repair and for making up frames ie just like we all have to do for our own apiaries.

After a rather rushed start, but with Roger Wilkes kindly mowing the apiary for us, with Mick Smith's support as DHL site manager and our group of interested and enthusiastic "trainees", I think we are set fair for a good season.

Tim Foden

## **Help!..... We Need Some Bodies for the Kenilworth Show**

We are particularly excited to be invited back to the Kenilworth & District Agricultural Society Show being held on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June at Stareton, in a field immediately opposite the entrance to Stoneleigh Park . In terms of foot fall, this is a premier event in our programme and provides a great opportunity to both meet our charitable obligations and have fun demonstrating our craft and extolling the joys of beekeeping to the wider public. We do, however, still need some more volunteers to man the stand and make this happen.

The stewarding day is divided nominally into three shifts each lasting roughly 2½ hours ( 9.00 a.m.- 12.00 p.m., 12.00 p.m. – 2.30p.m. and 2.30 p.m. – 5.00 p.m.) but help would also be appreciated on the afternoon before ( Friday 5<sup>th</sup>) to set things up.

For those new members, or those who have yet to have helped at our displays, volunteering involves sharing our knowledge and enthusiasm with the public, making honey sales, demonstrating various aspects of our craft and pieces of beekeeping equipment and answering queries - all well within the capabilities of anyone who has been on the introductory course.

This year, we are planning to offer candle rolling, skep making and microscopy opportunities to the public as well as holding a series of beekeeping demonstrations with a live hive. All this is in addition to the observation hive, and sales of honey and hive products, information boards etc.

The gates open 9.30. to 5.00 p.m.. Volunteering for a shift entitles you to free admission and will leave time to sample the wider delights of this show so why not bring family with you and join in the fun at the same time as supporting your branch?.

Should this appeal to you and you're free, please register your availability by clicking on the following link which is also posted on our website:-

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1gvccCKTNzjhgf2lv4miWJDovokAxFjaMjMguYPiO-vQ/viewform>

or by contacting Mick Smith at [michael.smith670@ntlworld.com](mailto:michael.smith670@ntlworld.com) or 01926 851272, or Bernard Brown, at [bernardnbrown@aol.com](mailto:bernardnbrown@aol.com) or telephoning 01926 843416

## **Stratford College Trainee Chefs**

June sees the start of an educational project with Stratford College trainee chefs as part of their catering course. The students will explore bee husbandry, the art of keeping bees and the different honey tastes. Then they will design and produce dishes using honey with the 2 best dishes being demonstrated to beekeepers and local hoteliers.

Apart from providing the students with an insight into beekeeping and honey the aim is to encourage local chefs to use local honey in their kitchens.

The students work in hotels and restaurants across Warwickshire

The demonstration will take place on Tuesday 16th June at 10.00am at Stratford College.

To book your place contact Paul Kerr at [kerrbees@gmail.com](mailto:kerrbees@gmail.com).

## **Bee Safari – 11<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

There will be only one bee safaris this year. For those who are new to WLBK Safaris we visit members' apiaries and are guided through hive inspections by a skilled and knowledgeable beekeeper. There is something to learn for everyone and we are delighted that Clive Joyce is leading the safari this year.

We will be visiting two sites. The first site is at Kings Hill Nursery, near our own Club Apiary at Dalehouse Lane. This is a commercial garden centre and there will be an opportunity to pop in for a look at the plants while we have (bring your own) lunch at the lake side -hot drinks will be provided. After lunch we will be moving onto Bernard Brown's bees in Langley.

The safari is restricted to 14 people so all can see what is happening and booking will be on a first come-first served basis. If for any reason you subsequently have to cancel we often have a waiting list for this event so would be grateful if you could let me know. Detailed joining instructions and maps will be circulated to participants nearer the date.

Gill Grimshaw

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



## Honey Honey Honey

If you would like to have the opportunity to have your honey on the sales table at The Kenilworth Show Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> June please contact Roger.

The honey will be sold at the following prices:- 1lb natural and creamed and 12oz flavoured £4.50, ½lb natural and creamed £3.00 ½ flavoured £3.50, Cut Comb £4.50. You will receive 100% of the take no commission will be taken.

Roger 01926 852076 [roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk](mailto:roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk)

## Dalehouse Lane Update

“Yet again the achievement exceeded expectations” said Mick Smith, “thanks to the sweat and skill of seven members who responded to the call for a working party at the Dalehouse Lane Apiary Last Saturday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>. Within the space of a couple of hours during the morning, a pre-loved metal gatepost replaced the “tired”, inherited wooden one on the main entrance, a particularly root strewn area at the back of the cabin was excavated and paving slabs laid to provide a hardstanding for our generator, a donated trailer was checked over and wants of repair identified and an annoying step between the tarmac drive and the paving leading up to the cabin eliminated.”

Meanwhile work progresses on the composting loo. The supports for the roof-mounted solar panel destined to supply power for the lighting and extract fan were installed and the building (shed), now secure will soon see the loo itself installed. There are no promises but we shouldn't have to contain ourselves too much longer.

Earlier in the week, the tree surgeons tackled the obviously dangerous and occasionally inconveniently located branches but their work had to be curtailed because squatters had moved in..... that is, into the nesting boxes installed by the Youth Justice Team. We are now the proud landlords of families of great tits, blue tits and, excitingly, of nuthatches. Judging from the frenetic activity of the parent birds, it won't be long before we hear the twitter of tiny beaks.

As elsewhere, swarming has started at DHL and members using the out apiary are reminded that in the interests of good neighbour relations, it is recommended that queens at DHL have their wings clipped and that swarm management inspections and control measures are implemented.

Returning to the efforts of the working party, Mick said “This was a really splendid effort. The apiary is really beginning to take shape. We now just need to complete the painting of the outside of the cabin, complete the paving round the composting loo, increase the car parking area, complete the French drain.....etc. so, keep an eye on your inbox for further working party opportunities.”

## Bees and Brownies

It was with some trepidation that Ann & I, ably assisted by Keith Henry, undertook to provide a session about bees for the 29 strong group of Long Itchington Brownies, with “Owls” of various kinds as crowd control. It is fantastic that our branch now has such a range of “public event” equipment, and has generated so many very creative ideas for presenting the subject of bees to differing audience groups.

We decided we would start by giving the youngsters pollination practice! We had a large flower in each of two buckets containing “nectar”. Two teams of brownies took it in turns to load a syringe from one bucket, race to the next and “pollinate” the flower, then load the nectar into a hive placed some distance away.

Next three groups were formed, which took it in turns to study the bees in an observation hive and taste honey assisted by Ann, see how a hive works as explained by Keith, and look at bits of bee and pollen through microscopes under my “attempted” supervision. While this was going on, the “owls” dressed in beesuits helped all the youngsters try on beesuits and had the photos taken wearing them

We rounded the session off with a short slideshow of what bees, bumblebees and wasps look like. We thought they could then explain this to their parents as from the swarm calls we receive, it is quite clear that most adults cannot make that distinction!

The thank you letter we later received described the youngsters as “positively buzzing” by the end of the session, so we were very pleased that they then returned to their parents!

Ann Foden, Keith Henry and Tim Foden

## Food Safety

During the 2015 BBKA Spring Convention at Harper Adams University I attended a day long course on the subject of Food Safety in Manufacturing. It is not mandatory for small scale beekeepers selling honey at the door or through local retailers to do this course though it, or something similar, is often required for those selling at Farmers Markets.

The course was attended by about 15 other beekeepers and was delivered, using material from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), by Professor Ralph Early who is Professor of Food Industry at Harper Adams. Ralph is a beekeeper and an experienced manager in food production, e.g. Dairy Crest and Cadbury's.

The principle behind the course was food safety: "the protection of the consumer's health and well being by safeguarding food from anything that can cause harm". The content covered was food in general and not specifically honey – in fact honey is regarded as a generally safe product\* – but reinforced the point that in selling honey we, the beekeepers, are responsible for what we sell and that our customers expect it to be safe to eat.

During the day we covered the topics of the law, hazards and risks, temperature controls, food handling and cleanliness, personal hygiene and clothing, contaminants, preserving food, date marking and pests. Ralph's slides were very clear and his delivery full of anecdotes from his experience – he has been known to carry a digital thermometer whilst shopping to check the temperature in the supermarket chill cabinets!

It was interesting to note that all food businesses need systems and procedures to protect the customer and should problems arise a defence is that all reasonable precaution have been taken i.e. that there is a system and that it is used.

We were all supplied with a very readable 100 page book from CIEH to support the course and at the end of the day we all sat a level 2, 30 question, multiple choice exam. I received my pass certificate a few days ago.

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and felt I learned a lot about food handling in general, some of which will now be employed in our honey handling processes at home.

\* Honey is generally regarded as a safe product because of its low water content and high sugar content. For small scale beekeepers honey is legally a primary product, i.e. the bees have produced it not you! But as soon as it is manufactured i.e. used in another product such as a cake or sweet it is a different case completely.

The top tip from the course was that the highest risk for us was probably contaminants in the jars, possibly even glass, so to reduce that risk we should wash the jars upside down in the dishwasher before filling.

Stephen Bates

## Wanted For Sale

Burco Boiler – large capacity and Pac tested, £20

Large Rapid Feeder – Unused Maisemore Jumbo Rapid Feeder (green) same size as BN super and fits directly on top BB, £20.00

Contact Gill Grimshaw on 01926 497440 or [gill@gillgrimshaw.com](mailto:gill@gillgrimshaw.com)

Polystyrene National hive with this season's cedar frames + wax, marked queen + almost full colony. Quiet, non-aggressive bees. £150

Bee suit -olive, medium size, fencing veil, light weight to keep you cooler in warmer weather. Almost new, worn only once. £25.00

Chris 01926512653 [ckehrer@gmail.com](mailto:ckehrer@gmail.com)

One flat pack hive purchased in Thorne's winter sale but surplus to requirements! Consisting of Open mesh floor, brood box, super, roof. Needs assembly. No frames, stand, queen excluder or entrance block. £75

Barney 07984 444993 [barney@berneyward.co.uk](mailto:barney@berneyward.co.uk)

## BEEWARE !!!

.....from whom you buy your queens.

We have long been advocating caution in buying queens without checking out the credentials of the supplier and the photo below justifies this advice.



This photo was allegedly used by a seller of queens to promote his business.

What a pity he couldn't tell a varroa mite from a paint blob!! I understand sales have dipped somewhat.

## Hints and Tips

If bees need to be moved, ideally they should be moved in the evening. The general rule of thumb is that they should be moved less than 3 feet or more than 3 miles. Ensure your bees are secure but have sufficient ventilation during transport.

When doing your disease check you may like to consider the following number crunching stats! Eggs hatch after 3 days, worker larvae cells are sealed 6 days later. So there should be twice as many larvae as eggs if the queen is laying consistently. It takes 12 days for a worker to emerge as an adult. So there should be twice as many sealed cells as those containing larvae..... I think that means that there should be four times as many sealed cells as eggs!

On average rape honey will granulate within 10 days of being sealed in the comb. So watch out for when the yellow flowers fade and harvest it as soon as possible.

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

## Hornets



Thought these may be of interest to some members, on visiting my apiaries over the last week I found the one on the left proudly sitting on the top of a hive, the other I found nearby to my hives at a different location.

Roger

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 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

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