



---

## Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

---

### A Day Out

A Branch social trip out is happening.....this will be on Sunday 12th JUNE from 11.30 a.m. at The National Herb Farm in Warmington just outside of Gaydon.

This is just a turn up if you want to event, there is a lovely cafe/restaurant for Lunch or coffee/tea.

You will be surprised at how many different Herbs are 'for sale' and I never leave empty handed..!!

I look forward to seeing as many of you as we can.

Mary x

### Help

Friday 10th June – help required to clean our extraction unit at Southwells Farm, in Kenilworth. 11.30 onwards, hopefully should only take and 1 1/2 with many hands..... Please come armed with mops, buckets, brooms, rubber gloves and anything else you may think of.

There will be cake, biscuits etc.

Please reply direct to [mary.pemberton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mary.pemberton@hotmail.co.uk)

Thank you Mary x

### Radford Semele Community Apiary

Six years after being granted the use of the above site, it has now been populated with member's and branch hives. Previous attempts to stimulate interest in the site have not borne fruit but, this year two of our new beekeepers, along with two of the branch's loan hives, have changed all that with almost all of the six permitted hive pitches spoken for.,

This is one of several sites made available to us for the cost of from a jar of honey per hive by Warwick District Council.

We are always on the lookout for potential out-apiary and community apiary sites so, if you become aware of any, please get in touch with the branch. Mike Townsend is the man to contact on [michaelatownsend@hotmail.com](mailto:michaelatownsend@hotmail.com).

### Call for Volunteers for our Public Displays

Our public display programme is now in full swing and we are still looking for volunteers to man our stands at the following events :-

4<sup>TH</sup> June – Kenilworth Show

11<sup>th</sup> June – Budbrooke School Fete

12<sup>th</sup> June - Hatton Country Fair and Dog Show

18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> June – Leamington Peace Festival

For the Kenilworth Show we still need help to man the stand but particularly could do with a hand on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> with the set up. We start loading at 2.00p.m. and should be done erecting the marquees by about 4.00p.m. So, if you could swing by, please let me know either by completing the form at the following link (preferred)

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1S4Mbsq-dQwIkG-ADbaFkCOKiRolhWWAzt669DsXF-C8/viewform> or by e-mailing me at [bernardnbrown@aol.com](mailto:bernardnbrown@aol.com) or telephoning 01926843416

Links to volunteer for the other events listed can be found on the Website or feel free to contact me as above..

## **Fated .....yet still Fêted**

Our first public display of 2016 was not without incident. This was the first time we had been invited to the village fete at Mollington - way out Oxfordshire way - and all seemed to be going well. The kit was collected and loaded and we found the venue with great ease. The weather had turned warm and dry, as the organisers had ordered, and we were met and shown our pitch which was right by the entrance with plenty of space as the chicken society, who were destined for the adjoining plot, had chickened out.

It was whilst erecting the marquee that one of the metal spars supporting the roof decided to demonstrate its limit of bending stress and snapped leaving us with a decidedly drunken looking structure. Just then the cavalry arrived in the form of Chris Fisher and Robert Park, - two beekeepers who had recently moved into the area and who wisely (and thankfully) had not only joined the branch but had volunteered to man the stand. Quickly sizing up the situation, within five minutes and with the judicious application of gorilla tape (the stronger version of duct tape) Chris and Robert had the spar repaired and the structural integrity of the marquee restored.

So it was on with dressing the stand. Now, as many of you will know, the most popular part of our displays is the observation hive with its challenge to the public to "spot the Queen". We had even ordered 1000 sticky "I've seen the Queen" labels with which to reward the eagle-eyed visitors who succeeded in this. After we finished setting up the banners and the honey sales and the rest of the gear we removed the shutters of the observation hive. True to form we soon had a cluster of queen spotters around the stand but could they spot her? "Oh she can be very elusive we said" and after the crowd thinned as they moved disappointedly to the next stand, we three beekeepers with the combined experience of 15 years beekeeping set to find her majesty.

The observation frame was noticeably packed with bees on both sides with bees on the glass as well as the comb making it difficult to see the queen and after an hour of trying to catch sight of her we began to suspect all was not well. It took us that long to become suspicious because I had caught a glimpse of the Queen the night before plumb in the middle of the frame, admittedly only fleetingly as she was soon submerged in bees again, so I was adamant she was there.... somewhere. Eventually our excuses to the disappointed public for her non-appearance, such as "she shuns the light" and "she's very shy" and even "Well if you had been laying 2000 eggs a day wouldn't you want a day off?" began to wear a little thin.

So what to do? Well, we decided we needed to thin the bees out so we could get a closer look. Fortunately we had a smoker as part of the display and after a quick rummage in one of the rubbish sacks found some cardboard. A trip to the barbecue for a light soon saw us smoking the observation hive. This had the expected effect of clearing the bees down into the nuc box but the unexpected one of discovering that the Queen was underneath the bottom of the frame tight on one of the slots of the Queen excluder.....and she wasn't moving!!!! Not even a twitch!!

"Ooops! It looks as though this queen is no more" we mused amidst echoes of the "dead parrot" sketch. And, indeed, she was an ex-Queen. We rationalised that what I had seen the night before was the funeral procession with the undertaker bees moving the dead queen out of the hive but, of course, they were thwarted by the queen excluder.

We had no alternative but to come clean and tell the public the sad news but fortunately the displaced bees returned to the observation frame and submerged the ex-queen again which was just as well as they continued to try to force her through the queen excluder. We were able to resort to the virtual nuc to show the public what they should have been seeing and were able to assure them that the colony would make a new queen very soon but it wasn't quite the same as the real thing.

Now what are the chances of a queen dying on her big day and in public? Pretty slim I reckon but despite these twists of fate we actually had a very good day with plenty of interest, a very good prospect of a new member and the offer of an out -apiary site. In her letter of appreciation of our efforts, the organiser wrote "..... You helped to create the whole village/countryside effect I was seeking, looking to a simpler and gentler time". Doesn't that sound just like beekeeping? I wish!

Bernard Brown

## **Wanted: Someone to Paint our Wagon**

You won't need to be a Michaelangelo nor a Picasso but the branch has been given a fully functioning small metal trailer which is in need of a coat of paint. It has been wire brushed clean and is awaiting the application of a coat of hammerite. The trailer is approximately 3ft x 4ft – ideal for moving hives and once painted will be available for use by members for bee related activities.

We have the paint; we have the brushes; all we need is a warm still day and couple of bods with say 2 hours spare to add their expertise to restore this pre-loved trailer to a standard that will pass muster . If you fancy helping us out with this please contact Mick Smith on [michael.smith670@ntlworld.com](mailto:michael.smith670@ntlworld.com) .

## **Hive Products Supplies**

If members want to sell their honey and other hive products on our stand at the various shows we shall be supporting over the summer, please contact Gill Grimshaw ([gill@gillgrimshaw.co.uk](mailto:gill@gillgrimshaw.co.uk)) for wax products or Bernard Brown ([bernardnbrown@aol.com](mailto:bernardnbrown@aol.com)) for honey at least 7 days before the event.

The opportunities to sell products at events in June are as follows:-

4<sup>TH</sup> June – Kenilworth Show

5<sup>th</sup> June – Lighthorne Church Fete

11<sup>th</sup> June – Budbroke School Fete

12<sup>th</sup> June - Hatton Country Fair and Dog Show

18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> June – Leamington Peace Festival

These and the dates of other events over the summer can be viewed in the branch diary section of our website for [www.warleambees.org.uk](http://www.warleambees.org.uk)

We will be selling clear and set honey at £5, £4, and £3 for 1lb, 12oz and 8oz jars respectively with a 50p premium added for speciality honey - heather, borage, lavender and ivy etc... Please note a 10% levy for branch funds will be deducted from sales which will be waived for those suppliers who man our stand at the event.

## **For Sale**

For Sale – unused polystyrene hive, includes one super and pack of unmade frames.  
£75. Collect from Kenilworth.  
Gill Donaldson 07786023623

2 Polystyrene National bee hives £45 each, queen excluders, varroa boards etc.,  
4 poly supers £8 each, 2 ekes £2 each, honey bucket, nylon double strainer sieves, rhombus bee escape, contact feeder, mouse guards, other bits & pieces 01926 512653  
Chris Kehrer  
Kenilworth, Warwickshire  
CV8 1ES

01926.512653

## A hive for the future

Some of you may have been to the Dale House Lane apiary recently and wondered what a strange looking hive is doing in the training area. A large, bulky looking thing with wires coming out the side and attached to a box on a post; well this is the ARNIA Remote Monitoring system which was installed a few weeks ago. Sponsorship was from the company "Eat Natural" which makes the delicious fruit, nut and honey bars.

Hive monitors enable the beekeeper to observe the status of a hive from any internet enabled device (e.g. Smartphone, tablet, PC) wherever and whenever you wish. Observations are taken of brood temperature, humidity, hive weight and apiary weather conditions. Acoustics monitoring interprets the sound of a bee colony, thereby assessing the colony strength, health and behaviour.

This is a new venture for the DHL apiary, but Clive Joyce has had five hives remotely monitored at the BBKA site since last year. This is obviously a very exciting advance in technology but is unlikely to ever take the place – or the thrill – of going in to do hands on inspections or simply to watch the bees going about their daily tasks.

Do visit the website for more information at [www.arnia.co.uk](http://www.arnia.co.uk)

Maggie Curley



## Hints and Tips

Did you know that bees exhibit 'flower consistency'? Well this means that they don't fly randomly from one flower to another but collect mainly from the same type of flower or plant at a given time. This has consequences for planting. If you plant in 'drifts' of one particular plant rather than scattering them around the garden, this will help the bees to find the flowers and have a good forage.

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 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.org.uk](http://www.warleambees.org.uk)