



Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

Evolution of Warwick & Leamington Beekeeper's Management Structure

The past few years have seen substantial change occurring within our branch. In 2000 our number of full and partner members was 26. By 2010 the number had increased to 133 and it now stands at 200 including juniors. Furthermore, with the recent additions of our cooperative purchasing scheme and our Dalehouse Lane apiary, our breadth of service has increased. We have also increased our involvement with public events. It must be remembered that the delivery of our services and our administration such as accounting and the maintenance of our membership records is all carried out by an increasing band of very willing volunteers, whom it is very important that we appreciate and they must not become overloaded.

For this reason, your executive committee has carried out a review of its structure, concluding that we need to delegate more authority and responsibility, share our work-loads as much as is practicably possible, ensure that we are resilient enough to deal with the absence of key personnel and achieve orderly change in our volunteers when this becomes necessary.

To this end we are pleased to confirm existing key responsibilities as follows:

Branch Treasurer	Val Dillon
Co-op purchasing scheme	Clive Joyce
Beetalk editor	Chris Kehrer
Training co-ordination	Gill Grimshaw
Secretarial & Admin	Tim Foden
Honey extraction unit	Clive Joyce

In addition to the above, we are pleased to announce that Mary Pemberton, our present Chair will oversee our apiaries (DHL training apiary, DHL community apiary, Warwick Uni community apiary, Radford Semele apiary (currently unused) and Bubbenhall apiary (currently in reserve)). Mary will also co-ordinate social events.

Bernard Brown will co-ordinate our presence at public events and Gordon Robbins will organize the members' meetings that take place in the Winter months.

As a reflection of our membership growth and as evidenced by the popularity of our current community apiaries, we realize there may be more we can do to help members locate suitable out-apiaries. Fortunately this demand is mirrored by an increasing interest in land-owners being prepared to accommodate honey bees and Mike Townsend has agreed to act as a focus in bringing the parties together.

Finally, we have reviewed how our co-operative purchasing scheme is working which has resulted in some changes outlined elsewhere in this edition of Beetalk.

The above changes will result in the further building of our working teams. The first such example is the recruitment of Jane Brown into our accounts team in support of Val Dillon. The Executive committee have authorized Jane to operate our bank account and in view of the importance of our financial planning and control, we welcome Jane onto our Executive Committee as a co-opted member.

Tim Foden

Beekeeping Taster Day – Charlecote Park – 10th July 2014

There are only a couple of places left at this event aimed at helping people to decide whether they would like to take up beekeeping, yet also to provide a more general appreciation of bees and beekeeping. This day long event, covering where bees can be kept, the equipment, cost and time involved, the beekeeper's year, and how to become a beekeeper or help the bees in other ways, includes a tour of Charlecote Park identifying foraging opportunities under the expert guidance of their Area Ranger and, subject to the weather, an opportunity to handle bees under close supervision of a beekeeper in Charlecote's own apiary.

So if you know of anybody likely to be interested, they should book their place soon by following the link <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dHV2Q21YN3JXbFNfWGd1cldaSUxIUgc6MQ#gid=0> or by going to the right hand side of the home page on our website, www.warleambees.co.uk

The cost is £25 per person which includes entry to Charlecote Par

Finham Bee Event

On Wednesday 18th June 9 willing volunteers from the branch descended on Finham Primary School. Our mission was to engage and educate the children as to the importance of the honey bee, how they collect and use nectar, the equipment we use and finally how we extract the honey. Through careful planning we calculated that we could deliver our message to the whole of Key Stage 2, a mere 240 children!

We set up in the main hall which was divided into 2, with mirrored displays on either side. The displays consisted of three stations; station 1, there was a WBC hive and wild flower bucket loaded with nectar (coloured water). Station 2, showed all the artefacts we use to manage the bees, smoker, hive tool etc. Station 3, displayed pictures of the extraction process and a manual extractor for the children to have a go with.

So the scene was set; each class of approximately 30 children were divided into 3 groups so that there would be 10 children at each station at any given time. We had our own busy bee, Jane Brown (in costume) who did a sterling job of keeping time and rotating the children so they each had 10 minutes per station. This meant we could process 60 children, 2 classes at a time. We started at 11am and broke for lunch at 12: 15 having delivered our message to 4 classes, with a further 4 more classes after lunch.

This leads nicely to one of the highlights of the day, school dinners for all the helpers. On the way to lunch we spotted chickens and guinea pigs which are both looked after by the pupils during their lunch break. Not many schools can boast an Observation Hive in reception, chickens and guinea pigs! We queued with the children and had a wide choice of food to choose from, which turned out to be delicious. But the highlight was seeing Clive Joyce (6' 3) attempting to sit at the very small tables, he did eventually manage albeit side saddle.

After lunch we were all revved up for the final 4 classes, we finished the day at 3pm. We had a great sense of achievement afterwards, happy in the knowledge that the children were all very inquisitive and fully engaged with every station. The feedback from children and staff was incredible, it's safe to say that Finham was buzzing that day!

I would like to thank the volunteers for making it such a special day for the school, thank you all!

Rich Carribine

Bees take precedence over Royal Mail



Filmed on location in Devon by Kath Pasteur

Branch BBQ at BBKA 5 p.m. Saturday July 5th.

Bring your own meat to cook, and whatever you need to drink, salads, breads, potatoes etc. will be provided.

Look forward to seeing as many of you as possible, as it's a good chance to chat and get to know each other.

Mary Pemberton

Leamington Peace Festival

There wasn't much "Peace" for the WLBK team at our Leamington Peace Festival display the other weekend. The warm weather attracted thousands of visitors over the two days of the event and it seemed like nearly all of them visited our stand to be wowed by the observation hive, to roll candles, peer down microscopes, take away leaflets and buy honey.

We feared that we might be struggling for volunteers as this event clashed with the final days of the ever popular Gardeners' World Live exhibition just up the road at the National Exhibition Centre but a clutch of our new seasons' beekeepers responded to the call so we reckoned that we should just about be able to cope with the activities planned.

What we hadn't reckoned with was the popularity of the festival with the public. This was the first time for many years that we had attended this show and had little idea what to expect. The excellent position of our stand within the festival site, the predisposition of the visitors for environmental issues and the onset of the hay fever season with its demand for honey as an antidote all helped to raise our profile. At one stage the prospect of being swamped was very real.

That was when our junior members stepped up to the mark.

Holly Ward(12) , Freya Phillips(9), and Daisy Carribine (9) calmly took over honey sales whilst Katie Phillips (12) made a bee-line for the observation hive where she held sway explaining what was going on in the hive with a confidence which held the visitors and experienced beekeepers alike, equally agog. With equal confidence, when not on honey sales, Daisy took on the role of candle rolling demonstrator to great effect.

So what could have been a marathon effort turned out to be..... well, not quite a stroll in the park,.... but certainly a manageable, if busy, day. We sold over £600 of honey, rolled 69 candles and still had the energy to pack everything away in 20 minutes at the end of the event.

Many thanks to all our helpers – experienced, novice and juniors alike. I hope you all enjoyed yourselves because we have more displays coming up - the next being The Dasset Country Show at Avon Dasset on 16th August and The Hive of Activity Show in the Jephson Gardens, Leamington on the 17th August.

To participate at Avon Dasset click on

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1xd3mwjp_qLuEWKNeke_OFZO43nEI7cCTAfwMdcwZf1U/viewform

To volunteer for the Hive of Activity in the Jephson Gardens click on

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1DqGbit5T2TZwaadau5mWX-k1-4Ck7WDgclK7TUx6o1w/viewform> .

Bernard Brown

Branch Community Apiaries

One of our successes in making beekeeping practicable for those without a suitable place to keep their bees has been the establishment of Community apiaries. We currently have the use of a small nature reserve on the outskirts of Leamington, another within the grounds of Warwick University, and most recently as part of our new teaching apiary at Stoneleigh Road Kenilworth. Although the Leamington and University apiaries are currently under used we would nevertheless like to increase the availability of such places to members throughout our Branch's area and we would like your help in achieving this.

Whilst you have your own place to keep bees has anyone asked if you would like to keep them on land they own which you don't want to make use of but would be an ideal apiary for another member to use? Are you aware of an ideal site where we can approach the landowner?

Our intention is to offer these sites to members nearby with opportunities to share a place with an experienced beekeeper thus building on the mentoring approach we try to foster.

If you can help please email Mike Townsend michaelatownsend@hotmail.com.

As this develops you will have the opportunity to express an interest in an out apiary by completing a form on our website, which will enable us to match sites to members.

Mike Townsend

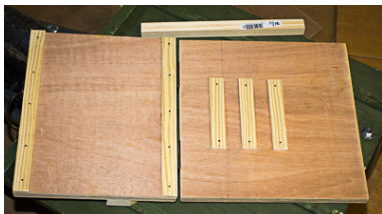
Honey Bucket Tipper

Dr. Bodgit

If you bottle honey from large buckets or tanks you usually have to tip the container to avoid the slightly scummy surface layer which can spoil the appearance of several jars if you're not careful. As the level drops you need to tip the bucket at an increasingly acute angle. Of course, you also need to tip the bucket to get the dregs out as well. This can all get a little precarious. There are a number of solutions available commercially. Thorne's sell a honey tipper which has a strong spring which is depressed by the weight of the full bucket.

As the level drops the spring extends, so tipping the bucket forwards.

Although clever, it's not an inexpensive solution. An alternative is the FillyBoy (www.fillyboy.de) which offers a simple manual solution but doesn't appear to have a UK distributor. The underlying principle of both approaches is the same - two pieces of wood, hinged along one side with the 'upper' piece fitted with some way of stopping the bucket sliding forward. This is easy to build at home.



The pictures are self-explanatory. I used offcuts of ply and softwood. The bucket 'stops' need to be suitably spaced for the bucket size you use. You also need to use a bit of trial and error to space the 'stops' on the baseboard to make sure the bucket is tipped at suitable angle. I placed the stop closest to the hinge so that the bucket was tipped at an angle of about 30°. Don't be tempted to try and tip it much more than this or it might not be stable if your buckets are tall. Although not shown in the pictures I've now added a simple handle to the 'back' edge of the upper board (see the FillyBoy images for inspiration) that makes moving the wedge and so increasing the angle an easy task. I've also given the tipper a couple of coats of varnish to make it 'wipe clean' ... not that any honey is ever spilt of course ;-)

Next month ... a steam wax extractor.



Skep Making Day

Saturday 27th September

Held at BBKA Centre, Stoneleigh Park

We are holding another skep-making day this year and are inviting you to join us.

The cost is £20 per head and this price is for the purchase of the tool and sufficient straw and binder to enable you to complete your skep.

The day will be from 10am until 4pm during which time you will hopefully be able to get well into making your skep, which you can then continue at home.

We have an informal lunch where everyone contributes and this will be arranged at a later date. Soft drinks will be provided.

If you are interested, please complete the Google form on the right hand side of our home page of our website www.warleambees.com and then make your payment as soon as possible.

Places are limited and there are always more people wanting to come along than there are places. So if you want to join us, please don't delay.

Val Dillon

Snippet

Congratulations to Matei Bolborea and Laure Vuillot on the safe arrival of Cezar. He arrived on 24th June 2014 at 21:19 weighing 3.4 Kg

Hints and Tips

*At this time of year you go to lift a heavy super and find that the top bars of the box below are being pulled up as well, often too late to prevent a thorough and unfortunate disturbance and unnecessary stirring up of the bees. If you do realise in time what is happening you can lever the box up half an inch or less with the hive tool, then take the weight on your fingers while you bend down to see which frames are stuck and use the hive tool to free them. At this point your back gives up in protest! With a wedge to hand you can stuff it into the gap to take the weight and leave room to drift some smoke in. Then you can change to a sensible position, kneeling maybe, and gently free the stuck frames without hassle to you or the bees. Of course, when you lift the box the wedge will fall into the grass and hide, so dip the blunt end into the brightest paint you have, or put some coloured tape on it. The wedge should be not much shorter than your hive tool and cut at a shallow angle.

Porter bee escapes get very gunged up and maybe last time they were used you were more focussed on the honey and overlooked their need for a good clean. So now is the time to get organised and treat them to a good soak in soda solution (200g/litre) followed by a gentle scrub with a nail brush and reset the 'doors' to a matchstick width.

If you are struggling to keep your smoker alight then try this recipe-

Before you put the marigolds on, tear up some egg box cardboard and light a strip and drop it into the smoker. Add a few more pieces so that you have a bit of a fire going on then add wood shavings(the sort they sell for hamsters etc)Top it all off with as much dry rotten wood as you can fit in. Give it a couple of puffs and I find you have to stopper it with grass as it is still going strong at the end of the inspection!

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

Coming up

5 July	Bee Safari 1	Dalehouse Lane Apiary	Gill Grimshaw
5 July	Branch Barbeque	BBKA Stoneleigh	
10 July	Taster Day	Charlecote Park	David Blower
26 July	Bee Safari 2		Gill Grimshaw
16 Aug	Avon Dassett Show		Tim Foden
17 Aug	The Hive of Activity Show	Jephson Gardens	Bernard Brown

The Bee Safari 2 is fully booked. Please let Gill Grimshaw know if you are unable to attend as there is a waiting list.

In the Branch Apiary

Having moved some of my hives into the apiary due to a bad start with the branch hives we have been able to open several hives at the Tuesday night sessions.

Topics covered in June under the how to banner are:-

Full hive inspection how it should be done - Shook Swarm - Uniting Colonies - Marking Queens and making up a nucleus from a full colony.

I have now moved my hives out as I have established some of the branch hives that were poor, we now have 6 working colonies in the apiary all be it the 2 have swarmed.

The swarming time should be coming to an end shortly which will help with the weekly inspections, but do not be complacent as they can still swarm later in the month.

Roger

Apiguard

Apiguard® is a natural treatment to control [varroa](#) mite populations in honeybee colonies. Tests show that Apiguard also helps to control [tracheal mites / Acarine](#) and [chalkbrood](#).

Seven reasons to use Apiguard:

- Natural product
- Very easy to apply will, be demonstrated in the branch apiary
- High efficiency against three types of hive pest: [varroa mites](#), [tracheal mites / Acarine](#) and [chalkbrood](#)
- Use against [varroa mites resistant to pyrethroids](#)
- No withdrawal time
- No risk to users

Ideal in Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programmes.



Apiguard will be available to pick up at the branch BBQ at Stoneleigh on 5 July. Please order and pay beforehand if possible.

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.

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

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