



Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

On with the Shows....

There wasn't much "Peace" for the WLBK team at Leamington Peace Festival display the other weekend.

The weather was kind and thousands of visitors came to the show 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 take away leaflets and to buy honey and wax products. .

The fact that we sold over £900 worth of members' honey and wax products, handed out over 200 "I've seen the Queen" badges to children, got through over 1000 honey tasting sticks, received 6 expressions of interest in beekeeping courses and Taster days, logged 3 offers of out-apiaries and fielded queries until we were hoarse, gives some idea of the popularity of the stand

All this was achieved from a stand much reduced in scale from previous years to match the stewarding support volunteered and that pressed into service from amongst non-beekeeping families and friends, so many thanks to all our helpers and we hope you will be out of recovery soon!

We have two more displays coming up - the next being **The Dassett Country Show** at Avon Dassett on **Saturday 6th August** and **The Hive of Activity Show** in the Jephson Gardens, Leamington on **Sunday 14th August**. Both deserve our full range of display activities so to volunteer to make this happen, please click on this link for The Dassett Country Show:-

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/13n56oditXynpcv943jrSfqwOKvVopLFEDBi9on0irT8/viewform>

and this one for the Hive of Activity:-

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1xd2dzKpduU91GK1ODDdVTroCOhWB5lbG4Vy7B6tmW-k/viewform>

Bernard Brown

Displays Co-ordinator

Beekeeping Taster Day – Charlecote Park – Thursday 14th July 2016

There are still some 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/forms/d/15tSbhZoBTh79SDUH8XvA6uZ8ERDsBarVYxEqr4ct_EM/viewform

or by going to the right hand side of the home page on our website, www.warleambees.co.uk

The cost is £40 per person which includes entry to Charlecote Park

If you would like a leaflet about this event to put up please contact Bernard Brown at bernardnbrown@aol.com 01926 843416

A place to keep bees

Three out apiary sites have been offered for a member to use.

One is at Norton Lindsey where a beekeeper who has given up his bees is happy for another person to use his site which is located in a small paddock. I have not surveyed this site but from memory when I helped this person get started it would be suitable for up to four hives.

The second place is off Rouncil Lane Kenilworth. It is a field site suitable for four hives and would need some fencing off using a few knock in stakes and sheep wire.

Another site, sadly abandoned without notice by a beekeeper some years ago, is available again. The landowner is known to me so I would not want her let down again. It is already fenced off and suitable for two or three hives and is located further out along Rouncil Lane.

If you are interested in any of these places please contact Mike Townsend, by email in the first instance, michaelatownsend@hotmail.com.

Mike Townsend

Honey from the Beehive to the Jar

2.30 pm to 4.30 pm Saturday 16 July 2016 at BBKA

At this event Clive Joyce and I will show you everything from taking the supers off the beehive to bottling and labelling your honey. It will as far as possible be based on practical demonstrations and showing you the equipment being used.

It is of course for all members to come along but those of you that did the Introduction to Beekeeping course are particularly invited to attend as this event is intended to cover dealing with your honey crop and forms this part of our Introductory course.

Included is:

- Methods of clearing honey from supers
- Extracting honey at home and the Branch extraction resources available
- Storing, straining, bottling and labelling honey
- Production of cut comb
- Dealing with crystallised honey
- The Branch extraction room equipment
- Making soft set honey by creaming

Kindly note this event is followed by the Branch BBQ event and details about this are in the following article. I do recommend coming along to the BBQ as beekeeping can be a rather a solitary occupation so this is an opportunity to meet a members with a wide range of experience at this popular and enjoyable occasion. It will also mean you have a little more time to view the equipment shown and ask more questions!

Mike Townsend

Branch BBQ 5.00pm to 9.00pm Saturday 16 July 2016 at BBKA

This year the BRANCH BBQ, will be held on Saturday 16th July, immediately after the Honey & Wax Processing workshop/talk given by Mike Townsend and others. This is BYO drink and meat/fish, - salads, bread, hot potatoes and desserts will be provided by the club. There is NO CHARGE to WLBK members.

If anyone could help out with Salads etc. please contact mary.pemberton@hotmail.co.uk Many thanks and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. It is always a good idea to bring a chair to sit on, as we cannot always rely on the BBKA tables/chairs.

Thank you
Mary x

Skep making opportunities

We have a large team of skep makers in the Branch so I am hoping some of you will be able to help demonstrate skep making on the BBKA stand at two forthcoming events.

The first is at the National Pet Show being held at Stoneleigh Park with skep makers wanted on Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 July. The BBKA generously give you and a partner a free ticket each for the whole day with the skep maker asked to help for the morning or afternoon only. I think there will be free on site parking but if not BBKA will reimburse your parking cost.

The second event is an opportunity to be involved in another special event; the first ever BBC TV Countryfile Live Show taking place at Blenheim Palace Oxfordshire. The ticketing and skep making arrangements will be the same with free tickets to reward you for your help. I am not sure yet what the car parking arrangements will be but I anticipate you being reimbursed by BBKA. Skep makers are wanted for Saturday 6 August and Sunday 7 August; again half a days helping is rewarded with two free tickets for the whole day.

I would encourage everyone that has attended our course to volunteer. We are not looking for expert skep makers; your involvement is as much about demonstrating (by making a skep) one of the many other new interesting and enjoyable activities that are available to everyone after taking up beekeeping.

If you can help please email michaelatownsend@hotmail.com saying which show (it can be both!) you would like to help at and indicate the day and morning or afternoon you would prefer.

Mike Townsend

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 or second week of August with them brought back about a month later.

It is quite any easy journey, up the M1 and through Chesterfield to the moorland at the back of Chatsworth House. 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 with near wall-to-wall brood is ideal. Rearranging frames with unsealed brood to the outside and sealed in the centre allows the queen to lay in the centre as workers emerge forcing honey to be taken up into the super.

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. I would appreciate an expression of interest in the first instance by email only please.
- I will liaise with heather goers to see if vehicle sharing is practical. This will take into account the type of vehicle beekeepers have with the opportunity to team up with others. Those with four-wheel drive/high clearance vehicles may help others get across the short last stretch of the field leading to the edge of the moor.

- I am exploring the possibility of leaving 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 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

I came across these notes from a talk Mike Townsend and Clive Joyce gave some years ago. Lots of useful tips to pass on.

- Check the spring piece in porter bee escapes before fitting them. When bought they are often too big- the width of a matchstick is a good size.
- Don't be tempted to select out those well filled frames by brushing off the bees. This can lead to anxiety in the hive. It is much better to remove the whole super when it is ready.
- Pallet wrap is a superior cling film and very useful for storing full supers before extraction. It is also good for wrapping frames after they have been treated in the freezer for wax moth.
- When cutting comb make a cardboard template and cut to size using a small very sharp knife. As you lift the cut comb our shine a light behind to enable the wire to be pulled out carefully, if necessary. Remember to put the best side up!
- Put cut comb in the freezer to prevent granulation.(Remember to defrost it before the honey show!)
- Left over pieces from the cut comb frame can be crushed with a potato masher and jarred- lovely on hot toast!
- Mush up granulated honey in the comb and heat at 40C for 3 days to separate. A hostess trolley may prove useful for this.
- When extracting, spin slowly to start with and then gradually build up speed for maximum honey yield.
- Tip the honey bucket, towards the tap, to maximise the number of jars that can be filled without scum.
- Fill your jars a bit fuller than is necessary so you have extra to remove the scum that will settle on the surface. Use cling film to remove those last few little bits off the top.
- When pouring creamed honey warm the jars to prevent lines forming. Remember to lay the jars on their side if using a fan assisted oven to prevent the debris from being deposited in your jars.

With many thanks again to Clive and Mike.

Now it is your chance! 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

Editor Roger Wilkes, email address is 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 July 27th, latest!**

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

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