



---

## Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

---

### Honey Presentation Workshop

Well, what an honour and an experience to meet and hear Peter Schollick (Beekeeper from Richmond, Yorkshire) and his wife Janet, at the recent Honey Presentation Workshop. Peter has the distinction of holding a Gold medal in showing Honey at National level.

We learnt what to do, and what NOT to do, little things e.g. No honey sticking to the inside of the jar lid – jar sufficiently full – no residue on top and the right viscosity!! We looked through his 'refractometer' to see what the water percentage was in each jar shown. 20% or less, means good ripe honey and 23% for Heather honey.

A honey ripener is the same as a settling tank – just so you know.

Make sure the honey jar you use has no air bubbles in the glass - pick out the best.

Peter brought along 15 different flavoured honeys for us to sample, and boy were they different. Hawthorne had a liquorice aftertaste, and lime tree blossom actually tasted of lime.

We saw the different 'cut combs' that Peter puts in shows, they were as normal in small boxes, and rounds and large squares, which he referred to as sections. A.M.A.Z.I.N.G.

All fired up now to try something different and enter our own Honey Show in October: have a go, don't be scared or embarrassed, we all have to start at the beginning, and who knows what pleasure it may bring. (please see separate article about entering our show).

A very big thank you to David Blower, who organised this event. Very inspirational – thank you.

Mary Pemberton

Tim Fodden

### Co-op Stock

A reminder that the club stocks the following commodities for members to purchase at amazing prices:

Wax   \*   Glass Jars   \*   Apiguard   \*   Apifuge (formerly Fabispray)   \*   Ambrosia  
Honey Buckets   \*   Nitrile Gloves   \*   Fondant

To purchase these goods, you need to go to the WLBK website and click on the link marked 'Co-op Purchasing'. Then select the goods you want to buy and fill in the appropriate order form. When you submit the form you get an acknowledgement and **detailed instructions on how to collect your goods**. You must pay for your goods (preferably by BACS) **before** you collect the goods. Goods will be reserved for up to **one month** only after payment so please pick up before then.

The stockholders are Clive Joyce (for glassware, ambrosia, buckets and gloves), Chris Kehrer (wax, apiguard, apifuge) and Tim Foden (fondant) and they do a wonderful job on your behalf! In order to keep their task within bounds, please follow the instructions closely. And a further plea not to 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!!

## **Members' Meeting 18 September – 7.30pm – Stoneleigh**

All Members are invited to our first Members' meeting this Autumn. Dave Bonner – one of our Seasonal Bee Inspectors – will open the meeting by describing the disease problems found on our patch this year and may (dare!) to comment on the husbandry practices he has found during his inspections. Later other branch members will describe changes to their approach they have tried during 2014 and whether these have been successful or not. We will provide refreshments and there will be time for some general chat.

Tim Fodden

## **Defra Announcement**

In May this year Defra announced its plans to form a new combined agency to ensure Government is better equipped to prevent the spread of diseases in animals and plants, and to respond to emergencies. The new agency will be known as the **Animal and Plant Health Agency**.

The work of the inspectorate function of the National Bee Unit, the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate, the GM Inspectorate and the Plant Variety and Seeds group will migrate from Fera and join AHVLA to form the new agency on 1 October 2014.

## **Thornes Winter Sale – Saturday 18 October**

One of our Members – Ulya Lalo – from Honiley is planning to attend the Thornes sale at Rand (journey time about 1.75 hours) on Saturday 18 October. Sale items can be pre-ordered via the Thornes website by the sale deadline of 15 October. She asks that any member who would like to attend the sale and share transport email her on [laloulya@yahoo.com](mailto:laloulya@yahoo.com) giving a rough idea of what they intend to purchase.

Tim Foden

## **Branch Annual Dinner – Coventry Golf Club – Friday 24 October – 7 for 7.30pm**

You and your guests are cordially invited to our Annual Dinner

Details are:

Venue: Coventry Golf Club, St. Martins Road, Finham, Coventry, CV3 6RJ

Date: Friday 24th October 2014

Time: 7p.m. for 7.30p.m.

Cost: £25.00 per head (Junior branch members £15.00 per head) to include an alcoholic drink on arrival. Sorry, juniors – orange juice for you.!!

To Book: [www.warleambees.com](http://www.warleambees.com) and click the link on the home page

Menu:

Starter Choice Smoked Salmon & Prawns OR Wexford Mushrooms

Main Carvery (Vegetarian option available booked in advance)

Dessert Eton Mess OR Cheese & Biscuits

Afters Coffee/Tea and mints

Honey Show awards to be presented on the night, also trying to get the Junior Basic Certificates for the same night.

We hope to see as many of you as we can, and look forward to a fun filled evening.

Mary Pemberton

Branch Chair

## Members Sale Day

This is to give you advance notice that Members will be invited to sell surplus equipment and colonies at Stoneleigh on 31 January 2015. You will be invited to send in priced schedules of items for sale for distribution prior to the event. More details nearer the time.

## Autumn Feeding and Supplies of Ambrosia Syrup

Clive Joyce has asked me to inform you that we now have stock of Ambrosia syrup, so orders can be placed. Clive should be congratulated as this year he has succeeded in a useful unit price reduction in this commodity compared with last year. The price is £9.71 per 12.5 Kg if you supply your own containers (buckets or previously used jerrycans) or £11.11 per 12.5 Kg if you also require a 30lb honey bucket as a container. (A typical price from a commercial supplier will be in excess of £20 per 12.5 Kg incl container, delivered). Ambrosia will not be supplied in 12.5Kg "jerrycans" as previous.

For those new to beekeeping, Ambrosia syrup is a specially formulated fructose rich corn syrup, which has been found to be an entirely satisfactory alternative to making ones' own sugar syrup. It has the advantages that it is ready mixed, has good keeping qualities, requires less work for the bees to store and has a lower odour than sugar syrup making one's hives less attractive to robbers.

I am of the view that the Autumn feeding of bees is one of the "arts" of beekeeping! The aim at the end of the foraging season is to have at least 20 Kg of stores in each standard National hive. Last year, early feeding was necessary as it was a poor year of weather and stores levels by the Autumn were very low. This year, most brood-boxes should contain some Summer stores, so with Ivy yet to flower I do not expect to feed until late September/early October. The danger of early feeding is that the colonies can conclude there is a strong nectar flow and turn too much of what you supply into brood, rather than store it. For Autumn feeding it is appropriate to use a rapid rather than a contact feeder.

Techniques for determining how much food each hive should be given vary considerably! Commonly beekeepers continue to feed their bees until they will "take down" no more. Others assess existing stores levels by estimating the weight of stores in each brood frame before feeding and making up the difference between the total and the target of 20Kg. A full national brood frame holds approx. 2.5 Kg of stores, hence the bees need the equivalent of 8 full frames. A full jumbo National brood frame hold 3.75Kg of stores. If you intend to leave a super of stores for your bees you can adjust the feed to be given accordingly as long as the bees have access to the stores ie remove the queen excluder or better still, put the super under the brood-box without a queen excluder. A further method is to weigh each hive using a luggage scale (it is accurate enough to weigh one side and double it). With years of practice, many beekeepers "heft" their hives in order to assess their weight of stores.

As a guide, it is recommended that 1.5 units of 12.5 Kg of Ambrosia is purchased per hive, and this is fed to the bees until they stop taking it from the feeder. Any Ambrosia remaining can be stored and used as a stimulative feed in the Spring (but be careful as this can encourage early swarming in prolific colonies)

Note that "thick" sugar syrup contains 40% water and Ambrosia nearly 30%. Whichever feed is used the bees need to evaporate the water down to about 18% before capping over the stores. Thus it is very incorrect to assume that 1 Kg of Ambrosia will result in an additional 1 Kg of stores. Especially if hives are near properties, it is best to feed bees in the evening. This is partly because, when fed, bees will do the "round dance" in the hive indicating that food is available somewhere in the general vicinity of the hive and will tear about looking for it. They have no means of telling each other that the food source is actually in the hive. (I suppose in a few millennia, bees will invent the square dance to deal with this!!) All colonies in an apiary should be fed at the same time to discourage robbing and the likelihood of robbing is further reduced by late evening feeding

The Branch will later supply fondant icing in 12.5 Kg blocks, which is a useful top-up feed if a hive becomes light over Winter or we have a late Spring (as 2013)

Please order your Ambrosia (and buckets) using the order form in the Co-op section of our website [www.warleambees.com](http://www.warleambees.com). Ambrosia can only be supplied if ordered in this way and paid for before collection is arranged.

As indicated in the order confirmation you will receive, collection is from the Leyes Lane area of Kenilworth (our honey extraction unit).

## Basically Successful

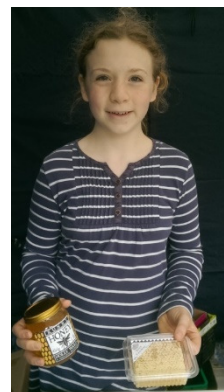
Congratulations to all those who have passed their Basic Assessment this year: Liz Gurney, Graham Pettitt, Sally Naylor, Nicki Maritz, Barney Ward and Helen Essex. In addition, especial congratulations to our two under 18s, who also took the Basic and passed, Holly Ward and Aimee Maritz.

Holly shows the sweetest results of all the hard work, honey from their hives.

If you have been keeping bees for a year or more and are interested in taking the practical competency assessment (no written work!) get in touch with Jane Medwell or Gill Grimshaw.

## Improving your beekeeping skills

There's always chance to talk to fellow beekeepers at our branch events and pick up tips and ideas but maybe you would like to do a little more? If you've bee beekeeping for a year or more and, if want some validation that you have got the right idea, why not consider doing the Basic Assessment. This is a practical assessment aimed at developing your confidence, and we offer training and support at Branch level. Ask those who did it this year for more information!



If you want to go beyond the Basic you may consider whiling away winters evenings by studying one of the BBKA modules. Self study and group study are both possible and it is planned to have a "module-mating" system throughout the County to help form study groups. Have a look at the list below (with more detail on the BBKA website) and contact me if you are interested or want to know more.

For the practically-minded experience beekeeper the BBKA General Husbandry Certificate may suit. It is practical, looking at your manipulations of bees, inspection of your equipment and honey products and some Q and A can be taken by anyone with the Basic and three years or more of experience.

We are also looking at our input into Children's activities and support for younger beekeepers, two passed the Basic this year, for example. Lynn Pearson has agreed to join the Training Team to look at this aspect of our Branch activities. Additionally, we are also planning to add to our series of short high quality videos, showing various aspect so husbandry, if you see a particularly good video or find one on the web please let me know.

There is so much on offer, both practical and more knowledge based, within the Branch and the County. Here's a taste of the possibilities, with more details to come month by month:

- BBKA Modules – Winter 2014/15. See BBKA website for details and contact Gill Grimshaw if you are interested or want further information.
- Bee Improvement for All: Full day on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2014 at Solihull School led by Roger Patterson
- Introduction to Beekeeping : 20<sup>th</sup> January – 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015, contact Liz Bates
- Towards the Basic Assessment (classroom sessions): 3<sup>rd</sup> March – 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015, contact Jane Medwell
- Hive Building Day: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2015 (following Bee TradeEx which is on 7<sup>th</sup> March at Stoneleigh)
- Practical one to one session for Basic candidates: 18<sup>th</sup> April 2015
- Managing Swarming: April 2015
- Microscopy
- Husbandry and bee diseases: May 2015
- Queen Rearing: May 2015
- Honey Processing: July/ August 2015
- General Husbandry: July 2015

### BBKA Study Modules:

Module 1 - Honey bee Management

Module 2 - Honey bee Products and Forage

Module 3 - Honey bee Pests, Diseases and Poisoning

Module 5 - Honey bee Biology

Module 6 - Honey bee Behaviour

Module 7 - Selection & Breeding of Honey bees

Module 8 - Honey bee Management, Health and History

Contact me or any member of the Training Team for more information.  
Gill Grimshaw, Liz Bates, Jane Medwell, Paul Kerr and Lynne Pearson

## **Branch Honey Show – October 16<sup>th</sup> 7:00 for 7:30pm**

### **BBKA HQ Stoneleigh Park**

2014 has been a splendid season so why not round it off by entering some of your bees hard work in our local honey show? There is a range of classes with something to appeal to those new to showing, our junior members as well as the more experienced show men & women. This is a relaxed evening with less of the rigour found at the larger events and is an excellent opportunity to see how your honey compares with that of the other members of the branch, whilst picking up tips for the future. There are trophies to be won to fill that gap on your mantelpiece.

Douglas Nethercleft, a member of Shipston Branch and a regular National Honey Show steward, will be our Show Judge on the night. Whilst he conducts the closed judging we will be treated to several short talks relating to beekeeping. Then, following refreshments, Douglas will impart his findings and I'm sure pass on some of his wealth of knowledge. The trophies will be presented at the Annual Branch Dinner on Fri 26<sup>th</sup> October.

If you haven't entered the honey show before then Nigel Coad's notes on how to prepare for the honey show, found on the branch website under the show section, will be invaluable. We have 20 carefully chosen classes and the honey classes only require a single jar per entry. There are classes especially for:-

- Novices (those who haven't won a first prize before)
- those with less than five hives (the 'cottager' class)
- honey judged on taste alone
- the ever popular honey cake (to a new recipe this year)
- a new class for Junior members
- for those with an artistic bent, the photographic class
- a creative class using products of the hive. (Did you join an encaustic art class or a wax flower making class at the convention? Or can you think of some other artistic way to present products of the hive? This is your chance!)

The full schedule is shown below and is also on the branch website along with the entry form. Why not make this the year when you have a go too? There's lots of time to prepare and it will help you learn how to produce quality honey for sale to the public. If you are unsure or have any questions ask myself or one of the committee members, we'll be only too pleased to help.

#### **Margery Blower**

Honey Show Secretary

The show is open to all PAID UP members of the branch and staging will take place between 7.00 and 7.30pm. Whilst all possible care will be taken with the exhibits the Branch Committee cannot accept any responsibility for loss or damage. There is an entry fee of one jar of honey or cash equivalent, which will be donated to Myton Hospice. There are no cash prizes.

**Show Manager:** David Blower **Show Secretary:** Margery Blower

## Schedule of Classes

1	1lb (454g) jar of light honey	12	Bottle of sweet mead
2	1lb (454g) jar of medium honey		
3	1lb (454g) jar of dark honey	13	One honey cake (to recipe below) - <i>Nancy Wilshire Rosebowl</i>
4	1lb (454g) jar of granulated honey		A paper plate and polythene bag will be provided for staging
5	1lb (454g) jar of soft set honey	14	Cottager Class for those with fewer than five hives - <i>Jack Taylor Plaque</i>
6	1lb (454g) jar of heather or heather blend honey		1lb (454g) jar of honey – liquid, granulated or soft set
7	1lb (454g) jar of any honey to be judged on flavour only	15	Novice Class for those who have never won a first prize in any show
			1lb (454g) jar of honey – liquid, granulated or soft set
8	One container of cut comb honey – 200g min	16	One photographic print (colour or monochrome) mounted on a card no larger than A4 of a subject related to bees or beekeeping.
9	One frame for extraction	17	Junior Class for those Junior members of the branch – 1 lb (454g) honey jar label (exhibited on jar, designed for selling honey from Dalehouse Lane teaching apiary).
10	One cake of beeswax -150g min	18	Gift Class. A gift item made from a product or products of the hive.
11	Bottle of dry mead	19	Best in show – <i>The Bernard Collins Trophy</i> Awarded to the member judged to have the best exhibit in the show from Classes 1-15.

### Notes:

Extracted honey must be exhibited in clear glass 454g standard squat plain jars

Mead (approximately one pint) must be exhibited in clear glass bottles of round section without fluting or decoration of any kind and closed with a cork stopper with a white or cream coloured plastic flange.

Jars and bottles should be labelled with approx 20mm from the bottom of the jar to the bottom edge of the label. Labels will be provided on the evening.

No more than 2 entries are permitted per class per entrant. Entries to be the produce of the entrant.

The Thorpe Cup will be presented to the exhibitor with the most points in the show excluding class

19. Points are awarded as follows:- 1<sup>st</sup>=4pts, 2<sup>nd</sup>=3pts, 3<sup>rd</sup>=2pts, 4<sup>th</sup>=1pt..

### Honey Fruit Cake. Exhibits must be made to this recipe:-

**Ingredients:** 200g/7oz self-raising flour, 175g/6oz honey, 110g/4oz butter, 175g/6oz sultanas, 2 medium eggs, 110g/4oz. glace cherries (halved).

**Preparation;** Preheat oven to 180 °C/350 °F /gas mark 4. Cream butter and honey together. Beat eggs well and add them alternately with sifted flour then fold in sultanas and cherries. A little milk may be added if necessary. Bake in a buttered circular tin, 16.5 -19.0 cm (6½-7½ inches) in diameter for approximately 1½ hours. Timing is for conventional ovens and is a guide only as appliances vary.

The entry form is available on the branch web site. If you are unable to use this method please contact Margery Blower on 07871088580 by Monday 13th October 2014.

## Warwickshire County Honey Show

Will be held at Hatton Country World on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2014

## National Honey Show

The National Show, held at St George's College, Weybridge on October 30<sup>th</sup> - Nov 1<sup>st</sup> is a great event, rather like an autumn convention with lectures, workshops and trade stands alongside a magnificent display of honeys, wax, mead and many other exhibits. The show schedule and lecture programme for this year have been published ([www.honeyshow.co.uk](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk)) and some Warwickshire members have been prize winners in previous years. If you would like to join their ranks you will need to prepare at least two identical jars of honey for each class as National Show standards are more demanding than ours.

## Bees Used in Medical Screening

We have heard before about bees trained to detect bombs and drugs through their antenna. Now the latest research, coming from the US, is that bees can detect diabetes. They can smell 10 million times better than humans. The bees are trained to smell a chemical called acetone, found in higher concentration in the breath of people with diabetes. The goal is to use this as a screening tool, especially in developing countries. You can find further info on youtube or from Boston researcher Dr. Mallika Marshall.

## Hints and Tips

This month is a good time to have a go at making a Honey Cake. It may disappear so fast that you end up making several. Remember to hide the best one away for the Honey Show and who knows the Rose Bowl could be yours to clean for a whole year!!

If you have heard the familiar loud laughing call of the Green Woodpecker around your apiary then it is a good idea to consider how to protect your bees from them this winter. It can be done by covering the hive with a thick polythene sheet which the woodpecker cannot hold onto. However this can lead to retention of damp in the wood, leading to rotting and the entrance is not protected. An alternative is to box the hive in with chicken wire but it is not very self-supporting and is prone to collapsing when being lifted on and off the hive. The best way, that Julian Routh recommends, is to make a cage out of galvanised welded wire mesh. It is more expensive than the other alternatives but is self-supporting and will last several seasons.

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

## Site available for a hive

Site available for one hive near allotments in Warwick, if you are interested please contact me I will then give you the contact details for the site

Roger

## For Sale

60lb White plastic settling bucket (new) with lid, carrying handle and fitted honey gate valve (new, plastic). £10.00.  
4 Available.

Contact Barney Ward on 07984444993

## In the Branch Apiary

Very quiet this month have done an inspection of all the hives all seem to be in good condition to go into winter, I will probably finish up with 9 hives one is just a touch weak have been giving it food to encourage the queen to continue laying and bolster the hive, should it not do so will unite it with another hive.

### Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September @ 2.00pm at the Branch Apiary.

Should the weather put it off I will try for Sunday at the same time, please watch your mail boxes.

I will be demonstrating:-

Treating with Apiguard  
Various ways to feed the bees.  
Treatment for supers  
Preparation for winter.

Roger

## Missing

"Missing" cedar wood NUC box, if anyone has knowledge of it's whereabouts please contact Mick Smith."

I have mislaid lost the hive records for the branch apiary, the last time I can remember where they were was when I put them on the WBC hive in the corner of the apiary.

They are in a white 2 ring binder, maybe someone picked them up and put them in the shed to keep dry.

If anyone remembers seeing them please let me know.

Thanks

Roger

## Coming Up

### September

17 County Exec Meeting		
18 Branch Members' Meeting	BBKA	7:30 pm
27 Skep Making - Val Dillon	BBKA	10:00 am
27 WBKA Honey Show	WBKA	7:00 pm

### October

16 Branch Honey Show - M.Blower/S.Bates	BBKA	7:30 pm
24 Branch Annual Dinner	Coventry Golf Club	

Editor Christine Kehrer, email address is [ckehrer@gmail.com](mailto: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 September 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](http://www.warleambees.com)