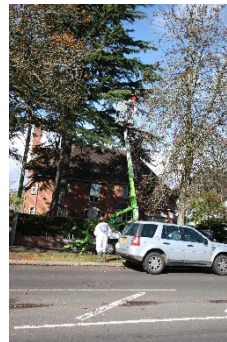




Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

A spectacular Swarm



This swarm landed sometime in May and watched grow by the children of the house from their bedroom window behind over the summer, as it was positioned over the footpath where children pass under every day it was considered to be dangerous to the public in general.

Call into action WLB team Dave Smith, Barney Ward, Richard Wiggins and Roger Wilkes with the help from Leamington Plant Hire who loaned the cherry picker free for some publicity, which you may have seen in the Observer.

Strapping three brood boxes together putting these in the cherry picker we were able position this under the colony then cut the branch either side of the boxes thus holding the colony inside safely.

All went very smoothly safely to the ground then moved to a quarantine site for the winter.

Roger

Branch Child Protection Policy

It is only proper that an organization such as ours has a child protection policy, but important that this is brief, practical and realistic. After appropriate consideration and consultation the Branch now has such a policy, which compliments our recently introduced Junior Membership category and our general wish to safely introduce young people to beekeeping. Our new policy requires that parents or their authorized representatives accompany children at all times whilst involved in Branch activities. It specifies the requirements for adults to be present when children are involved as a group and it requires that adults should not be alone with children from other families, but should always be in sight of another adult.

No one should take photographs of children without parental consent and in the event of an alleged breach of this policy, the method by which a complaint should be made is specified. Our introduction of Junior Membership and the child protection policy does facilitate young people joining the Branch and participating in our activities who do not come from beekeeping families. However they must have a beekeeper guardian who is a member and has been authorized by the parents to be in loco parentis. The full policy appears on our website under Knowledgebase/downloads

Tim Foden

DHL Update

“ Work at DHL continues slowly and as soon as some important things are attended to like budgets etc. I will be asking for a working party, for the moment however, just be advised that there are several steps to heaven recently installed by our Apiary Manager, see attached picture. He assured me it was better then sliding down the slippery slope !!

Mick Smith



Christmas Cards

Happy Christmas



These delightful Christmas cards have been beautifully designed for WLBK by Linda Clements, a local watercolour artist.

Profits from card sales will be used to support Linda's work with sick hedgehogs and there will be a donation to Bees Abroad. Cards can be ordered via the WLBK website.

Please place your orders before 12th November to ensure you receive them in time for Christmas!

Happy Christmas



Honey Show Feedback via Tim Foden

I have had a letter from John Craddock, who is the Warwickshire County Honey Show Secretary. I invited him to our honey show as he expressed an interest in how we run it. This is the text of a letter I received from him:

Dear Tim, Mary, Margery, and all members

Thank-you for your kind invitation to your honey show evening last Thursday at Stoneleigh.

It's a very pleasant change for me to attend a honey show as a guest and I had a wonderfully enjoyable evening. Your show was beautifully presented with exactly the right mix of professional and craft skills, and a social occasion amongst friends with a passionate interest in beekeeping. Congratulations on a wonderful evening.

Sincerely yours
John Craddock

Sale of surplus Bee Equipment

Please note there will be a sale of surplus bee equipment at Stoneleigh on Saturday 31 January 2015. More details in next month's Beetalk

Tim Foden

Beekeeping Course

Hello everyone

We are recruiting participants for next year's Introduction to Beekeeping course, and we know that many people become new beekeepers because they know someone who keeps bees and would like to do the same.

Attached is a short 'advert' for the course, printed twice on a single sheet of paper. Please could you pass on these details to anyone you feel might be interested, or put one on your local notice-board. It will be nice if the course is well-attended.

Secondly, I'm looking for a few volunteers, particularly from those who attended the course last year, who would like to come and help with setting up / refreshments etc. In return, you get a chance to hear lots more from the expert speakers. Please let me know if you are able to help - if I get overwhelmed, I'll let you know.

Liz Bates

Would you like to keep honeybees?

The Warwick and Leamington Beekeepers "Introduction to Beekeeping" course is ideal for anyone who would feel they would like to keep honeybees. Run on six consecutive Tuesday evenings, it provides you with the skills and knowledge to keep bees safely and confidently, and includes both talks and hands-on sessions. Places are limited, so please book early if you wish to attend.

Start date: Tuesday January 20th 2015

Time: 7.00pm to 9.30 pm

Venue: National Beekeeping Centre Stoneleigh Park, near Kenilworth

Cost of course: £60

For further details and a booking form: www.warleambees.com or contact:

Val Dillon T: 02476 417374; Email: val.dillon@outlook.com



Winter Walk

This year the Winter Walk will take place on Sunday 23rd November. I have selected a circular walk on field paths and parkland footpaths over what is described as gentle rolling farmland and parkland, starting and finishing in the village of Berkswell. The total distance is 5 miles, which takes about 2 ½ hours to complete.

Assemble at 10.30am in the free car park, near the Church in the centre of the village, for an 11.00am start.

Lunch has been booked for 2.00pm at the George in the Tree Beefeater Restaurant close by in Balsall Common.

I need to advise the restaurant of numbers, it be helpful therefore if members wishing to take part on the walk or to join us for lunch could contact me on either 02476 467356, 02476 410011 or 07986307152 by noon on Saturday 22nd November.

Mike Radburn

How to save at least 75% of your foundation costs

Replacing brood foundation is one of the regular ongoing costs of beekeeping. Although foundation is not particularly expensive, it's surprising the amount you get through – and the replacement cost – in a normal season (per colony):

- Replacement as part of integrated pest management; 3-4 sheets
- Swarm control; 11 sheets
- Prepare new nuc; 5 sheets

So that's two packets already. If you additionally put out bait hives for swarms and are successful you'll need another 10+ sheets.



Foundationless frame a day after addition to the colony

Bees naturally build comb. They don't need a full sheet of foundation to work from. If you provide them with a simple starter strip along the top bar of a frame they will draw out the full frame **at least as fast** as when working from foundation. Several experienced beekeepers in the association already do this for their supers, this article is predominantly concerned with foundationless brood frames. Because brood frames are bigger and manipulated more often it is important to provide some lateral support – I 'wire' my frames with thick nylon fishing line which the bees readily incorporate into the comb.

Frames are built in exactly the same way as normal except that the side bars should be pre-drilled with three holes through which the fishing line will be threaded. Spacing doesn't matter too much, but the lowest hole should be about an inch from the bottom bar (the comb is often not connected to the bottom bar and needs a bit more support here). These holes should be precisely located in the foundation guide channel. The easiest way to do this is to build a small jig, premarked, and drill 2-4 stacked side bars together. Fix both bottom bars in place.



Side bar detail. Brood frames need three horizontal 'wires' rather than just two.

I've used 15 kg (~30 lb) nylon monofilament this year in about 100 frames. In a handful (<5%) the bees managed to chew through it if it wasn't properly incorporated into the comb – usually the bottom strand and never rendering the frame unusable. I'm going to try thicker line next year. You can buy bulk spools of nylon monofilament from eBay and expect to pay about 1p per metre ... which is a bit more than you use per frame. I use drawing pins to hold the line in place. Use a simple overhand knot in one end of the line to fix it with a drawing pin just below the top bar, thread the line through the holes, then wrap it several times around the bottom drawing pin before driving it home flush with a quick tap with a hammer. The line needs to be taught, but not banjo tight. To prevent the line cutting into the side bars I fix staples next to the hole (see picture above).



Starter strips fitted ready to go

All you then need to do is add a short strip of foundation about 1cm long along the top bar. If you've got wired foundation you can easily cut through the wires using a sharp knife. However, unwired foundation is even easier to prepare. The foundation doesn't even have to be embossed ... you can use a simple strip of thin wax. Foundation is held in place in the normal way.

The bees use the strip of foundation as a guide to draw comb. When provided with a side-by-side opportunity to use foundationless or standard frames, the bees regularly use the former. The queen often laid up foundationless frames faster than those with foundation. None of this was done at all scientifically, so may have been influenced by frame location *etc.* I've used boxes with ten foundationless frames plus a single drawn comb in the centre (for example during Demaree swarm control), or swapped out individual frames and replaced them with foundationless. I've had almost no problems with brace comb.



Drawn frame, middle 'wire' not fully incorporated into the comb.

However, it is **very important** that the hive is level. More specifically that the plane of the comb to be drawn is **vertical**. If the hive slopes towards the entrance and you orientate the frames the wrong way (*i.e.* parallel to the entrance) the bees will fail to incorporate the lower 'wires'. Bees build comb down vertically.

Three final observations. **Firstly**, foundationless frames are ideal for bait hives. If you've read Tom Seeley's book *Honeybee democracy* you'll understand that scout bees look for an empty space about the size of a National brood box. Foundationless frames provide this empty space and the guides for new comb to be drawn, so there is no need to disturb the newly-arrived swarm or check the box on a regular basis. If you prepare a bait hive with a single old tatty brood frame and 10 foundationless frames the swarm that moves in will draw the latter within a week. **Secondly**, foundationless super frames (if fully drawn) with just two horizontal supports are easily strong enough to spin in a radial extractor. **Thirdly**, since the bees are not following the embossing on the foundation, they build a lot more drone comb than you might expect. They mix drone and worker comb on the same frame and remodel comb through the season to fit their needs. This didn't cause any problems this season, either by making the colonies less productive or in increasing the *Varroa* and deformed wing virus problems.

Further reading <http://theapiarist.org/foundationless-frames/http://beekeepingafloat.com/2014/04/13/foundationless-frames/>
<http://www.bushfarms.com/beesfoundationless.htm>

David Evans

Walking Tour of Marton Village Farm

I was pleased and surprised that fourteen Members toured this ecologically managed small farm during the weekend as advertised, but interest was such that a further seven enjoyed an extra visit the following weekend. Feed-back was such that the owners have offered further visits next year so that visitors can see the farm during a different season. (Chris – do you want to elaborate on this?)

Tim Foden

Hints and Tips

This time of year our thoughts are turning to winter preparation and trying to ensure that we have done as much as possible to ensure our bees survive the next few months.

An insulating quilt put on top of the crown board can be helpful in maintaining the hive temperature. These can be bought specially, made from cuts offs, carpet or a carpet tile.

During the wintery weather check to ensure the hive entrance has not become blocked by drifting snow or iced over completely. This will need clearing away to allow proper hive ventilation.

It is possible that following bad weather the entrance may become blocked by dead bees which the surviving bees have not managed to evict completely. These need to be removed to maintain good ventilation in the hive.

The reflection of sun on snow may fool the bees and lure them into the chilling air and then they cannot return to the hive. A piece of board placed at an angle over the entrance will provide shade and so deter the bees from venturing out.

If you are similarly deterred from venturing out then you might like to have a go at this recipe;-

Honey Anzac Biscuits

4oz butter

2 tablespoons honey

5oz plain flour

4oz rolled oats

3½oz desiccated coconut

6oz soft brown sugar

1 teaspoonful bicarbonate of soda

1 tablespoonful hot water

Melt honey and butter. Dissolve the bicarb in the water. Mix all the dry ingredients together. Mix everything together. Roll into small balls and place on a greased baking tray leaving enough room for spreading. Cook in a moderate oven 170°C for 10-15 mins. until golden brown.Enjoy!

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

In the Branch Apiary

The bees have been well fed with Ambrosia some are still taking it down, Mouse guards and Woodpecker protection has been fitted, all looking very strong to go through the winter.

Roger

Coming Up

Nov 16	Bee Improvement For All	Solihull School	9.00 for 9.30 – 4.30 approx. at Solihull School
Nov 20	Branch Members Meeting	BBKA	7.30pm
Nov 23	Winter Walk	Berkswell	10.30am
Dec 11	Mead & Mince Pies	BBKA	7.30pm

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 November 27th, latest!**

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

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