



Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

Branch 'magical' Christmas party

Thursday 15th December 7 for 7.30 at BBKA Stoneleigh



Please come along with your partners and children, we have our very own 'magic circle' magician to entertain us, with lots of Christmas fun, refreshments, mince pie and mead.....other drinks as well!!

This will only be a success if you attend, we look forward to seeing you on the evening.

STOP PRESS - A prize is being offered for the most original Christmas Hat.....



Thank you
Mary

Breaking news! - The Special Relationship in Safe Hands?

With world recent events throwing established orders into turmoil, Bee Talk is delighted to announce that the "special relationship" far from being under threat is not only assured but is set to flourish following the appointment of WLBK member Leigh Sidaway as the BBKA's General Manager.

Leigh's bee keeping roots are very firmly founded in Warwick and Leamington Beekeepers having attended a May Taster Day held at Marton back in 2012 and, being so inspired, took advantage of the encouragement offered to attend the apiary training sessions for the rest of that season before attending our Introduction to Bee Keeping course the following spring. She currently has two colonies, successfully passed the Basic Assessment in 2015 and is currently a member of one of the Branch's module study group.

She takes over at a time of change in the way BBKA is run and so has her work cut out in familiarising herself with past practices and piloting new ones.

As the branch local to BBKA, many members, both in the past and currently, have been involved in numerous aspects of the BBKA. These include Peter Spencer who has been General Secretary who, with Brian Milward, was heavily involved at the turn of the century; Clive Joyce who has just retired as BBKA Apiary Manager but who continues as a moving force in organising the Public Displays mounted by BBKA at National Events along with, Mike Townsend, Gordon Robbins, Barry Thorne, Roger Wilkes and Steve and Liz Bates; Paul Kerr and Gill Grimshaw who have taken over running the BBKA Apiary; David Blower who has acted as BBKA education co-ordinator; not forgetting, as if one could, Mick Smith who at one time worked in the office creating the membership database. Latterly, under the instigation of Tim Foden, members help relieve the pressure on BBKA's established staff during the annual swarm season by manning the BBKA's swarm line answering calls from the public.

Of course, the benefit is not all one way. The Branch benefits enormously from this relationship in many ways not least in being able to indulge our passion for this hobby

So it's hearty congratulations to Leigh as we look forward to working with her and her team and we wish her every success in her new role

3 No Brunel DM6 Stereo Microscopes for Sale

The Branch has 3 entry level stereo microscopes for sale. Acquired for use at public displays these microscopes have been used less than a dozen times before being superseded by more powerful versions and are thus surplus to requirements. Described by Brunel as a superb field stereomicroscope at a very affordable price providing x20 magnification and particularly suitable for the naturalist or young scientist. RRP £55 each – offered to members @£35 each Contact Bernard Brown at bernardbrown@aol.com



Membership Renewal for 2017

It's that time of year again for Members to renew their membership of Warwick and Leamington Beekeepers for 2017. In the case of all classes of member except Associates, this will automatically cover your renewal with Warwickshire Beekeepers' Association and the British Beekeepers' Association.

Having completed a renewal form, which you will find on our website after December 1st, please ensure you pay your subscription, rates being: Full Members inclusive of insurance for up to 3 colonies* - £45.00, Partner Members - £20.30, Junior Members £16.00, Associate Members - £5.00. £13.00 should be added to the subscription of Full, Junior and Associate Members if newsletters are required by Royal Mail as opposed to Email

* Full Members should add £2.00 additional insurance for up to 5 colonies, £5.25 for up to 10 colonies, £7.75 for up to 15 colonies, £9.50 for up to 20 colonies and £11.10 for up to 25 colonies - all inclusive of the first 3.

For a full explanation of the subscription structure, please go to <http://www.warleambees.org.uk/wlbk-subscription-rates/>

BACS payments should be made to A/C No 00173056, sort code 30-94-93, A/C Name Warwick & Leamington Spa Branch of WBKA, a registered charity. Cheques should be made out to W & L Beekeepers and sent to Mrs Val Dillon, Oak Tree Cottage, Cryfield Grange Road, Kenilworth, CV8 2JU. Subscriptions are due by 31 December 2016.

It is of note that the Branch, County, BBKA and Bee Diseases Insurance rates are unchanged for 2017.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

The Branch AGM will take place from 7.30pm on Thursday 16 February 2017 at BBKA. Stoneleigh. If any member wishes to make any proposals at the AGM they are requested to notify the Acting Branch Secretary by 15 December 2016 (e-mail; secretary@warleambees.org.uk or 07836668439).

Nominations for Election to the Branch Executive Committee

Members are also invited to put their names forward to the Acting Branch Secretary for election to the Executive Committee at the 2017 AGM. The Executive Committee normally meets 6 times a year at Stoneleigh in the evening. The purpose of the Executive Committee is to determine general policy, plan and implement our range of activities and services and to monitor and control income and expenditure. The Executive Committee will have some vacancies in 2017, which we regard as a positive situation in that it ensures traditional ideas are questioned and new ideas are considered.

Influencing the branch's progress is rewarding and as a member of the committee you will learn more about how the Branch, County Association and the BBKA function. Members of the Committee take on responsibility for some aspects of the branch's activity. If you would like your name put forward, or to learn more about the role please contact the:

Acting Branch Secretary Chris Cox by e-mail; secretary@warleambees.org.uk or 07836668439

Finham Primary School Observation Hive

Finham Primary School (Coventry) is looking for a volunteer beekeeper to keep an eye on their permanent observation hive bees.

Located in a prominent position in the reception foyer of the school with a webcam linked to a video screen trained on it, this two frame observation hive has been an integral and popular part of the life of the kids and their parents for the past four or five years. Judging from the project work displayed on the walls of the school, the educational opportunities provided by beekeeping have not been ignored either and in fact the kids knowledge about honey bees and nature in general is really amazing.

There is much enthusiasm and support from the staff at the school but the present beekeeper, who is a member of our branch, is moving on hence the need for a replacement. The duties involve general husbandry such as checking the general health of the bees from time to time, feeding, swarm control etc. and arranging respite care should the bees become stressed and over the summer holidays.

So, if you would like to help this so worthwhile enterprise in making the next generation aware of the importance of honeybees in this way, please contact Richard Carribine at ticklemonster80@outlook.com or 07704 772616 for more details.

WLBK Executive (What your Exec is up to).

The members of the Executive met on Monday 7th November as one of the 6 meetings a year to oversee and direct the activities of the Branch on behalf of the members. This note is to give members, some 250+, sight of issues under consideration.

Firstly, the health of the branch is clearly sound with such a level of membership. In addition the finances are also very healthy with ever increasing reserves. However the executive had concerns principally around the "social" aspects of membership and how do we involve the members in a more inclusive way.

Clearly education is one driver with the Introduction to Bee Keeping being an excellent example of membership participation while the promotion of other courses and the obtaining of qualifications strengthen the knowledge base available to the members. To this must be added the Branch Meetings, with the speakers addressing current concerns impacting the beekeeping community. An urgent action is to recruit a Schools Liaison officer (any offers out there?) to fill a need in the wider community.

The question posed at the meeting focused on the social side of the branch. Currently there is the Christmas Magic! Mead and Mince Pie event at BBKA on 15th December (bring along children) but consideration on the timing and nature of subsequent events was held over to the next meeting. Recent experience led to the feeling that members preferred a "beekeeping" activity participation event (e.g. Apiary Based) rather than something that was purely social (e.g. Spring/Summer Walk). Feedback from members is to be sought through a short survey.

Significant issues that are both immediate and on the horizon are BBKA Insurance; Cosmetic Sales at WLBK events, and The Future of the Extraction Unit at Glasshouse Lane.

The compulsory BBKA insurance, which is included in the membership fee, is viewed by the Executive as falling far short of what cover should be available to members. In addition the research element as considered inappropriate and unnecessary, with the National Bee Unit being better placed. As a result this insurance issue is to be escalated to the WBKA.

Cosmetic Sales are an area where the liability to WLBKA in the event of an allergic reaction is a concern. Clearly the presence of WLBKA at shows and events give an opportunity for members to promote and sell their honey and other hive products and this is encouraged. However the legislation and liability aspects and the consequential insurance aspects of these sales need to be clearly understood, particularly that associated with cosmetics. There is more work to be done in this area during the winter.

The Extraction Unit at South Crest Farm is under threat from the proposed housing development that takes in the farm. There are two main options. Move it to another location or negotiate with the developers to fund a new site as a condition of the development. There are pros and cons about both approaches but this is something the Executive will have to get to grips with over the next year or so. A overriding issue could be the relatively low usage last year.

The meeting also agreed to invite the celebrated local Artist, Naturalist and Photographer and Bee Enthusiast Steven Falk to talk at the January meeting, see <http://www.stevenfalk.co.uk>. To accommodate his diary commitments this meeting is on the revised date of 12th January.

Chris Cox

Stop Press:

An Extraordinary Meeting was held to consider how the branch coped with Tim Foden's withdrawal from active participation in the Branch (his involvement is comprehensive across all aspects of WLBKA). At the same meeting the A46 Stoneleigh Junction road proposals were discussed as the draft plans show realignment of both Dalehouse Lane and Stoneleigh Road that heavily impacts on our DHL Training Apiary.

Amazing space

Some of you may have seen reports in the local press about the destruction of allotment sheds in Warwick? It is unclear whether the fire, which was intense, was caused by arson or fireworks.

One of the sheds was my beloved bolt hole and I have lost both a haven and all my tools and other equipment such as nets, sprayers etc.

It is difficult to imagine life without my allotment shelter so I am on the lookout for a new (but modest) des res.

I would be grateful if members could let me know if they hear of any unwanted sheds or summer houses, or indeed any structure that would provide shelter and sustenance.

Gill Grimshaw

Jephson Gardens is the Bees' Needs!

Warwick District Council's Green Spaces team is buzzing after winning a "Bees' Needs" Award for its work in Jephson Gardens. The award scheme run by Keep Britain Tidy in conjunction with Defra is presented to Green Flag awarded parks that have made improvements to encourage pollinators.

Recent planting schemes in Jephson Gardens, such as the Sensory Garden and East Lodge Garden, have been designed to make the park a more pollinator-friendly place. Over 90% of the plants in these schemes are pollinator friendly, producing pollen and nectar for insects to feed on or providing shelter from the elements. Even the formal flowerbeds have been made more pollinator friendly in the last few years, with the designers choosing plants which are better for insects.

There are numerous insect homes scattered throughout the park including The Warwick and Leamington Beekeepers maintained WBC hive in the East Lodge Garden recently reinstated thanks to the efforts of Mike Townsend following a vandalism incident. Mike is pictured here along with Colleen Abell, a nearby member resident who keeps an eye out for the Jephson bees when not tending her own colony on one of the out-apiaries kindly provided by Warwick District Council.

We recently had an e-mail from a non member park visitor asking where the bees had gone and it is encouraging to have such evidence of concern for our girls from the general public. He is planning to get married in the Jephson Gardens next summer and wanted to know if the bees would be back. We were able to reassure him that they would.

Pictured in Jephson Gardens Jon Holmes (green space development officer, WDC), Dave Partridge (head gardener, ID Verde), Colleen Abell (W&L Beekeepers), Jane Knight (chair, WDC), Mike Townsend (W&L Beekeepers)



Wanted.

Are any members updating their kitchens and need to dispose of a sink top and base/ wall units which still have some life left in them?. If so, and you would be prepared to donate them so that the 25 year old kitchen at BBKA can be given a much needed face lift, please contact Leigh Sidaway on 02476 696679

National Honey Show Successes

Congratulations to David Blower for his 1st prize in the Frame for Extraction class in the National Honey show and also to Doug Nethercleft, who judged our branch Honey Show this year so brilliantly, and so ably demonstrated his prowess by achieving six prizes including three 1st prizes and a 2nd.

Well done both!

For sale 2 x Vogue CE151 good quality stainless steel, floor standing cabinets. 900mm x 1200mm x 600mm

Fantastic equipment for a honey processing room.

The link to a product description is [http://www.nisbets.co.uk/Vogue-Floor-Standing Cupboard/CE151/ProductDetail.raction](http://www.nisbets.co.uk/Vogue-Floor-Standing-Cupboard/CE151/ProductDetail.raction)

They are very good quality, have had some use, so need a clean. Not much used as in places the protective plastic film is still on the surfaces/shelves.

The quality of the stainless steel is high, very thick so they are very heavy about 40kg each.

They come complete with legs (adjustable), shelves and doors).

They cost £600 new before VAT. – a snip at £170 each – buyer to collect. Will sell separately.

Replies do Dave@bonner.me.uk

For Sale 60 cm Bompani Calor Gas Cooker, with 4 burners, metal lid, oven, grille complete with 13 kg gas cylinder with some gas, regulator and pipe. This cooker was inherited with the portakabin and we have not used it nor, we suspect, did the previous owners very much who bought it new. It no longer features in our plans for the portakabin and hence offers based upon **£150 ono** are invited. It may be viewed at DHL by arrangement with Mick Smith michael.smith670@ntlworld.com



An ideal Christmas present

A complete Bee Hive all sterilised ready for the new season for only £120 (Just add foundation)

This includes:-

Hive floor choice of solid or open mesh with slide. Entrance block and mouse guard.

Brood Box complete with 12 Hoffman frames.

Queen extruder choice of metal or polythene.

2 Supers complete with 12 Hoffman frames in each

Crown board with 2 porta bee escapes

2 inch feeding eke.

Roof.

Would reduce the price to £100 less one super or £80 less second super.

Contact Roger 01926 85076 or roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk

Hints and Tips

Many thanks to Bernard Brown for sharing these topical tips with us

Storing fondant

Fondant, being a gooey substance, has a tendency to spread outwards in a bid for freedom unless restrained. It relies on the enclosing cardboard box to halt this southwards march and in particular on the strengths of the joins in the said box - some of which have been found wanting in the recent consignment. So if you intend keeping your fondant for any length of time, the judicious application of a strip of duck tape on the box's vertical side joint – there is only one and it is about 3 inches long - and along the join in the bottom flaps will bring a little peace of mind and hopefully save a sticky fondant slide. Store the fondant so that the box is fully supported on a solid surface ensuring that its is well wrapped to avoid premature drying out and in a cool, dry, vermin free place.

A tip to help carving slices of fondant from the main block.

Before you start, place a bowl of hot water and one of hand-hot water within reach and place a length of cling film on a convenient table or worktop. Place your block of fondant on the draining board of the sink partly overhanging the clean and dampened bowl. Take your knife, - we use a stiff bread knife - and dip it in the bowl of hot water. Peel back the blue plastic wrapping on the overhanging bit of fondant and saw away at the fondant with the hot knife returning it to the bowl of hot water to reheat it when the sawing gets tough. Steve Sidaway's tip of allowing the fondant to overhang the bowl causes the cut section to fall away preventing it from re-sealing with the parent block. Place the severed piece of fondant on the cling film and wrap it up ready to be transported to the hive. It is helpful to have the bowl of hand-hot water handy to wash sticky fingers in as you go along.

At the hive score one side of the cling film a couple of times with your hive tool, lift the crown board, add an eke, move the bees away from the top bars and place the fondant scored face down, directly on the top bars over the cluster. Job Done.

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

Thank you

May I thank those members who have sent me items for Bee Talk throughout the year without these I would be redundant and you would be short of things that happen within the Branch.

At the same time I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful Honey Gathering New Year.

Roger

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 December 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