



BEE TALK

Warwick and Leamington Branch of Warwickshire Beekeepers

ANNUAL WLBK BBQ AND EXTRACTION UNIT GRAND OPENING

On Saturday 22nd August members of the club gathered in the Hurst

Farm farmyard, not to collect ambrosia or jars, nor even to extract their honey, but to enjoy each other's company and celebrate what has been a bumper harvest. This was a new venue for the BBQ but worked really well. The concrete yard between the new Extraction Unit and brick building meant that the gas BBQ was safe and wasn't going to burn the whole place down! Bernard had collected the club's tables and the Shows Team provided the tablecloths. With food brought to share, tables were laden with an array of salads, breads, scrumptious cakes, local figs and cheeses. Neil Tabram

conducted an impromptu class in BBQ cooking and there was lots of bee chat and plenty of eating. Unfortunately, the Red Arrows were not available, but the Hurst Farm Swallows gave a bravura exhibition of flying, and we could, at least, talk over their calls and were not plagued by any trails of coloured smoke. If you go up to use the Unit or collect orders before mid-September, remember to look up and see the encores.

The bee chat was paused for the grand opening ceremony of the new Extraction Unit which the committee decreed should be known as 'The Joyce Extraction Unit'. Unfortunately, HRH was



unavailable, but Mike Townsend gamely stood in to do the honours, unveiling the plaque (turn to page 2) which memorialises those involved with its conception and fit-out.

Mike's speech focused on the importance of volunteering to the club and the huge steps the club had made with the support of volunteers, to support members by providing extraction facilities and operating a co-op where members could buy feed, wax and jars etc, easily and cheaply, without delivery charges. Following this we toasted the new Unit in fizz.

Mike's duties were not yet done – he returned to his feet to receive a framed certificate, presented by our Chairman Barry



The Joyce Extraction Unit

Named after CLIVE JOYCE, beekeeper who conceived, designed, planned and managed the entire project.

Assisted by the following volunteers:

Alistair Walker	Martin Coward
Bernard Brown	Steve Ghent
Eileen Joyce	Steve Poynter
Hester Duffy	Terry Dillon
Mikki Blackshaw	Val Dillon
Dai Timothy	Alan Rodricks

Funded by Warwick and Leamington Beekeepers

Completed August 2026

Meatyrd, to commemorate his long contribution to the club.

For those who do not know, Mike singlehandedly started the club's first Introduction to Beekeeping course and later put together a team, which continues to prepare wanna-bee beekeepers and helps to provide new members for the club. He also ran skep-making workshops and supported the charitable work of the club, educating the public by giving talks and providing bees for the glasshouse in Jephson gardens, not forgetting looking after the bees in Warwick Museum.

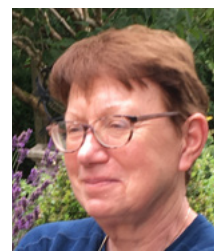
Another certificate was prepared for Helen Essex, who has contributed to the club for many years by running the club honey show and writing a regular hints and tips column in Bee Talk since. Helen helped many members avoid the difficulties of

doing things with bees and encouraged members to take pride in their bees' produce by entering frames, wax, honey and cakes in the honey show. Helen could not be at the BBQ but members appreciated her contribution from the depths of their honey extractors. She will receive her certificate by post.

After the formalities, Clive was on hand to show members around the new Extraction facility.

On the following page, Bernard will take you inside and describe what is in there.

Judith Masson
Meeting Secretary





floor, an attempt to thwart the unwelcome attention of every wasp within the locality which, attracted by the smell of honey, so often rendered the old extraction unit unusable. The idea is to shut the main door into the extraction unit/open the porch door and then bring your supers into the porch and put them down whilst you close the outer porch door. Inside the porch is an insect zapper and when this has done its job and the wasps are toast, the inner door is opened. Inside the extraction unit is another insect zapper to deal with any sneaky wasps who make it past the porch. Close attention has been given to sealing all points where wasps could get in but we acknowledge their ingenuity and persistence and expect further weaknesses requiring attention to become evident once in operation.

Once inside the unit, we are struck by the amount of space provided. There is plenty of room to access the various pieces of equipment and to accommodate training in their use for new and established members alike. The space also enables the layout of the kit to reflect the natural flow of activities in getting the honey from the comb into the jar.

We start off by placing the supers, four high, on wheeled dollies to get them to the warming cabinet. The new warming cabinet (turn to page 4) itself reflects a totally different design concept from the old one, addressing many of the issues in its use reported by members. Rather than the vertical cupboard of the old extraction



The formal opening of our new extraction unit, now officially known as the Joyce Extraction Unit, revealed an interior of an externally unprepossessing portacabin, resplendent in white paint, light grey flooring and stainless steel – in other words the epitome of hygienic conditions which, after all, was the prime reason for the project in the first place.

Sporting several new features, some innovative (of which more anon), this was the culmination of the work of a small team of committed members over the past few months. Join me as I take you on a tour around it

Firstly you enter through a porch, fabricated by the team around the unit's main entrance door and featuring a ramped

unit, the new one consists of four bays underneath a countertop set at kitchen worktop level.

Insulated in all directions, each bay will take 4 supers, so the dollies are just wheeled straight in, the doors closed and the heater switched on. No more struggling to carry and lift heavy supers onto a stack - so a massive health and safety dividend achieved here. In order to get 16 supers in the old warming cupboard, the stack would have to be 8ft high, so we have also increased the capacity to accommodate supers. Equally easy, is the removal of the supers from the warming cabinet and onto the adjacent uncapping table where the cappings run, under gravity, from the uncapping tray into the honey/wax separator.



Our new 20 frame radial extractor and honey jarring machine



The warming cabinet

extraction unit is able to provide filtered and settled honey jarring facilities using our automatic jar filling machine which will make short work of this time-consuming activity. This machine can be set to provide the correct weight of honey to suit the jar size, automatically tares the jar, and delivers the correct weight of honey.

Our much-treasured heather press, previously unable to be accommodated in the old extraction unit and thus requiring manhandling of this very heavy cast iron piece of kit to put to use, has now, due to the increased space afforded by the new unit, found a new home in it.

The deep sink from the old extraction unit has been reinstalled alongside a new handwash basin, both with hot and cold water,

Next in the sequence of operations is the branch's brand new spinner waiting to receive runny, uncapped frames or, if the honey has crystallised, we can leap-frog over the spinner to the apimelter.

Before moving on, a word or two about the new spinner. This is a very versatile piece of kit. It can be used either as a tangential extractor, or as a 20 frame radial extractor. That's two supers' worth of frames extracted in one go!

Once extracted you have a few options. The honey, in its buckets, can either be whisked away home or, poured into the filtering and settling tank first and once filtered, then whisked away. For those seeking to minimise domestic strife, the

A freestanding cupboard for janitorial supplies and two wall mounted white boards complete the installation.

There are still a few bits and pieces to finish off before the unit can become operational, so keep your eyes on your inbox for an announcement and booking procedures.

We think that this unit is a tremendous facility for members, but don't just take our word for it, come along to one of the open mornings we are planning once we are operational.

Bernard Brown



WAX MOTH WARNING



It seems to have been quite a year for the wax moth.

There have been numerous reports of infestation, from minor to totally destructive. Interestingly, it has been the supers which have borne the brunt of the destruction. Many of us have stored the early OSR honey ready for the Apimelter and found to our dismay that there was little or none to be processed. Normally we would expect to see evidence mainly in the brood boxes. The unusually hot summer may have contributed to the problem as warm conditions speed up the life cycle when activity is at its height from June to August.

Of the two species of wax moth, Lesser *Achroia grisella* and Greater *Galleria mellonella*, the greater is the commoner and more destructive. It is the larvae, not the adult moths which burrow under the cappings and feed on wax, honey and pollen. The greater will chew into wood – at times with spectacular results! As can be seen in the photo below.

Lessons for next season:

- Careful inspection of both brood and super frames and remove any sign of infestation.
- Wrap supers in pallet wrap before storing in a cool place or if possible extract the honey straight from the hive.
- Read NBU fact sheet [here](#)

Maggie Curley



OUT APIARIES

There is one recent addition to the schedule of out apiaries located on farmland between Farnborough and Claydon. This is an ideal location for an apiary and it has good security and access with excellent forage potential. For further details contact Alistair Walker alistair.walker@btinternet.com.

A schedule of all available out apiaries is on the WLBK website.

YLAH AWARENESS WEEK



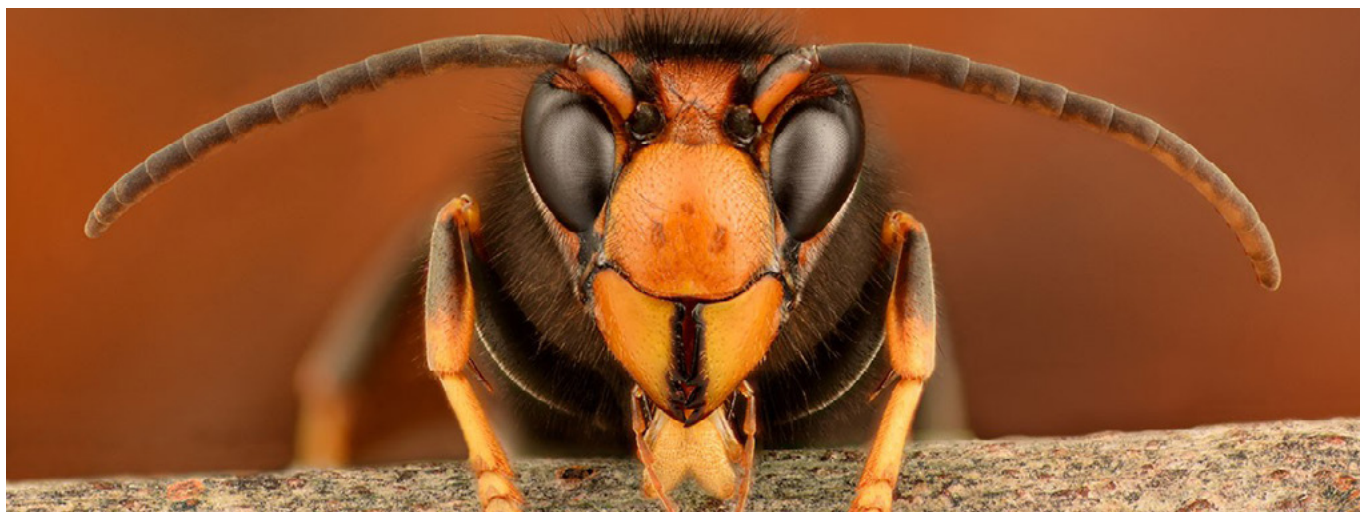
The BBKA's YLAH Awareness Week is **7th - 13th September** and they are urging everyone to remain alert, get informed, report any sightings and take every opportunity to spread awareness amongst your various networks of contacts. Find out more [here](#)

Bernard Brown
YLAHAT Co-ordinator
WBKA

WLBK Christmas Party



YLAH – THE LATEST BUZZ



Nationally, sightings of the YLH have rocketed over the past month with 145 sightings and 45 nests traced up until the 22nd of August, significantly fewer than last year when 345 sightings and 86 nests were recorded. This is very encouraging. There is also, coincidentally, a noticeable reduction in wasp activity so perhaps the cause is environmental – the wet winter maybe but less likely, given the origin of the YLH, are the recent heatwaves. Whatever the cause we must not be complacent. There has been a couple of sightings in the northwest in Manchester (Littlebury) and Oldham (Chadderton) so although the vast majority of sightings are in the

southeast, it still has the capability to spread. Hitherto the BKAs local to these sightings were, like Warwickshire, low risk areas, but as you will have seen from last month's issue of BBKA news, they managed to respond by deploying bait stations, reasonably quickly.

We too need to have preparations in place to react promptly in the event that the YLH discovers our glorious county. Strides in this direction were made in July with our YLAH Monitoring Workshop attended by 40 or so members.

Bernard Brown
YLAHAT Co-ordinator
WBKA

WINTER MEETINGS PROGRAMME

A varied programme of talks has been arranged from September to April, on the third Thursday of each month (except December) 7.30-9.30 pm at Kenilworth Senior Citizen's Club, Abbey End. The December meeting is replaced with our truly excellent Christmas Party on **Friday 11th December**. All our meetings are both educational and social events – the talk is always followed by tea/coffee and CAKE.

Our meeting programme starts on **17th September** with Margaret Murdin, NDB and Past President of the BBKA. Margaret has spoken to the club previously on bee genetics but this time her title is bee nutrition and she will add some information about preparation for winter – I hope the early summer does not make this too late!

On **15th October**, Marin Anastasov will talk about why the bees do not follow the books. There is definitely more to this talk than they haven't learned to read!

On **19th November** we have a speaker from Bees Abroad, Boluwaji Durogbola, who will talk about beekeeping in a changing climate with a focus on Nigeria, where climate change is even more apparent.

After Christmas we have a talk from Jane Nimmo, former Secretary of WBKA, who has recently become a Master Beekeeper. We also have our annual AGM and on **18th March** a session on making and tasting mead from Debbie Smith, a champion mead maker and mead judge. Our last talk is by Richard Ricketts, one of the co editors of Bee Craft. Richard's talk on **15th April** is entitled By Rolls Royce to Rajastan.

Books previously held in our library will be for sale on 15th October before and after the talk. Payment is cash or card.

Do put all these dates in your diary, come and meet your friends, eat cake and learn something new.

Judith Masson
Meetings Secretary

QUEEN PUSHES PESTICIDES TO EGGS TO PROTECT HERSELF

Worker bees are the first line of defence when it comes to removing contamination in honeybee colonies, but a queen has her ways, too. A honeybee queen facing chronic exposure to pesticides will take up that contamination and pass it along to her eggs, a process researchers call maternal offloading.

The findings, which document for the first time the extent a queen will go to survive, are published in the journal *Current Biology*. Research was led by the University of California, Davis.

"In order to protect herself, the queen bee offloads these chemicals into her eggs to get rid of them," said Sascha Nicklisch, the paper's senior author and an associate professor in the Department of Environmental Toxicology. "No one has shown this in honeybees before."

The findings offer a glimpse into a way that pesticides may build up in a colony long after exposure, once worker bees can no longer filter out contaminants. The findings are important for beekeepers, growers and integrated-pest-management planners who may want to consider pesticide exposure during foraging or colony expansion times.

"When pesticides accumulate to the extent that the queen bee has eggs that are so loaded they may no longer develop properly, there could be a tipping point," Nicklisch said. "There may be a slow creeping effect of chemical accumulation that will contribute to delayed colony collapse."

Toxicology studies on honeybees have generally focused on worker bees. However, this research looked at where chemicals get deposited in the hive and how that affects the entire colony, including the queen, her ovaries, the eggs and the wax. Inside a colony, worker bees feed and care for queens and developing larvae.

It has long been thought that queens are protected by worker bees that filter out contamination from the food they give to queens, but the scientists are seeing a limit to this protection, said Angela Encerrado-Manriquez, the lead author on the paper.

"In our study, pesticides began to accumulate in queens over time, suggesting that worker filtration capacity can be overwhelmed," Encerrado-Manriquez said. "When this happens, queens have their own defense. Maternal offloading allows them to shunt the toxic burden to their eggs."

Researchers created so-called "nanocolonies," which represent the inner workings and functions of a hive and colony using conical plastic containers fitted with netted bottoms. Each nanocolony contained one queen and 60 worker bees.

The bees were given pollen, water and food tainted with the pesticide methyl parathion that was tagged with a low-level radioactive marker to enable tracking. In the first day, worker bees were able to filter out 95% of the pesticide and deposit it into the honeycomb, but that number fell to 86% by day 10.



One of the nanocolony environments created to represent a typical honey bee hive

The research was possible via a collaboration between the USDA, which provided unique expertise in honeybee biology and study design, and LLNL, which was able to measure radioactive tags down to the atomic level using a biological accelerator spectrometry, or BioAMS.

"With BioAMS, we can trace very low levels of a pesticide," said Bruce Buchholz, an LLNL scientist and author on the paper. "The pesticide concentrations we used were not lethal and were environmentally relevant to that seen in nature."

Honeybee queens can lay 1,500 to 2,000 eggs per day to support their hives, which pollinate about one-third of the world's food crops. Losing colonies diminishes agricultural productivity and food security.

"The queen is the only member of the hive who can lay eggs that become the next generation of workers," Nicklisch said. "She keeps the colony alive, so understanding how pesticides can affect queen bees and also her offspring is important."

How long queens can pass along contamination, the long-term effects on colonies and if it varies by pesticide are other topics for future research.

Article supplied by the University of California, Davis.

HINTS AND TIPS



IMPROVISED TRAVELLING SCREEN

Transporting bees over any distance runs the risk of them overheating, not only from being confined but also from the stress created by being tossed about en route. One of the ways to mitigate this is to remove the roof and add a travel screen – a wooden framed mesh placed on top of the boxes. Being a tad on the frugal side, I baulked at having to acquire and store such a piece of kit which would only get used once a year so it was time for some improvisation. I took a mesh floor, inserted an entrance block (I actually screwed it in place) – inverted the floor and hey presto! – a perfectly adequate travel screen.

Many thanks to Bernard Brown for this money saving gem!

UNITING COLONIES BEFORE WINTER

Now is the time to think about uniting colonies. Bad tempered colonies and weak ones can be managed by killing the queen of the unwanted colony and putting it on top of the recipient colony. Unite through newspaper which has some small slits in, hold down with a queen excluder. Do this in the evening and look for chewed paper at the entrance in the morning. Unwanted queens can be euthanised by putting them in the freezer.

FINISH FEEDING BY THE END OF THE MONTH

A strong colony needs 20kg or more of stores to see it through the winter. It is not easy to judge the amount extra needed so just keep feeding until the bees stop taking the feed. Try to get feeding finished by the end of September so the stores can be ripened and capped before the weather gets too cold.



If you find that the bees are not cleaning the wet supers but are adding to them then put an empty super between the brood box and wet super.

Now it is your chance! If you have any hints or tips that you would like to share, please send them to

h.essex211@gmail.com

Helen Essex



The editor of Bee Talk is Tanya Weaver.
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