



The HBKA

Buzzzzz
Word



APRIL 2016

The Newsletter of Herefordshire Beekeepers' Association
www.herefordshirebeekeepers.org.uk



LOOKING AHEAD...

Your Committee wants to do something a bit different with the HBKA Honey Show this year, everyone.

We're aiming for something a bit bigger, something to catch the public's imagination and draw them in, something to actively promote beekeeping and broaden its appeal, something involving trade stands, demonstrations, talks and other attractions; but all built around the nucleus of our usual high quality Honey Show.

Something that we'd like to call ...

"THE HEREFORDSHIRE FESTIVAL OF BEES & HONEY"

We will need **your** help to make this happen.

Please watch this space for further details

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 5 April - East LAN Apiary Meeting - Stone House

Tuesday 5 April - South LAN Indoor Meeting - Baptist Church Hall, Ross, HR9 7EA

Friday-Sunday 8, 9, 10 April - BBKA Spring Convention - Harper Adams University, Newport, TF10 8NB

Wednesday 13 April - North LAN Indoor Meeting - Bush Inn, Kings Pyon, HR4 8EH

Saturday 16 April - Beginners' Practicals - HBKA Apiary, Holme Lacy

Saturday 16 April - Wye Valley BKA - Swarming & Swarm Control led by Wally & Jenny Shaw - Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall - 11 am. start

Wednesday 20 April - South LAN Apiary Meeting - HBKA Apiary, Holme Lacy

Thursday 21 April - East LAN Apiary Meeting - Clayfoot Farm

Tuesday 26 April - Talk "Allergic Reactions" by Dr. Phillips - Three Counties Hotel, HR2 7BP

Saturday 30 April - Beginners' Practicals - HBKA Apiary, Holme Lacy

Tuesday 3 May - South LAN Apiary Meeting - HBKA Apiary, Holme Lacy

Saturday 7 May - Swarm Control Practice - HBKA Apiary, Holme Lacy

Tuesday 10 May - East LAN Apiary Meeting - Barethorne



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LAN REPORTS

SOUTH LAN MEETING – WEDNESDAY 9TH MARCH

The South LAN held the first of its two initial indoor meetings at the Baptist Church, Broad Street, Ross-on-Wye on Wednesday 9th March. Ten members attended. After Geoff Blake ran through some announcements,, members enjoyed coffee and homemade mini-scones.

Colin Pavey then led on the main event , "What To Expect: The Annual Bee Cycle". The purpose of the meeting was to show the relationship between the time of year/temperatures and the impact such changes have on forage, corresponding bee activity and what beekeepers should anticipate and respond to. Members were given a blank chart each to fill in and there was a group discussion to identify what should happen and when.

There were a few memorable things for me. We learned that honey bees cannot access pollen and nectar in field beans unless a bumble bee has already been there first and bitten into the flowers! I also learned a few new bee sayings/descriptions such as "for bees you need bees" meaning that for there to be strong growth in numbers there needs to be a strong colony first. Also, "boiling the jam" was a reference to bees fanning to dry out the honey, and my favourite, "like kids out of school and on the street", to describe the behaviour of bees when there are lots of them at a time when there is little forage around so that there's nothing much else to do other than make a nuisance of themselves by robbing other colonies!

Our next meeting is on Wednesday April 6th at 7.30 pm and the topic is "How To Work A Hive: A Dummy Run". All HBKA members are invited. The venue will be the Baptist Church again which is easy to find, central, and there is plenty of free parking available in the evening.

Many thanks to Ian Melvin for the above report (Ed.)

NORTH LAN MEETING - SATURDAY 12TH MARCH

We held an informal question and answer session at the pub in Bush Bank on Saturday March 12th. Our next meeting will be at 7.30 pm on Wednesday April 13th at the same venue. We hope to arrange apiary meetings about once a month through the summer once the weather warms up. Please contact Mary if you would like to host an apiary meeting.

Many thanks to Mary Walter for this item (Ed.)



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EAST LAN MEETING - TUESDAY 22ND MARCH

East LAN beekeepers were pleased to welcome several colleagues from other LANs to Bish-ops Frome Village Hall for their first meeting of the 2016 season, a talk by National Honey Show prize-winner Lyndon Corbett entitled "Honey & Wax Preparation For Show".

Lyndon began by taking us through all the stages of producing a show-grade block of bees-wax and it soon became clear that, to obtain the highest quality wax, you needed some essential, carefully sourced bits of equipment including tights, empty Brillo pad boxes, cooking oil, a slow-cooker and a dog bowl - as well as A levels in Patience, Perseverance and Nerd-ism! (Well, Lyndon did freely admit that he was a bit of perfectionist and had spent the best part of a morning in Allan's of Netherton going through 200 dog bowls in order to find one that was as flawless as possible to use as his ultimate wax mould!).

He showed us how to work wonders with some rubber bands, an empty Brillo pad box and a pair of old tights - and, even better, a layer of tights plus a layer of kitchen paper plus another layer of tights.* Here's how I thought it went

- Secure a layer of tights material across the top of an empty Brillo pad box with a rubber band and place on the material the pieces of wax you wish to use - then place the whole caboodle in a warming cabinet heated to between 50C and 65C.
- Remove from warming cabinet, allow to cool, remove strained and solidified wax from bottom of Brillo pad box and scrape off gunk.
- Now give it the warming cabinet treatment again but this time use a three-stage filter (see * above)

This should give you wax good enough to enter for classes in a local Honey Show. However for wax of an even higher quality, a more complex approach is needed - which is where the cooking oil, slow cooker and dog bowl come in - no room here to explain further I'm afraid but I have my notes and intend to have a go at doing what Lyndon suggested. Que sera, sera - as Doris Day would say!

Lyndon went on to talk about honey production (useful tip - a piece of clingfilm placed on top of the honey in your honey bucket before storing will take off most of the scum when you warm it up again and remove it prior to jarring), swarm gathering (with his mighty vacuum gatherer that gently hooovers bees from great heights) and other ideas that were clearly the product of a very clever, practical (he's an engineer by training) and analytical mind.

Many thanks, Lyndon - a great evening to kick off 2016 and loads of ideas to keep coming back to throughout the season.

C.S.



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EVENTS

HOW DO BEES LEARN?

Talk by Marin Anastasov, BSc MSc

Having started beekeeping as a teenager, in Bulgaria, Marin Anastasov soon learnt that beekeeping involves observing your bees, and treating the whole colony as one organism. By understanding how bees learn, it is possible for the beekeeper to use that information to make himself a better beekeeper.

Bees can obtain knowledge in several ways – learning from experience (trial and error), instinct (inherited information) and through communication with others.

Learning is not required in a constant environment (i.e. home duties) as this is instinctive. But learning is important for a changing, or varied environment. The ability to respond to change means they can deal with different situations - swarming, for example, or trying out different forage plants for nectar and pollen.

A bee's sense organs provide the essential link to the environment for both learning and communication. The sensory world of the bee is adapted to make use of the signals transmitted by flowers (e.g. colour, shape, and smell) They may collect information through taste, touch, sound, temperature, speed, magnetism, humidity, and even carbon dioxide.

In the 1950s, Karl von Frisch did a series of experiments to test bee's perception of colour.

For the first experiment, a blue card, with sugar syrup on it, was placed near a hive of bees. As expected, the bees visited the card to get the sugar syrup. Then a red card was added, and this time there was no sugar syrup on the blue card. The bees still chose to visit the blue card, showing they could see the two cards as different colours (but maybe not in the same way as a human would).

For the second experiment, the blue card with syrup was repeated, as before, and then the bees were shown a blue card (no syrup) and a variety of grey and black cards. As expected, the bees visited the blue card. The test was repeated with a red card, with sugar syrup, which the bees visited. But when they were shown the red card (no syrup) and a variety of grey and black cards, they didn't all go to the red card. Conclusion? - they couldn't distinguish between the colours, showing that bees can't see red.

Bees see red as black (the reflecting UV) - and as orange reflects UV too, it also looks dark (*see illustration on opposite page*).

Karl von Frisch also did a series of tests, looking at the function of scent and colour .

A blue card, with sugar syrup and scent on it, was put by the hive, and the bees visited it.

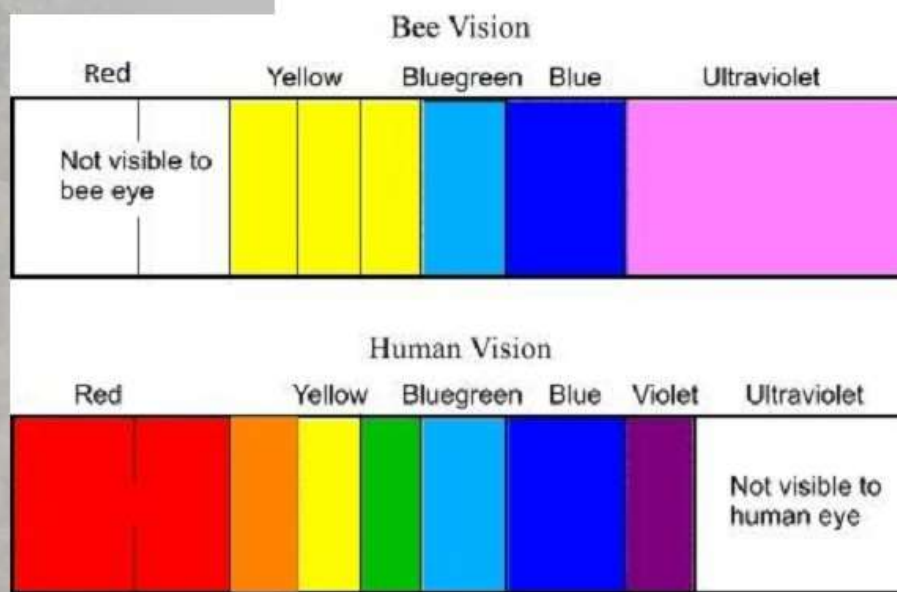
When the blue card had only syrup on it, and a grey card was used with the scent, the bees went for the grey card instead. This shows the importance of scent when bees forage.



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Perception of colour



When tested with complex cognitive tasks, bees can pick out similarities and differences. If shown two cards, with the same pattern on them but tilted at different angles where one tilted to the right has sugar syrup on it and one tilted to the left doesn't, the bees learn to visit the right-tilted pattern and continue to do so when the syrup is removed.

Bees can also take on abstract concepts. An experiment using a 'Y' shaped maze showed how they could be trained to go through a yellow opening to a yellow back wall, or through a blue opening to a blue back wall. If the experiment was changed to a horizontal pattern on the opening, instead of a colour, they also knew to go to the same shape on the back wall.

Bees can discriminate between left and right, symmetrical and asymmetrical, odd and even, and more or less. And the speed at which they learn is amazing - it takes three to five experiments for shapes or colours to be learnt, but only two for scent – there is 90% accuracy on a single experience in discriminating odours, and 100% on the second experience (Clever bees!) One of the practical aspects of bees having these skills is so they can recognise flowers, which never look uniformly the same.

One of the ways beekeepers can use some of this knowledge is by making the hives in their apiary different colours and patterns (not grey though, as the bees can't see it). There will be less chance of drift between the hives, as the bees will find it easier to distinguish their own hive from the rest. Useful when space is limited and all the hives have to be orientated with their entrances facing the same way.



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As we know, the waggle dance is how the bees communicate direction and distance. But experiments have shown that bees perceive distance on how much information they have taken in on the journey – the busier the landscape, the further the bees will think they have travelled and the waggle dance will communicate this to the other bees. It is even thought that the queen affects the way bees dance, which can cause confusion in the transition after re-queening. Learning in bees is affected by several factors – age (they learn better when older), juvenile hormone levels, pupa temperature while developing (warmer means cleverer – summer bees learn better than winter bees), and chemicals (e.g. neonicotinoids – they interfere with the transmission of nerve signals).

The fact I was most interested in was when Marin said it is possible to train our bees to forage on particular crops – by soaking the flowers in sugar syrup, and feeding them to the bees, they learn to think of it as a good food source.... Can I persuade my bees to go for the spring blossom, rather than the rape? Now that really would be worth a try!

A really fascinating talk.... And if people want to learn about more of the experiments Karl von Frisch did, there is a book, now out of print, but copies are not impossible to find.

Many thanks to Justine Gallaccio for such a detailed and informative report of what was a very complex talk - brushes at the ready everyone - get painting those hives! (Ed.)

.... AND COMING SOON

HBKA EVENING MEETING - TUESDAY 26TH APRIL

We have been fortunate to book Dr Phillips from Hereford Hospital to come to talk to us on April 26th. The meeting will be at 7.30pm at the Three Counties Hotel, Belmont Road.

Dr Phillips is an expert in respiratory medicine. He will talk about the problems which occasionally occur after being stung. Anaphylaxis is a rare event, but it is as well to be able to recognise the problem and know what to do if you think you are developing an allergy. Most of us suffer a skin reaction after being stung, especially if we were slow in removing the sting, but a more general reaction causing difficulty with breathing can be much more serious.

PRACTICAL BEEKEEPING SESSIONS - Saturdays April 16th and 30th

Everyone is welcome to attend our practical events at Holme Lacy. We will meet at the village hall, at 2pm on both dates. The hall is on the south side of the B4399, post code HR2 6LP. There will be a display of beekeeping equipment and we will practise making up frames and demonstrate how to put together a flat pack hive. Weather permitting, we hope to have some hands-on beekeeping experience with the bees at the apiary. Please wear suitable clothing. We will be able to provide beginners with bee jackets, but you should bring clean wellingtons and marigold or latex gloves. Thick, loose trousers should be worn. Bees do not like artificial scents such as hairspray or aftershave. There are currently road works on the Hereford side of the B4399 so allow plenty of time to get there.

At the apiary please remember not to stand in the flight path, and allow beginners to come to the front and handle the bees. There may be sheep in the orchard so make sure that the gates are shut. Late-comers will be given directions when they get to the village hall.

If you need equipment this can be pre-ordered from Bob Cross provided you give him seven days' notice. [_____](#)

We plan to have a question and answer session over tea at the end of both afternoons. A contribution of cake or savouries will be most welcome.

NEWS & FEATURES

SWARM COLLECTION

Mary Walter writes:

John Hewitt has set up a new page on the HBKA website (www.herefordshirebeekeepers.org.uk) for anyone wishing to collect a swarm. There is a short form to fill in giving your contact details, distance you are prepared to travel, and any other information you wish to add (e.g. weekends only). Your information can be removed at any time, and will be deleted after a month unless you renew it.

Before collecting a swarm, it is wise to obtain as much information as possible about its size and position. Some “swarms” turn out to be wasp nests or tree bumble bees. There is guidance on collecting and hiving swarms on the BBKA website. It is not worth risking life and limb to retrieve a swarm from the top of a tree.

Not all swarms have a viable queen. If there are no eggs after about a week and the bees have failed to build a brood nest, you might have a queenless stock. In this case another swarm could be added into a box above a sheet of newspaper. Queenless bees should not be left for any length of time as, once laying workers develop, it is impossible to re-queen them.

SWARM CONTROL WITHOUT FINDING THE QUEEN

Equipment needed:

Before you start – gather together a spare hive, consisting of a brood box containing a full set of waxed frames with at least some drawn comb, a crown board, an excluder, a roof and a floor.

Method:

1. Move main colony to one side and place the new empty hive and floor in original place.
2. Remove one spare frame from the new brood box
3. Take one frame from the main colony which has eggs and brood but NO QUEEN CELLS , and place it in the new hive between drawn frames.
4. Put the spare frame (from 2 above) at the back of the original brood box.
5. Put queen excluder, supers, crown board and roof on the new hive.
6. Put the crown board and roof back on the original hive.
7. All the flying bees will join the new hive – which may, or may not, contain the queen.
8. Bees in the original hive will tear down any queen cells if the queen is present, or raise a new queen – as required.
9. Bees in new hive will build up if the original queen is present, or raise a new queen, as required.

Many thanks to John Harley for this - just what I need with my lack of queen-finding ability! (Ed.)



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UPDATE ON PESTICIDE PROBLEMS

Mary Walter writes:

“Equity”, the pesticide containing the organophosphate **“chlorpyrifos”**, was one of the chemical residues found in the bees analysed from John Robinson’s apiary (*see last month’s Buzzword – pages 8 and 9*). This has now been **banned** following a European Union review. New human health-based safety levels were agreed in 2015 because of the risk to operators. From 1 April 2016, the only permitted use will be a protected brassica seedling drench treatment applied via an automated gantry sprayer. Storage, disposal and re-labelling of any existing chlorpyrifos stocks must be completed by 1 October 2016.

MEMBERSHIP QUERIES

Lester Martin (Membership Secretary) writes:

1. Some members have renewed their membership electronically but unfortunately I’m unable to identify them. The only details I have are as follows:
 - Mr. J.J. & Mrs. C.M.G. who paid via BACS on 6th Feb;
 - Rosaleen Smith who paid via PayPal on 18th Feb;
 - Rebecca Ameko who paid via PayPal on 11th Feb;Could these people please contact me at [Thank you.](#)
2. For those members who have yet to renew their membership, please don't forget to include the "late payment fee" of £5 - otherwise your application will not be processed. (The closing date for renewals was 29th February 2016).

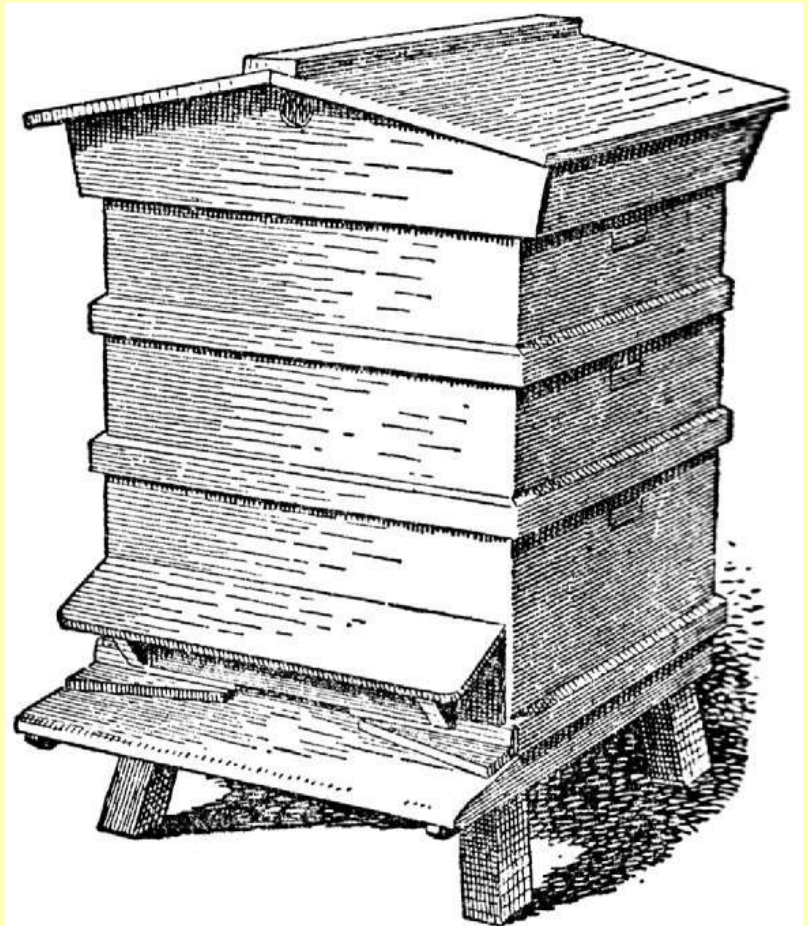


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BOB'S BEELINES FOR APRIL

- The tail end of the winter is still with us – drier but still showery with a cold wind and some frost - not good weather for our bees.
- I made a quick check on my colonies on Saturday 12th March and found small patches of brood and good patches of eggs. One hive had a drone-laying queen - otherwise they were all OK.
- The Asian Hornet, though not arrived in this country yet, is only just across the Channel in France and queens could arrive here at any time on a load of timber or imported goods. It is the duty of all bee keepers to keep a good look-out for this insect (it's about the size of a queen wasp) and to make traps to catch it if we can before it starts to build its nests and multiply at the expense of our honeybees. I have constructed several traps for the Asian Hornet. They can be made for a very little cost (about £1.00) and, if you would like to see some, please get in touch



That's all for now

Bob and Kath Cross



ADVERTISEMENTS & NOTICES

BEE SPACE...??!

A friend has offered space in her apple orchard to anyone who is interested in keeping bees and doesn't have the space at home, or is looking for a new location.

The orchard is located near Lugwardine (3 miles East of Hereford) and is approximately 2.5 acres in area, containing 80 or more old fruit trees (mainly cider apple) and about 25 younger fruit trees. The orchard is certified organic. Sheep graze there for a few months per year. Grass and weeds are topped twice a year. There is already a fenced-off area where bees have been kept in the past.



WYE VALLEY BEEKEEPERS

SWARMING AND SWARM CONTROL

led by WALLY AND JENNY SHAW

Saturday 16th April Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall - 11 am. start

Wye Valley Beekeepers have arranged a talk by Wally and Jenny Shaw to be held in the Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall. Swarm control is a very important part of bee management which is not always given enough attention. For amateur or professional beekeepers the loss of a large proportion of a hive to a swarm will probably result in less productive hives and colonies which may not be strong enough to make it through the next winter.

From the point of view of practical management, swarm control can be divided into two distinct parts with a clear (biological) threshold between them – which is when the colony starts queen cells.

1) Pre-emptive swarm control – the type of management that can be used before queen cells are present in the hive (to prevent their initiation).

2) Re-active swarm control – the type of management that can be used when queen cells are produced (to prevent the issue of swarms).

If you would like to attend this talk it is open to all beekeepers at a charge of £8 on the door, tea and coffee available, bring a packed lunch.

The location is Ewyas Harold Memorial Hall, HR2 0EL
Ewyas Harold is just off the A465 Abergavenny to Hereford road. From the A465 head towards Ewyas Harold village and the Hall is 300m on the right hand side.



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Bob & Pam Mendy
Hill House Farm

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Bob & Kath Cross
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contact our SBI, Colin Pavey on 07775 119471/ email colin.pavey@apha.gsi.gov.uk

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North LAN:	Mary Walter (Leominster)
East LAN:	Chris Stowell (Bringsty)
Marlene Hewitt (Burley Gate)	

Newsletter Editor	Chris Stowell
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CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Items for the Newsletter should be sent to the Editor - Chris Stowell,

The deadline for inclusion of material in any

edition of the Buzzword is the 24th day of the preceding month unless otherwise notified. While care is taken to verify the material published, the Editor does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of statements made by contributors or necessarily share the views expressed.

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