



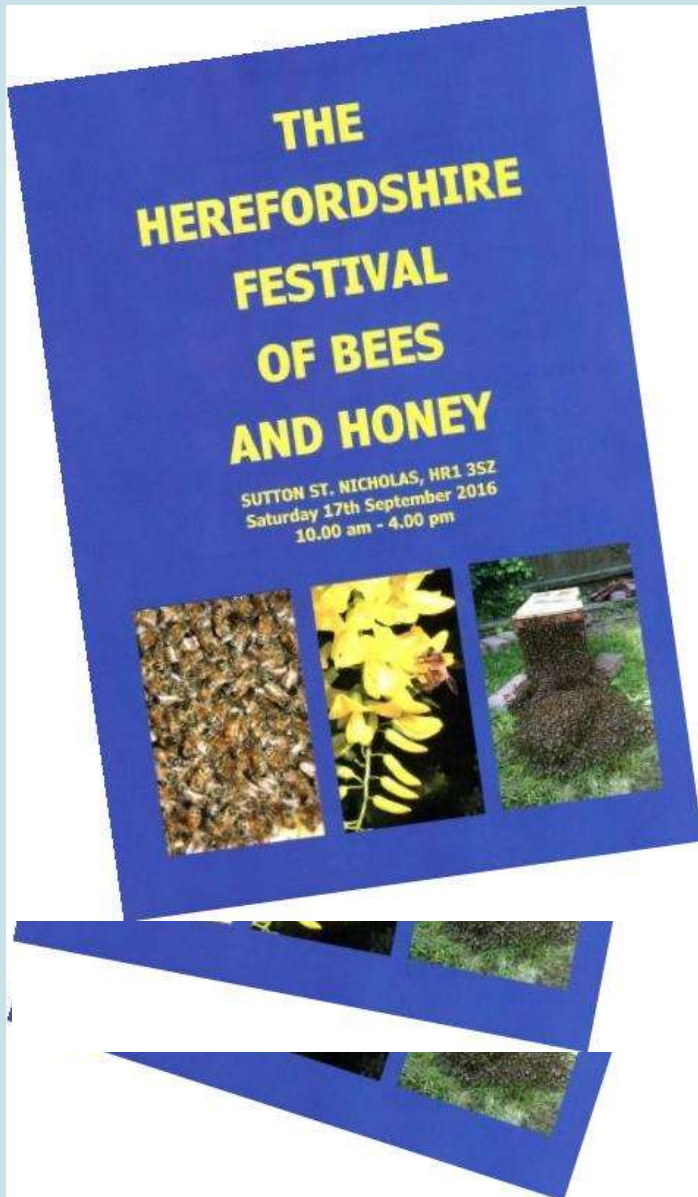
The HBKA

Buzzzz Word



JULY 2016

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



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 5 July - South LAN Apiary Meeting - HBKA Apiary, Holme Lacy

Friday 8 July - North LAN Apiary Meeting - Millcroft Farm

Saturday 16 July - HBKA Garden Party - Upper House

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

Tuesday 2 August - East LAN Apiary Meeting - Acton Green

Saturday 13 August - Bob's Honey Harvesting Workshop #01 - Stone House

Thursday 18 August - East LAN Apiary Meeting - The Old Rectory

Saturday 20 August - Bob's Honey Harvesting Workshop #02

Saturday 17 September - Herefordshire Festival of Bees and Honey (incorporating HBKA Honey Show) - Sutton St Nicholas Village Hall, HR1 3SZ

Tue-Thurs 20-22 September - BIBBA Conference - Isle of Man

Thursday 20 October - Talk by Professor Robert Pickard - "Wonderful Things about Bees"

TO ALL HBKA MEMBERS - PUBLICITY WILL BE THE KEY TO WHETHER OUR "NEW LOOK" HONEY SHOW IS A SUCCESS. FLYERS ARE NOW AVAILABLE (SEE ABOVE) IN VARIOUS SIZES (A5, A4 and A3) AND CAN BE OBTAINED VIA LAN COORDINATORS. IF EACH OF YOU COULD FIND 3 OR 4 GOOD DISPLAY POINTS LOCAL TO YOU (E.G. VILLAGE SHOPS, PUBLIC NOTICE BOARDS, SCHOOLS, PUBS, ETC.) WE WILL BE ABLE TO BEGIN TO SPREAD THE WORD.....(see also page 6)



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LAN REPORTS

EAST LAN APIARY MEETING – THURSDAY 26 MAY

The day had been cold and cloudy but at about 4.30 pm the sun came out and it warmed up to about 16 degrees. Seventeen beekeepers turned up at Panks Bridge Farm and we split into two groups to see my four hives that are situated beyond a small gate at the bottom of my garden.

Bob Cross opened up two of the hives. In the stronger hive he checked for queen cells and varroa mite as I hadn't treated them at Christmas with acid and because of the cold weather in the spring I wasn't sure if my Api-life Var treatment had worked. He did find a few bees with varroa damage but didn't find any large queen cells. I had hoped he would find a queen cell that I could box up as a Nuc for a back-up if a queen was lost in my apiary. Bob found that the smaller hive was doing well and he found plenty of eggs and brood, so I believe that that hive will soon catch up in size.

We have had quite a lot of oil seed rape within a half mile radius and the apiary is surrounded by cider orchards coming into blossom but the bees may not have taken full advantage of all this nectar and pollen because of the colder than average weather in the spring. In the stronger of the two hives that I opened we found four open queen cells so they were on the verge of swarming! The frames in the super were not all capped but very heavy so I added another box to the hive. The smaller hive I opened was similar to the one Bob opened and there was an impressive amount of eggs and brood to be found on nearly every frame.



Afterwards, most of the group stayed in the kitchen to have tea and cake and we had a good chat.

P.S. On the weekend after the meeting I suited up two of my grandchildren in the suits now owned by our LAN group (*see left*) and we found the frame with the queen cells, added it to two frames of nectar and pollen and made up a nucleus box with a couple more frames of new foundation.

Many thanks to Marlene for this report – it's good to see the younger generation becoming involved, especially as education is the main aim of Herefordshire Bee Keepers' Association. (Ed.)



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SOUTH LAN APIARY MEETING - TUESDAY 7 JUNE

Some fairly advanced beekeeping was taking place at Colin Pavey's apiary for the South LAN meeting on June 7. The apiary is in a delightful setting at Kings Caple and, after we had shooed the horses into another part of the orchard, we got started.

The subject was queen rearing, which is a fascinating but complex topic, so this isn't the place to go into the detail. For that you need a full-blown workshop, and ideally some preparatory reading up on the subject.

Colin had already done a great deal of work beforehand to ensure that there were suitable frames of eggs that could be harvested to raise new queens. About a dozen of us had a go with the grafting tools to pick out eggs and place them in the artificial queen cells – it's a tricky job, you need patience and a steady hand. The rack of potential new queens was then placed in a nuke to await developments.

In true Blue Peter style Colin had a rack of cells which he had prepared earlier. He went to the hive and withdrew it with a flourish, only to find the bees hadn't co-operated – not one queen cell had been built up.

Colin was philosophical: "If you can't take disappointment, don't take up beekeeping," he said. But when the bees do play ball the results are impressive. Members who have had Colin's queens praise them highly.

Queen rearing is nowhere near as straightforward as this simplified account suggests but – hey – if you had wanted more detail you shouldn't have waited until we were taking our wellies off to ask for a write-up. I could have taken notes if I'd known.

Afterwards we all adjourned to the Harp at Hoarwithy to work on building up team spirit within the local beekeeping fraternity – very successfully, I might add.

Many thanks to Ellen Davies for this report - good to hear about all that team spirit being built up down there in the South - keep up the good work! (Ed.)

EAST LAN APIARY MEETING – TUESDAY 7 JUNE

Well - those of us who host these hive openings know how it feels! A hot, clammy day...then just a half hour before folk were due to arrive ... a not so distant clap of thunder and so it rumbled around in different parts of the sky.

How a thunder storm never materialised, I know not. Apparently, Ledbury had it hard, as did other places. All down to the strange pockets we live in, I suppose, what with the Malverns, Black Mountains etc.

Dave Sutton began the inspection with my sad little hive that I knew was dying. No queen, the poor things struggled on, trying their hardest to make sense of their rôle with no focus to their lives. *(A bit like us, post-Brexit! Ed.)* Dave reckoned there were dwarf drones present and recommended tipping the few remaining bees out. He said they were geriatric and maybe the other hive would take them in.

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The other hive had been a pain. It had swarmed and then moved on. But...what joy! Something was going on...Bob Cross spotted a young queen and she was definitely starting to lay. Amazing! This is what beekeeping is all about.

Back, then, for tea. Plenty of new members. Great! As always my dear mum had baked for us. But oh dear - Chris, in a vain bid to be useful, managed to trip and send my mum's splendid fruit cake flying across the patio. All I ask is...please don't tell my mum!

Thanks to Ginny Holly for this report – and no, I certainly won't tell your mum! (Ed.)



Bob Cross receiving a special present after the meeting on the occasion of his 57th birthday - oops, sorry - those figures should be the other way round!



East LAN in the apiary...



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NORTH LAN APIARY MEETING – THURSDAY 23 JUNE

Dower Cottage in King's Pyon was the meeting point for this meeting of the northern LAN group. The apiary is in the garden and the bees enjoy a wonderful view across fields towards Westhope Hill. Currently, there are 3 colonies in total and each has had its own particular problems during this season. So it was good that other beekeepers should come along with support and advice.

The bees in Hive 3 are a swarm from a local farm and equestrian school, collected last year. Fed throughout the winter and despite probable poisoning earlier in the spring they were very strong. A few weeks back the hive was split and a queen cell and some frame taken to start another colony. The rest were put on to new comb using the Bailey method which hadn't gone quite according to plan! The bees that should have gone up, initially didn't and thinking that they had, a queen excluder had been put on, trapping the queen in the wrong box! Mary to the rescue; found the unmarked queen and showed us all how to use the crown of thorns and mark her. With the known position of the queen it was easy to sort out the boxes and at last the queen is on new comb. We added another super and hope for a honey crop!

We did not look at Hive 1 which was the original colony in the garden as they had recently swarmed – the previous signs indicated that perhaps there was time to divide the colony and prevent swarming. The colony was divided but an increasing volume of buzzing indicated a mass of bees heading for the high branches of the nearby damson tree and then disappearing forever. Now the remaining bees were settling having performed a maiden flight and it was possible that disturbing them at this time might cause them to leave the hive altogether.

The middle hive is a united combination of bees, brood in all stages and a queen cell from Hives 1 and 3 but a few days before the LAN meeting it was discovered that the cell had not produced a queen, the brood in all stages were nearly all baby bees, very angry and the honey stores were decreasing rapidly! Despair – was it time to say that beekeeping was just impossible? Then a swarm appeared in the garden, within reach in a plum tree. Having decided to take a risk that the swarm would be disease free, they were 'popped' in a pillowcase and delivered to be united with the queenless hive. We peeked inside and the bees were calm, just getting on with being bees – no obvious signs of the queen laying.

Then to the all important tea time, the weather being warm enough to sit out in another part of the garden to enjoy a cuppa and Brian's sponge cakes whilst discussing beekeeping – and not one mention of the Referendum as it had been Polling Day!

... and we all know now what the result of that was! Many thanks to Judi Thomas for her report - obviously life in the North is full of incident. (Ed.)



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EVENTS

.... COMING SOON

HBKA SUMMER GARDEN PARTY - SATURDAY 16TH JULY

This year's Garden Party is due to take place at **Upper House**
We're hoping for good weather out here in the East so that plenty of you can come and enjoy all the usual summery things that happen on these occasions with the added bonus of a lovely situation and some pleasant company. Book this in your diaries now, everyone.....

.... AND THEN

BOB'S HONEY HARVESTING WORKSHOP - SATURDAY 13TH AUGUST

Bob Cross's workshops are now an established item on the calendar and are ideal for beginners wishing to learn about all aspects of harvesting and processing honey. There will be several sessions during the day so if you'd like to sign up for one, please email Chris Stowell or [if you want to find out more before committing, have a chat to Bob](#)



.... AND AFTER THAT

HEREFORDSHIRE FESTIVAL OF BEES & HONEY - SATURDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER



THE HEREFORDSHIRE FESTIVAL OF BEES AND HONEY

SUTTON ST. MICHAEL, HR1 2SE
Saturday 17th September 2016
10.00 am - 4.00 pm

This will be the first outing for HBKA's "new look" Honey Show which is designed to be a much wider-ranging event than those of recent years. At the heart of the Festival will be our annual Honey Show (lots of entries please everyone - you already have the Schedule) but built around that will be lots of other bee-related activities - trade stalls (plants, bee produce, books, equipment) - short talks about bees by various local experts - demonstrations (e.g. how a hive works, honey extraction) - and refreshments which will be available throughout the day. Publicity is now vital so please do your utmost to get our posters and flyers displayed and distributed in your part of Herefordshire. The main aim of our Association is to educate the public about bees and this event is the main point in our year when we can do this. So please don't be shy - help us to raise the level of awareness about beekeeping among the general public - grab some leaflets and spread the word!



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NEWS & FEATURES

NBU ALERT – 30TH JUNE 2016

Beekeepers may wish to monitor their colony food levels closely over the next month as many colonies, particularly those which are strong and had their spring honey crop removed, will be at risk of starving. In some parts of the UK, the weather is still cold and foraging opportunities for large colonies are few and far between. It is important to check and monitor all your colonies feed levels, if you do not wish to open them up because of poor weather, lift below the floor, in turn, on both sides of the hive to see how much it weighs. Where the hive is light, liquid feed should be applied directly above the bees. Feed can be prepared from refined white sugar and water mixed at a 2:1 ratio or one of the proprietary ready mixed syrups available from Beekeeping equipment suppliers. More information about mixing up sugar can be found in the Best Practice Guidelines no. 7 <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167>

Large starving colonies of bees will take 1 gallon (approx. 5 Litres) of syrup very quickly while smaller colonies will take half a gallon (approx. 2.5 Litres). After feeding, heft the hives again and check the weight and if in doubt feed some more in a few days.

HBKA TEACHING APIARY AT HOLME LACY

HBKA Membership Secretary Lester Martin writes....

I have just returned from a LAN meeting, which was held at the HBKA teaching apiary. It was not my first visit to this venue, but it was the first time that I realised what a fantastic facility it is!

Possibly due to the name "teaching apiary" and its location at Holme Lacy, I thought the apiary was owned and run by the agricultural college, and that we were just allowed to visit ... how wrong I was!

We, the HBKA, have a dozen or so hives sitting in a beautiful orchard in Holme Lacy. They are ours for us all to use! These hives are all deliberately (or maybe not totally deliberately) in different 'states' so that members can see for themselves, hands on, what is happening, what can go wrong and get some suggestions on how to improve different scenarios.

It is a very useful, ever-present resource, brilliant for anybody wanting to get a bee experience.

As a newish member, I urge all fellow members to pester your LAN coordinators to organise a meeting or two at Holme Lacy in order to make full use of the apiary. It's available at any time on any day – so let's use it.....



NEONICOTINOIDS

Lin Hoppe has suggested that readers might like to see the reply she received from George Eustice when she enquired about recent requests by the NFU for emergency authorisation of some banned neonicotinoid pesticides.

Here it is:

The UK Government has implemented EU restrictions on neonicotinoids in full. In imposing the restrictions, the European Commission acknowledged the evidence was incomplete and promised a review of the science relating to neonicotinoids and bees. This is now under way and provides an important opportunity to produce up-to-date assessments of all the available scientific evidence. The UK will contribute to the review as it progresses. We continue to ensure that decisions on the use of neonicotinoids should be based on a full assessment of the available scientific information.

Legislation sets out specific rules for authorisation in emergency situations in crop protection. This requires that authorisation can only be for "limited and controlled use" where such a measure appears necessary because of "a danger which cannot be contained by other reasonable means".

As you are aware, in April the NFU submitted two applications to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE - the regulator) for emergency authorisation of neonicotinoid seed treatments on oilseed rape against insect pests. The Government's independent advisers, the UK Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP), advised that neither of the applications meet the requirements for emergency authorisation. Accordingly, based on the evidence and the advice, I rejected both applications.

Advice from the ECP can be found online at: gov.uk/government/groups/expert-committee-on-pesticides#advice-to-ministers

The NFU has now submitted revised applications. These will be considered in the same way against the same criteria as required by the Regulation.

George Eustice
GEORGE EUSTICE MP



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

T 03459 335577
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
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15 June 2016

Bill Wiggin MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

From George Eustice MP
Minister of State for Farming, Food and Marine Environment

Dear Bill

Thank you for your email of 23 May to the Secretary of State, on behalf of your constituent, about bees, neonicotinoids and the recent application from the National Farmers Union (NFU) for emergency authorisation of Cruiser OSR and Modesto. I am replying as Minister responsible for this policy area.

Protecting our pollinators is a priority for this government. They are an essential part of our environment and play a crucial role in food production. Our National Pollinator Strategy highlights that everyone, be they landowners, land managers, councils, or window-box gardeners, can do their bit for pollinators. The National Pollinator Strategy (NPS) is available from: www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-pollinator-strategy-for-bees-and-other-pollinators-in-england.

The NPS forms a framework for collective action to help manage and raise awareness of the pressures facing pollinators. To raise public awareness, a 'Call to Action', 'Bees' Needs: Food and a Home' (www.wildlifetrusts.org/Bees-needs) provides five simple messages to all land owners/managers on the essential needs of pollinators and how to fulfil them.

Farmers and other land managers make a vital contribution to supporting pollinators through management and creation of beneficial habitat features. Farmers can receive funding to carry out this beneficial management through our agri-environment schemes, particularly through the Wild Pollinator and Farm Wildlife Package, part of the new Countryside Stewardship scheme. In total we are spending £3.1 billion on agri-environment schemes. An associated monitoring and evaluation programme will assess the uptake and effectiveness of this package.

Pesticide active substances are assessed at EU level and are only approved if they meet safety requirements. The UK is responsible for authorising products containing approved active substances. For this we carry out a thorough assessment of the scientific evidence. Risks to bees are a key part of the assessment carried out before products are authorised. The regulatory regime also provides for regular reviews to take account of the latest information and scientific knowledge.

Many thanks to Lin for sharing this with us.....



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BOB'S BEELINES FOR JUNE

We're now in July which should be the month for our main honey crop with a bit of luck! We have had the rain, so now we could do with some sunshine. Varroa seems to be a bit of a problem this year so keep a check on your brood nest and under-floor tray.

We had a good time representing HBKA at the Three Counties Show and I would like to thank Mary Walter and all the helpers for the hard work they put in to set it up.

That's all for now,

Bob and Kath Cross.



TRAWLING THE NET by Roger Gill

I have the great advantage of having no bees, no hive, no experience and no knowledge, so naturally am casting round to soak up information. For instance there seem to be great everlasting debates in the bee world about the advantages or otherwise of poly hives versus modified national hives (which were designed in 1944 when there was a shortage of wood as it was needed to build Mosquitoes for the RAF). The authoritative answer has just been published last month: <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs00484-015-1057-z>

On this last point, the paper was produced not by an academic, but by the physicist/engineer husband of a bee keeper in Hampshire. He (Derek Mitchell) and his wife give talks to, for instance, the Oxford BKA. Perhaps we could tempt him or them up to Hereford one damp autumn evening.

There is plenty of rubbish out there and I sometimes stumble across bits during the day when I really should be doing arguably more useful things. For instance did you know that the third week of June (starting Monday 13th) was European bee week: <http://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/opinion/european-bee-week-what-the-eu-should-do-for-bees-and-biodiversity/> and <http://www.beeweek.eu/programme/> ?

Or that Kew has just transferred and re-erected a 17m high sculpture of a bee swarm: <http://uk.reuters.com/video/2016/06/16/giant-hive-highlights-bee-plight?videoId=368944907&videoChannel=81&channelName=Entertainment> (well I do use Reuters a lot for other things) and <http://www.kew.org/visit-kew-gardens/explore/attractions/hive> ?

Finally, if you went to the talk on anaphylaxis back in April (Bee Aware by Dr. Aled Phillips), you might find this an interesting follow-up item: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-36539882>

Many thanks to Roger, one of our newer members, for wasting his time in a good cause! More please Roger..... (Ed.)

P.S. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-36578310>

P.P.S. <http://www.savelondonbees.co.uk/>

...OK Roger - down boy, down - that's enough for now – you can have another slot in a future edition!



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LAN COORDINATORS

South LAN:	Geoff Blake
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,

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