



The HBKA

Buzzzz Word



APRIL 2017

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



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 1 April - East LAN Apiary Meeting - Stone House

Friday, Saturday & Sunday 7-9 April - BBKA Spring Convention - Harper Adams University, TF10 8NB

Wednesday 12 April - North LAN Meeting - Bush Inn, Bush Bank, Kings Pyon, HR4 8EH

Thursday 20 April - East LAN Apiary Meeting - Stretton Grandison



LAN REPORTS

EAST LAN MEETING – THURSDAY 9 MARCH

Members attending this last of East LAN's winter meetings found that, on entering Stanford Bishop Village Hall, they were faced with a large amount of beekeeping equipment which had been carefully laid out on tables prior to the meeting. The culprits proved to be Bob and Kath Cross (naturally!) who are always the first to arrive and it was Bob who started things off by demonstrating how to assemble a frame.

Dave Sutton then persuaded several other people to have a go and much scraping and hammering ensued during the course of which cups of tea and nibbles gradually began to appear from the direction of the kitchen courtesy of Kath Cross and helpers.

The result of all this endeavour turned out to be quite a few very passable frames and there followed a discussion about cleaning frames using a Burco boiler and washing soda, a practice highly recommended by several of those present.

Dave then went on to talk about what to look for when doing the first inspection of the season, specifically mentioning the symptoms of nosema and ways in which it could be minimised. Then on to feeding – fondant or syrup? – which and when ? – and finishing with how to replace old worn-out frames with the least disturbance to the colony.

The evening ended at 9.20 pm and we all wended our way homewards feeling well prepared for the season ahead - and full of tea and cake, items essential to every beekeeper's wellbeing.

C.S.

NORTH LAN MEETING - SATURDAY 22 MARCH

We held an informal planning session at the pub in Bush Bank . A fire in the substation behind the pub meant that we had to continue in candlelight!

The next North LAN meeting will be at 7.00pm on Wednesday April 12th 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.

M.W.



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EVENTS

BBKA ANNUAL DELEGATES' MEETING SATURDAY 14TH JANUARY 2017

This is a summary of the Meeting. The full minutes will be available from the BBKA by the end of May. The Agenda, and reports given to the delegates to read before the Meeting are available on the BBKA website.

The Meeting was long, and at times fractious, running from 10.30 am until 5.30 pm, the late finish meaning that some delegates had to leave before the voting on all propositions was completed.

Leigh Sidaway was confirmed as the BBKA's General Manager (General Secretary).

The Minutes from 2016 were checked, and voted on. The subject of VAT on beekeeping equipment was discussed, and a vote was taken for the Executive Committee to pursue the issue once 'Brexit' is resolved, as VAT is currently tied up with EU regulations.

Regarding hosting the 2017 International Meeting of Young Beekeepers, the £30,000 sponsorship is all but raised, and the agreed levy of £1 per member can now be paid by each association to the BBKA.

Annual Reports were presented. Margaret Murdin stated the need for feedback from the membership on what the BBKA Research Fund should be funding (she will ask the question in March's 'BBKA News'). There were comments from several delegates expressing disappointment that they had not been able to get articles on local association events included in 'BBKA News'. Margaret Murdin said that articles were always welcome, but needed to be sent in good time, in order to meet printing deadlines.

Tim Lovett spoke about the Spring Convention. It had gone well in 2016, with most talks sold out, although visitor numbers were down. For this year's Convention, 60 workshops/classes, and 25 lectures are on offer. The website is open and bookings can be made there.

Regarding Governance, there will be a full consultation to produce a revised Constitution, to better fit in with the Charities Commission.

As part of the Financial Report, Howard Pool talked of the uncertainty of 2017, due to Brexit, the US elections, etc. as companies are reluctant to make donations. Not increasing the membership subs. will also have an effect on the BBKA's finances. BBKA Enterprises Ltd has been registered for VAT, as this helps with the BBKA's Charity status, and limited liability. The budget projections were then approved by a vote. In January, Chris Lake resigned as Treasurer. The BBKA are looking to appoint someone, and are open to offers, wishing the process to be as 'clean' as possible.

Various awards were then handed out, before we broke for lunch.

The next part of the Meeting covered applications for Association Membership. These were voted on in turn, after each application had been discussed. There were strong feelings on the subject, with delegates discussing why there was a need for County Associations to split into smaller groups, as this cost the BBKA more to administer. There was also a comment from one delegate as to whether these splits were due to the breakdown in relations between association members, and whether this justified the application.



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Some applications were based on the geographical difficulties of getting to meetings in a large county, while the demise of Berkshire BKA had led to 4 of the applications. Some delegates were worried that by refusing some of the applications, the members involved would leave the BBKA altogether. Of the 9 applications, 7 were voted in (Salisbury, Reading, Wokingham, South Chilterns, Slough Windsor and Maidenhead, Burton, and Sheffield) and 2 rejected (Petersfield, and Tyneside)

In the Elections, there were 6 vacancies for the Executive Committee (4 for 3 years, and 2 for 2 years) but only 5 candidates, so all got elected. The results were as follows: –

- Stephen Barnes (53 votes) - 3 years
- James Diver (46 votes) - 3 years
- Garath Morgan (46 votes) - 3 years
- Susan Webster (38 votes) - 3 years
- Ken Basterfield (28 votes in 1st vote, and 36 votes in 2nd vote) - 2 years

There were 3 candidates for the Examinations Board, for 3 vacancies (for 3 years) and all were elected, results as follows: -

- Pam Hunter (55 votes)
- Dr Christopher Evans (54 votes)
- Fiona Eelbeck (52 votes)

The final part of the day was spent discussing and voting on all Propositions.

- **2017/01** – to introduce a £10 joining fee for new members. Due to too much heated debate, and suggestions for amendments, the Proposition was withdrawn by the Chairman.
- **2017/02** - to establish a working party to inform on the reappraisal and reorganisation of the BBKA. **Rejected.** (voting 5 for, 48 against, 3 abstentions)
- **2017/03** – to set up a working party to reappraise and plan the reorganisation of BBKA, to provide a more efficient, open, effective Association. **Rejected** (voting 2/53/1)
- **2017/04** – the disclosure of fees/expenses paid. **Rejected.** (voting 6/47/3)
- **2017/05** – the BBKA to poll its membership for views on moving to OMOV (1 member 1 vote). **Rejected.** (voting 16/37/4)
- **2017/06** – that the OMOV proposition presented in 2015 survey be rejected as inappropriate. **Passed.** (voting 39/16/1)
- **2017/07** – that draft minutes of previous ADM are always sent no later than 21 weeks before next ADM. Withdrawn

- **2017/08, 2017/09 & 2017/10** – all covered the subject of Delegates' expenses being reinstated. After much discussion, including whether the BBKA's funds could be used more productively, and whether it showed enough consideration to the time/effort put in by the delegates, an Amended Proposition was voted on- that the BBKA reinstate paying travel expenses for attending any ADM/SDM. **Passed** (vote 35/9/2)
- **2017/11** – to develop a 'Course in a Case' type set of training materials to be used when visiting schools. **Passed** (vote 32/20/2)
- **2017/12** – to work with Chemicals Registration Directorate and Trading Standards Officers to address the risk of secondary poisoning from feral colonies. **Rejected.** (vote 22/23/8)

I get the impression that there are some old hostilities contained within some of the voting decisions, but with the change of trustees, and office staff, I'd like to hope we can move on and focus on the main aims of the BBKA, which are to promote and foster beekeeping and bees.

Many thanks to our new ADM delegate, Justine Gallaccio for this item. Justine has contributed a number of excellent reports on talks by visiting speakers in the past but this is the first one about an event of this kind that she's produced for us. As expected, it's full of detail and very informative and we look forward to reading many more in future. (Ed.)

SLOVENIAN BEEKEEPING & THE SLOVENIAN BEE HOUSE THURSDAY 16 FEBRUARY

In February we were entertained by a fascinating lecture on the art of bee keeping in Slovenia by Andy Tatchell.

The evening was an enlightening excursion into the geography, history and culture of this beautiful country. Andy was entertaining and gave a useful insight into the bee house system of beekeeping that is employed throughout the land. We enjoyed being given a wealth of information on bee house design and uses. This included therapy based on breathing 'bee air' that had passed through the hives and into hospital-like bee houses where 'patients' stay for an hour or two or even spend the night to improve their wellbeing.

In Slovenia there is a high ratio (1:250) of beekeepers in the population compared to 1:2500 in our country – possibly due to the fact that the bees there are extremely docile and friendly! Many of the beekeepers see this as an important supplementary income, investing time and creative talent to decorate the hives, as well as sharing their enthusiasm and their culture through tours.

Andy also showed slides of his own bee house during all phases of construction and outlined the theory behind good bee house design. A truly fascinating and thought-provoking talk that certainly requires a follow up as Andy becomes more familiar with the success of this system of bee keeping. Thanks Andy for a great evening!

Many thanks to Mike Healey for this report. (Ed.)

NEWS & FEATURES

SWARM COLLECTION

There is a page on our website at www.herefordshirebeekeepers.org.uk to arrange contact for members of the public needing a swarm removed or a member 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 automatically deleted after a month unless you renew it.

The BBKA website has some excellent guidance on collecting and hiving swarms. Unless it is raining or dusk, it is usually necessary to make two trips when collecting a swarm, so bear that in mind when agreeing to deal with it. Flying bees prospect for a new home from the swarm, so they should be left to rejoin their swarm mates once flying has finished for the day, otherwise the homeowner will be left with a queenless bunch of lost bees.

Before collecting a swarm, it is a good idea to elicit as much information as possible about its size and position. Swarms high up or bees embedded in a building are best left alone. Casts with a virgin queen behave differently to a prime swarm (i.e. they will not walk the plank into your hive) and are more likely to abscond. Some "swarms" turn out to be wasp nests or tree bumble bees. It may be advisable to agree to have your expenses covered if this turns out to be the case. Full members of the Association are covered by third party insurance through their membership of the BBKA. This could cover mishaps occurring during swarm collection, but would be unlikely to cover damage to yourself or property if you act recklessly.

Many thanks to Mary Walter for this timely item. If you're seeking further reading about swarm collection, there's a good article by David Teasdaje on page 122 of the latest (April 2017) edition of BBKA News. (Ed.)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED!

There are currently several vacancies on the HBKA committee and we would be delighted if any of our public spirited members would be prepared to lend a hand. In particular, someone who likes playing with spread-sheets would be very useful to fill the vacant post of Membership Secretary. Also, as you will see elsewhere in this newsletter, we will shortly need to find a new Honorary Secretary and a new editor for The HBKA Buzzword.

We only hold 5-6 committee meetings a year, and there is not a huge amount of work involved. We try to arrange an interesting and varied programme of events and it helps to have several members helping with the organization. We have taken out trustee insurance to cover committee members' liability; once we have converted to a CIO this will be unnecessary.

Mary Walter

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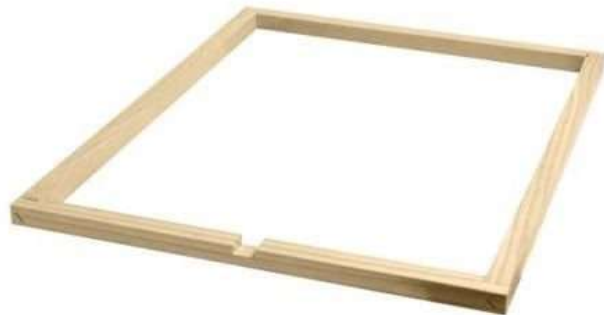


THE IMIRIE SHIM

This is the invention of the late American Masterbeekeeper, George Imirie, to which he attributes much of his success. There are a variety of uses but the most important is to add shims between extracting supers during the honey flow to provide upper entrances.

Here's what George himself said:

"Ever since my shim was endorsed and put on the commercial market, many users have contacted me asking for advice about some problem with their beekeeping; and they use their purchase of the shim as a "justification" for contacting me. However, I found that many of these inquirers are using the shim for some purpose that has little to do with its intended purpose and hence my reason for its use; and then I am chastised or insulted because the shim



"does not work" or it "makes new problems". The only purpose for the shim is to relieve brood chamber congestion by providing ingress and egress to the super area and the shim should only be on a colony when supers are in place! It should not be used in the brood area! It should not be used as an upper entrance in the fall or winter. It should not be used between supers of foundation (which is far different from drawn comb). The shim should never be in contact with a queen excluder!

The proper use of a shim is as follows: Use with supers of drawn comb only. Put two supers over the queen excluder, then add a shim, add a 3rd and a 4th super, then add another shim, add a 5th super, install the inner cover that has an upper entrance made into the edge of it, and top this off with the telescoping cover and a brick.

The shim is 3/4" inch high, and hence its placement is defying the "rules" of bee space, and bees will build burr comb on top of frames if the shim is used improperly, particularly if it is used in the brood area. If the shim is placed between supers of foundation, the bees (having no construction blueprints) will build burr comb within the 3/4" inch space of the shim, and "weld" the upper super to the lower super with burr comb as they draw foundation.

Lastly (and this should be very instructional for some readers), if you are using drawn comb in your supers, but you are still getting burr comb built in the shim space, the bees are really trying hard to tell you something, and that is: we need more super space! It is hard work, time consuming, and requires a lot of nectar eating for bees to build comb; and hence, if your bees have plenty of drawn comb super space for them to temporarily unload lots of nectar for storage until they can ripen it into thick honey, the bees will not trouble themselves to build burr comb in the shim area between supers of empty drawn comb! I have been using my shim for 30-40 years on all my colonies supered for extracted honey production with little or no burr comb construction; and it materially helps in the two things I designed it to do - aid in swarm prevention because it relieves brood chamber congestion from forager bees - and increase honey production because foraging bees can enter and leave the colony via the shim entrances directly into the super area faster than using the bottom board entrance. Install shims when supers are installed, and remove shims when supers are harvested."

This article comes from Notts. BKA via eBees – many thanks to all concerned. The original version can be found at <http://pinkpages.chrisbacherconsulting.com/> and googling "Imirie shim" will get you all sorts of relevant articles, comments and building plans. (Ed.)



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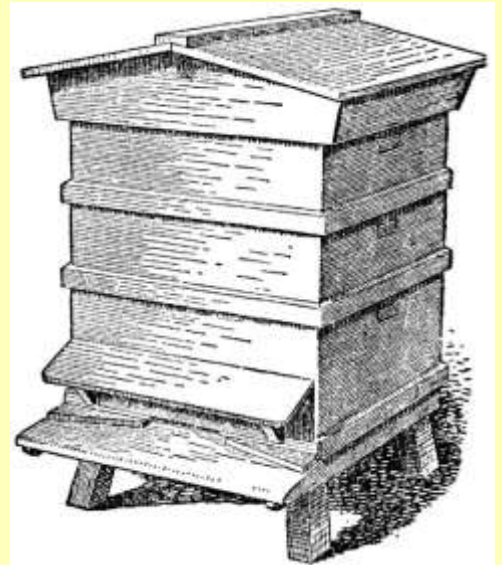
BOB'S BEELINES FOR APRIL

The weather in March has been reasonable with some warm days, some very wet and some days with cold east wind.

- Now the days are longer and hopefully warmer, I will be opening my hives up for their first inspection. I know I have lost one hive and have one drone laying queen up to now. The bees are bringing in pollen, a good sign that all is well. But I need to make sure they have plenty of stores.
- The oil seed rape will be in flower in about 10 days' time, so get your supers ready to put on - but check your queen excluders for any cracks or holes.
- This is for all you new bee keepers - when you open your hives up for the first time, you may find the brood nest in the front or back of the brood chamber. Move the brood nest to the middle of the hive and replace the frames with food on either side of the brood nest. The queen can then lay on both sides of the brood nest and you will find that it will expand more quickly.

That's all for now,

Bob and Kath Cross.





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HARBINGERS OF SPRING - MARCH FORAGE

This article features some of the plants on which our bees can usually forage at this time of year.

1. **Iridaceae** (The Iris family)

This is not a huge family and contains some early-flowering plants, as well as later ones. The plants are usually upright with leaves coming from the base. Most grow from corms or rhizomes. The flowers are quite conspicuous and their structure is based on the number three: they have 3 sepals, 3 petals, 3 stamens but usually more than 3 stigmas. The petals and sepals are not obviously different so they appear as 6 petals to the casual observer. The family is divided into about 13 genera (sing. Genus), but one is *Crocus*, which is important because it is one of our earliest bee plants.

Crocuses can be in flower as early as February, but more often it is March and they are a wonderful source of early pollen for our bees, some bumblebees and a few early solitary bees and hoverflies. They do contain nectar but it is difficult to reach for our bees and is not important. The pollen loads are usually bright orange or golden and are extremely valuable to the colony as it is building up.

At this stage of the year, fresh pollen is worth its weight in gold to the colony, so it is well worth planting crocuses. It does not much matter what kind you grow. Some will naturalise in grass, others need to be away from competition, colours vary through a whole range from white and yellow, through pink, and purple.

One last point: if you plant in grass, don't mow them until six weeks after all the crocus flowers have gone.

2. **Salicaceae** (The Willow family)

This too is a small Family with only two genera this time: *Populus*, poplars and *Salix*, willows. These are all trees or shrubs, many very large, others tiny and creeping along the ground, and their flowers are very much reduced catkins, held close to the stem. Each tree carries either male or female flowers, a condition described as dioecious. This means that only male trees have pollen, although both types have nectar. Some of the poplars are useful pollen producers in early Spring but one group in particular, the Balsam Poplars, produce a resin on their flower buds which is keenly collected by the bees to use as propolis.

The willows are an important group because they produce an abundance of pollen in February to March and one *S. aegyptica*, can flower as early as January. If you decide to plant willow in your garden, pay particular attention to size, and gender. There are many small varieties including the ubiquitous *S. caprea* 'Kilmarnock' which fills the garden centres in Spring. Common it may be, but it is an excellent small tree and bees love it. There is a lovely variety called *S. hastata* which is upright with purple/red stems and remains compact.

Other plentiful forage for our bees at this time of year includes:-

Trees

- Alder (*alnus glutinosa*)
- Hazel (*corylus*) - these should supply plenty of pollen in dry weather
- Prunus trees



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Shrubs

- Blackthorn/sloe (*prunus spinosa*)
- Box, common (*buxus sempervirans*)
- Camellias - the more open flowered varieties display stamens - there are many varieties - they don't all flower in March.
- Cherry plum (*prunus cerasifera*)
- Daphne mezereum, very strong scent
- Edgeworthia chrysantha (frost hardy down to -5°C)
- Heathers, early flowering bush and tree varieties
- Mahonias japonica and bealei Gold Dust
- Prunus shrubs
- Rosemary (*rosmarinus officianalis* and *prostratus*)
- Viburnums tinus and bodnantense Dawn
- Yew, common (*taxus baccata*) - (pollen only)

Perennials

- Daffodils
- Hellebores
- Lamium (dead nettle)
- Leucojum vernal (spring snowdrop)
- Pulmonaria Raspberry Splash (lungwort)
- Wallflowers (*erysimums*) which also occur as annuals and biennials

Wild Plants

- Celandines (*ranunculus ficaria*)
- Gorse
- Kingcup/marsh marigold (*caltha palustris*)
- Primroses

This article comes courtesy of Celia Davis Warwickshire BKA and Ann Jones Farnham BKA via eBees - many thanks to all involved. (Ed.)



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ADVERTISEMENTS & NOTICES





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**If foul brood is suspected, contact our new RBI, Colin Pavey (congratulations Colin!)
on 07775 119471 - or email colin.pavey@apha.gsi.gov.uk
At present, we do not have a local SBI.**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

President	Colin Pavey	_____
Chairman	Mary Walter	_____
Vice Chairman	Debbie Smith	_____
Secretary	Chris Stowell	_____
Treasurer	John Robinson	_____
Membership Sec.	VACANCY	_____
Examinations Sec.	Louise Sheppard	_____
Committee	Robert Cross	_____
Committee	Anthea Keller Smyth	_____
Committee	Andy Tatchell	_____
Committee	Mike Healey	_____

LAN COORDINATORS

South LAN:	Geoff Blake	_____
North LAN:	Mary Walter (Leominster)	_____
East LAN:	Chris Stowell (Bringsty)	_____
Marlene Hewitt (Burley Gate)		_____
Newsletter Editor	Chris Stowell	_____

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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