



The HBKA

Buzzzz Word



JUNE 2017

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



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday 6 June - East LAN Apiary Meeting - Stone House

Saturday 10 June - Visit to HBKA Apiary & Hog Roast - Holme Lacy & Ballingham

Wednesday 21 June - North LAN Meeting - Bush Inn, Bush Bank, Kings Pyon, HR4 8EH

Thursday 22 June - East LAN Apiary Meeting - Much Cowarne





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LAN REPORTS

EAST LAN APIARY MEETING – TUESDAY 2 MAY

Another evening at Bob and Kath's, our second of the season, and a good turnout of nearly twenty members arrived to see how the bees inspected last month were progressing.

The most striking thing to me was that the hive that was developing very slowly last month and had been given a shot of syrup to get them going had indeed got going and was now brimming with bees. Amazing what a spoonful of sugar will do to help things along (cue music, etc, etc,!).

Everything else seemed to go as planned - oh! except that the meeting had been billed as dealing with swarm control and there didn't seem to be a queen cell in sight! (This problem was rectified at the next meeting though - see report on following page.)

Then it was back to the house for a cup of tea and a chat in the conservatory. Thanks to Bob and Kath for another interesting evening and we're looking forward to seeing you both again at the beginning of June.

C.S.

NORTH LAN APIARY MEETING



We met at Leigh Bank, and started by culling the excess queen cells from the brood of an artificial swarm I had performed a few days earlier. We also had a look at the sacrificial drone brood that we pulled out of another colony. There were a few varroa mites on the drone pupae, so this colony will need monitoring carefully through the season.

We proceeded with a "craft" session constructing Asian hornet traps using plastic bottles, and the zinc mesh sold for car repairs. The plans are on the Beebase website, but I hope the traps will prove unnecessary. I found a rather dozy queen European hornet on the roof of one of my hives recently, but she must have been caught out by the cold weather and was almost moribund.

We had another session at Bush Bank in May and spent some time talking swarm collection, and what to do when you discover that your colony has already swarmed.

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



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EAST LAN APIARY MEETING – THURSDAY 18 MAY

This was an extra meeting we decided to add to the LAN schedule because the oilseed rape honey was due to be taken off a week earlier than expected and we thought that super removal and extraction would be a good topic for a meeting, especially for the beginners.

To get the bees out of the supers, we had put Porter bee escapes on three hives the night before the meeting and rhombus escapes on another three.

Thursday 18th was a warm day, so I returned from shopping to find 3 swarms around our field - we don't think they were all ours, but you never know! I put one in a nuc, one in a skep and left one to be gathered that evening.

We had ten beekeepers at the meeting which began by trying to get the swarm into a nuc. Luckily it was on a fence at a very nice height. Textbook collection!!

We then went on to remove the supers and were pleased to see that nearly all the bees had gone down into the brood chambers using both sorts of escapes. The empty (of bees!) supers were then taken into the kitchen where extraction began with a supply of plastic aprons on hand if needed!!

When everybody had got sticky, we went out to the garage where Dave explained how he usually deals with the cappings, melting them down and converting them into usable chunks of wax from which he makes candles or beeswax blocks. He had even made one of the "Turkish Baths" as described in the BBKA News May 2017 issue which worked very successfully.

After all that, Dave was gasping for a cuppa so we all adjourned for a drink and chat about what had turned out to be a varied and eventful evening.

EAST LAN APIARY MEETING – THURSDAY 25 MAY

Twenty two people attended this meeting. The first hive we had to inspect was one that was being given to Don Priestly. On checking it we found the queen and marked her - she was very lively, but Dave Sutton managed to tame her! The frames were being drawn out nicely, nearly ready for its new home.

It was a VERY warm evening and everyone was feeling it but luckily the apiary had gone into shade which helped a bit. We went on to check several hives that had swarmed and see if they were now queen-right as well as trying to find and mark the queens in a couple of others.

We were unable to find any signs of a queen in one hive, but pollen was being taken in and cups polished so it was agreed to wait and see. Queens were also found and marked successfully in another two hives.

We then went on to check the nuc we had collected the week before - the queen was found and marked and all was well.

To finish the evening, using the skep I had collected the swarm in the week before (it was amazing how much comb they had made in the week), Dave Sutton gave a demonstration on how bees used to be driven from one skep to another in order to extract the honey without killing the bees. The skeps are joined together using driving irons, with the full skep at the bottom. The bottom skep is tapped at a steady beat and all the bees climb up to the top skep. We even found the queen! It is quite fascinating to watch (thank you Dave). The bees were then



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placed into a nuc so that we could feed them. Unfortunately they did not like their new home and swarmed again the next morning just as I was taking the grandchildren to school – so when I got back, I had to collect them all over again!

By now it was time to go and enjoy some refreshments and because it was such a lovely evening we were all able to sit outside and enjoy what was left of the daylight.

Many thanks to Sue Garrett for writing these two reports – she and Dave have both been very generous indeed in allowing us to visit their bees twice in successive weeks during May and all those who attended found both meetings very worthwhile. (Ed.)



Dave Sutton beating up the bees...!!



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EVENTS

BOB'S BEE DAY - SATURDAY 13 MAY

A good crowd of beekeepers turned up for a lovely afternoon with Bob, Kath and their bees in Cradley. Bob had displayed a selection of different types of hive, together with his collection of bee problems, under gazebos in the garden. We split into three groups to inspect his colonies in the orchard. The surrounding rape fields had provided the bees with plenty of nectar and they had converted this into heavy supers of honey during the recent fine spell.

We kitted out some of the youngsters with beesuits and gloves, and they were suitably fascinated by life in the hive. I hope we have some new recruits here; "when can I do it again" was one comment I heard. This was also a very good opportunity for some of the beginners to get some more hands on experience with different bees under different conditions, and to spend a pleasant afternoon talking bees. I hope we have them hooked! My group practised marking drones, using a crown of thorns and marker pen. A marked queen makes life much easier when swarm control is needed.



Bob showed us his occupied straw skep, which he had overwintered covered by a National brood box. He had fed the bees with fondant from below, and hoped that they would move down into a box he had placed underneath, but the bees remained comfortably ensconced in their skep. On a previous occasion he and Dave Sutton had managed to extricate bees by drumming on the side of a skep. Skeys are not a practical home for bees, swarm and disease control is difficult if not impossible, but they provide a fascinating insight into beekeeping in the past.

There was generous supply of tea and cake at the end of the afternoon, and plenty of time for discussion.

I walked to the car past Bob's laurel hedge. It sounded as though a swarm had moved in, but on closer inspection I could see bees busy foraging. The laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) produces nectar from extra-floral nectaries on the leaves. These probably help to balance sugars and water in the plant, and also attract ants which may make the plant unpalatable to grazing animals. Field beans are another

plant which has these strange organs, in this case on the petioles.

A big thank you to Bob and Kath for their hospitality and hard work in setting up the displays, and for providing some nice quiet bees to inspect. I am sure all who attended had a very interesting and informative afternoon.

Many thanks to Mary Walter for this report - Mary was there to lead one of the groups on the day and I'm sure everyone benefitted from her beekeeping experience. (Ed.)



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Bob and Mary have a pre-inspection chin-wag...

We're off to see the Wiz,,,,oops, sorry.....the bees.



Bob looking closely at a frame of bees...



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.... MEANWHILE, COMING SOON

HBKA APIARY VISIT AND HOG ROAST

SATURDAY 10 JUNE

Andy Tatchell will be on duty at the HBKA Apiary at Holme Lacy which will be open for visitors from 3.00pm on the afternoon of June 10th prior to the Hog Roast which starts at 5.00pm. If you need directions to the apiary, email Mary or Andy (sandmwalter@btinternet.com / andytatchell@gmail.com).

Mike Healey and his son-in-law will be arranging another hog roast for us at their farm at Ballingham The cost will be £5 per person payable on the day. Partners, friends and children are welcome. For more details, phone Mike Healey. Please bring a small contribution of salad or dessert to share, and your own veggie option if required. Cider will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own drink too. Please bring something to sit on. If it's wet, we can shelter under cover. If you have any second hand or unused equipment for sale please bring it along. Anthea intends to bring equipment of all sorts to sell – complete national hives as well as accessories e.g. feeders, spacers, hive tools, a smoker, smoker fuels, queen cage, Q marker pens etc.

To ensure we have enough food, please return the reply slip (available at <http://www.herefordshirebeekeepers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Hog-roast-Reply-Slip.docx> to Mike Healey by Saturday June 3rd.

.... AND THEN

ROYAL THREE COUNTIES SHOW 2017

The Royal Three Counties Show takes place on June 16th-18th at the Malvern Showground. This year there will be displays by the Red Devils, Motocross stunt displays and much more in the main arena. There is also the International Orchid Show, prize livestock and sheep shearing together with many other attractions.

The Bees and Honey marquee is always buzzing with interest, with observation hives, and live beekeeping demonstrations.

HBKA will need help manning our stand over the three days, so please let me know if you can help. Free tickets will be sent out to anyone who can help with at least half a day on duty.

Mary Walter



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NEWS & FEATURES

BOB'S BEELINES FOR JUNE

The month of May started with a cold east wind and some sharp frosts. In the second week we had three or four days of rain, then very warm weather. As a result, our bees have been swarming because we were unable to check them early in the month.

The oil seed rape honey has been a bit of a problem this year due to the weather early in May. For our beginners if you have taken your honey off, make sure the bees still have plenty of stores to keep them going. Feed them if necessary as we are coming into what is called the June gap where very little nectar will be coming in due to the annual lull in flowering plants at this time.

Still check your hives every 7 to 9 days for queen cells. If you cannot find your queen or any eggs, if possible leave a sealed queen cell and one unsealed as backup.



THINGS TO DO IN JUNE:

- Continue with regular weekly inspections to monitor for signs of swarming, colony health problems and colony development.
- If you are looking to increase your stock and prevent swarming at the same time, this is a good time to split your strongest colonies or make nuclei from them.
- All your oilseed rape honey should have been extracted by now to avoid it setting solid in the combs.
- Beware the "June Gap" - there may be a lull between the spring flowers and blossom and the later big tree blossom such as horse chestnut in July. It may be necessary to feed your bees to tide them over so make checking for stores part of your inspection regime at this time.

That's all for now,

Bob and Kath Cross.



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

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Items for the Newsletter should be sent to the Editor - [Chris Stowell](#).

The deadline for inclusion of material in any edition of the

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