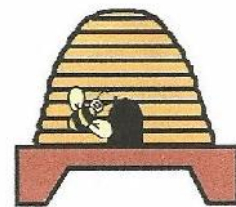


Herefordshire Beekeepers' Association



Newsletter
July 2017

Forthcoming events:

Tuesday July 4th - 6.15pm East LAN Meeting,

Wednesday July 19th - 7pm North LAN, Get together at the Bush Inn, Bush Bank

Friday August 18th - 6pm Garden Party, **Friday-Sunday September 15th-17th** MSWCC Cirencester

Saturday October 14th HBKA Honey Show, Hellens Manor, Much Marcle

National Meadows Day

July 1st 2017



HBKA VISIT TO HIGHGROVE on TUESDAY 30th MAY 2017

Highgrove House is the family home of Prince Charles and his wife Camilla. Prince Charles bought the house in 1980 with 300 acres of farm land from Maurice Macmillan (the only son of PM Harold MacMillan). More land has been added to the estate over the years and there are now 1800 acres.

We had our own 2 hour conducted tour around the gardens which are separated into large 'rooms' on three sides of the imposing Georgian mansion. There are numerous statues of famous people and gifts to the Prince located in all sorts of places around the gardens.

Laura, our guide, was charming, very patient and knowledgeable. She carefully steered us around the individual gardens, which has 30,000 visitors every year! For me, the kitchen garden was the high-light of the tour. The 11 gardeners, some of whom are part-time, are very, very busy at this time of year keeping all the lush growth under control.

There is no doubting Prince Charles's passion for gardening, wildlife and conservation. Recycled water and compost are generated on the estate for use in the gardens and there is a very discreet irrigation system.

And so to bees! We were assured that there are black bees in the hives in the Lower Orchard but we didn't see them. According to the Highgrove Book, there are 10 hives housed in a Slovenian Bee House which allows the beekeeper to inspect his bees under shelter. A plaque reads – 'Republic Slovenian Home of Carnolian Bee 1998' and was a gift to the Prince.

The visit was rounded off with a delicious cream tea in the restaurant and a spending spree in the shop. It was a lovely day out and many thanks to Mary Walter for organising everything including an inspiring visit to the Gloucester Services on the M5.

Pru Lloyd



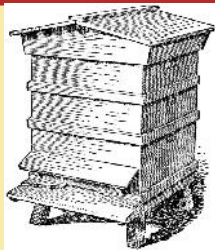
Basic Assessments

Anyone wishing to take the basic assessment this year should fill in an application form (found on the BBKA website) and send it with the fee (£20 cheque made out to the BBKA) to:

Assessments take place before the end of August, so you should get your application in before the end of July if you wish to take it this year. Candidates must have at least one years experience of keeping bees. The syllabus is also on the BBKA website, it looks alarming but the questions and manipulations are straightforward. You will be asked to describe what you see when you inspect a colony of bees, you need to construct a frame, and answer some questions. It generally takes just over an hour. Last year two candidates were examined at Holme Lacy (in the rain).

If anyone needs any guidance we may be able to arrange some practice sessions.

Mary Walter



Bob's Beelines will be back next month.

Topical Tip

The warm weather at the beginning of June has had its effect on the bees. Some colonies are making swarm preparations again, so don't neglect your weekly inspections and take action if needed. An extra super may be required, or sometimes exchanging brood frames that are clogged with stores with one or two of drawn comb or foundation will divert their energies.

Royal Three Counties Show

June 16th-18th

A scorching weekend with much to interest our beekeepers.



Young Phoebe demonstrating her beekeeping skills.

The embroidered bee forage panels exhibited by the National Botanic Gardens of Wales. The students are undertaking an analysis of honey samples. Contact laura.loner@gardenofwales.org.uk if you would like to take part.



The giant frame constructed by Gloucester Beekeepers' Association. It came complete with sound effects!

The prize winning display exhibited by Debbie Smith.





A successful visit to the apiary by the science club at Bishop's Blue Coat School, following a visit to the school by Mike Healey.



The children enjoyed the both sessions. They were divided into two groups for a hive inspection. While one group was looking at the bees, the others discussed bee forage, and also had a go at frame making.

Neonicotinoid News

As I expect you know, the European Union has had a temporary moratorium on the use of three major neonicotinoids on bee-attractive crops since 2013. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) is due to rule in November on whether to make the ban permanent. New studies have now added to the evidence that neonicotinoids are indeed harmful to pollinators, which in turn adds to the pressure for Europe, at least, to introduce a full ban.

One of the studies was the largest field trial to date, reported last week; involving honeybees, bumblebees and solitary bees at oilseed rape sites in the UK, Germany and Hungary. The team were given a licence to use two banned neonicotinoid insecticides (NNIs), clothianidin and thiamethoxam. One of these, or no NNIs at all, was used at each site, with the allocation made at random. Even where NO chemical was used, bees' hives and nests were found to contain NNI residues, indicating that the chemicals have remained in the environment even after the moratorium.

In honeybees, the effects varied from country to country. During the April to June flowering period, NNI exposure had negative effects on colony size in the UK and Hungary, but positive effects in Germany. In Hungary, the negative effects persisted over the winter, with worker numbers down 24 per cent the following spring. Diet and disease could be important factors in this variation; bees in Germany had a more varied diet, getting less of their pollen from oilseed rape, and also had lower levels of parasites.

"Whatever you use the chemicals on, they are contaminating the environment and getting into bees' food," says Dave Goulson at the University of Sussex. "That suggests the EU's current moratorium, which only applies to flowering crops such as rape, won't work. I think you'd have to be pretty unreasonable at this point not to accept that, at least some of the time, these chemicals harm bees when used in normal farming practice", he said. He expects the EFSA to recommend at least that the moratorium on flowering crops be made permanent, and that it might raise the possibility of an extension to all crops. However, many farmers say that the ban has damaged yields and forced them to spray crops several times a season which they suggest could itself be more harmful to wildlife - and indeed one of the authors of the study, Richard Pywell, believes that there needs to be more research on pesticides that might replace NNIs. "Whatever is decided, we've got to consider the alternatives," he said.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, two makers of NNIs, Bayer and Syngenta, (who funded the study) have rejected its conclusions, claiming that the results have been misinterpreted.

Steve Walter

Varroa mites

Populations are high this year due to a mild winter, with little or no break in brood rearing. Colonies which failed to swarm, and have continued rearing brood throughout the season may well have dangerous levels of the parasite by now.



Varroa mites on drone pupae.

There is evidence that varroa feed on the fat bodies of their host as well as the haemolymph.

It is important that colonies go into winter with low varroa levels, and a good population of well fed winter bees, so that the colonies chance of survival is maximised.

An Alert from the National Bee Unit:

In some regions of the UK, colonies are starting to show symptoms of high levels of Varroa mites, for example wing deformities and perforated cappings. Therefore, it might be prudent to start monitoring colony mite populations and information on how to do this can be found on page 15 of the Managing Varroa booklet. Also, the Varroa calculator can be used to help calculate your estimated mite population in your colonies:

If your colonies have a high amount of Varroa, i.e 1000 mites after calculating it from the average drop, you may want to treat them with a registered varroacide. Suitable treatments where brood is present would include: Apiguard; Apilife Var; Apistan*; Bayvarol*; Mite Away Quick Strips (MAQS) and Thymovar.

If you wish to use an oxalic acid based product then a broodless condition should be created first. Additionally, if you have honey for human consumption on the hives, remember that MAQS is currently the only registered product which can be used. When using any medicines it is important to remember to always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

* NB. Mite resistance to these products have been recorded and so a resistance test (the Beltsville test) should be carried out before using the product.

North LAN Meeting June 30th

Mike and Rose Smith hosted an interesting evening at their home in Knapton. We walked around their grounds and the adjacent common, which Mike keeps under control, together with several natural ponds. The garden is colourful with perennials and climbers.

Mike's bees are gradually building up in top bar and Warre hives. We opened the window of the Warre box, and viewed the small colony which had made some nice comb on the top bars. The colony in the top bar hive seemed to be making better progress, but they are difficult to assess without disturbance. Mike was surprised that the honeybees are ignoring his wild flowers, while the bumblebees are making good use of the garden. We all admired the current building projects, and especially the splendid cakes and scones baked by Rose.

Mary Walter

Bees in the top bar hive.



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.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

President Peter Furneaux
Chairman Andy Tatchell

Vice Chairman Debbie Smith

Secretary VACANCY

Treasurer John Robinson

Membership Sec. Mary Walter

Committee Robert Cross
Mike Healey
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North LAN: Mary Walter

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