

Herefordshire Beekeepers' Association

Newsletter
March 2018



Forthcoming events

All welcome:

Saturday March 3rd Beetradox. Stoneleigh.

Thursday March 8th 7.00 pm "Bee diseases" . How to identify health problems in the hive. Stoke Lacy Village hall.

Thursday March 15th 7.00 pm, AGM followed by a talk by Wally Shaw "Simple Ways of Making Increase", Three Counties Hotel.

Wednesday March 21th 7.00 pm, South LAN Meeting, Red Lion, Peterstow, planning the season, Q&A.

Friday April 13th -Sunday April 15th BBKA Spring Convention. Harper Adams University.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the HEREFORDSHIRE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

will be held at

The Three Counties Hotel
Belmont Road

Hereford HR2 7BP

on

Thursday 15th March 2018

THE MEETING WILL COMMENCE AT 7.00 pm

HBKA AGM Thursday March 15th

Wally and Jenny Shaw have been keeping bees for 30 years – a joint activity in which they are equal partners. They live on the west side of Anglesey in North Wales where they experience a fairly extreme oceanic climate with a lot of rain and strong winds. Eight years after they planted an orchard they were still not getting much fruit. Through the kids they knew a local beekeeper so invited him to keep a hive in the orchard. After one year, during which there was a much improved crop, the beekeeper decided to leave the area and offered the hive. Fine, what could be so difficult about beekeeping? Wally and Jenny soon found out! Back in 1987 there were none of the books for beginner beekeepers that there are today and they struggled. Initially it was the intention to keep just two hives. To cut a long story short, they now keep about 50 in 6-7 apiaries and also make 30-40 nucs a year for beginners. They are both retired research ecologists so a more science-based understanding of bees is our main driving force. Having a large numbers of hives means you can afford to say “What if.....” and try new things and they do this all the time. They have never purchased a queen or a colony and rely entirely on locally adapted bees.

AGM Speaker

Wally Shaw is a very experienced beekeeper. He has written for the BBKA news and has published several useful leaflets. John Kinross our local bee book seller will be bringing some along to the AGM for sale.

AGM Nominations

Nominations are invited for committee members to join the group of beekeepers who endeavour to keep the show on the road. If you are interested in helping out please contact us at:
secretary@herefordshirebeekeepers.org.uk

Gardening for Bees-a talk to the South LAN, February 6th

A good crowd of beekeepers gathered at Stoke lacy village hall to hear a very interesting and well illustrated talk by local garden designer Olivia Kirk. Olivia works with private clients on garden designs for individual homes, as well as on larger landscaping schemes for public and civic institutions. She has worked extensively in the health sector and completed varied projects all over the UK for a large number of hospices. She tutors for the London College of Garden Design, based in Kew Gardens. Olivia started by giving us an oversight of the garden design work she does. She has designed gardens for the Chelsea flower show and also the Malvern garden show. She specializes in sensory gardens. It was only when Olivia had her own colony of honeybees that she realized that they are seldom seen on the nearest flowers you have lovingly grown for them, but generally prefer to fly a distance to forage for pollen and nectar. Despite this she does try to include bee friendly planting in her designs.

She took us through the seasons with describing the garden flowers useful to bees. Five mature flowering trees are thought to be as valuable to bees as an acre of wildflower meadow, although tree blossom is generally over quickly, while the meadow may flower over several weeks.



Early spring bulbs such as crocus and snowdrops are especially useful when the bees start foraging in spring. Weeds such as dandelion also provide a boost of nectar and pollen at the beginning of the year.

Hellebores are good value, and go on flowering for a long period, and these overlap with bluebells and grape hyacinths.

In the summer there are numerous bee friendly plants for the garden, ranging from the single dahlias to heleniums, persicaria, asters and lavender. It is worthwhile seeking out organic nurseries selling plants which have not been treated with pesticides.

Olivia brought a wide range of seeds collected from her own garden which we were invited to take home to try.

Mary Walter

Honey preparation and Any Questions February 15th

Debbie Smith has recently become a qualified honey judge, and gave us a good grounding on preparing honey for sale or show. Honey is heated to 50° C and passed through a stainless steel sieve. If she is preparing liquid honey it is also passed through a filter cloth. As she extracts she tastes the honey and puts any with a good flavour aside so that this can go into the show. She bottles the honey, overfilling the jars, and allows plenty of time for the honey to settle and any air bubbles to rise to the surface.

After a few days in a warm room the surface can be skimmed with a teaspoon. Debbie then inspects the jar by shining a torch from the bottom to make sure that there are no bubbles or extraneous bee parts.

Debbie explained that honey jars are often made from recycled glass. It is important to use jars from the same batch so that the judge can make sure that you have matching samples. Lids need to be new and clean, and the jar thread should not be sticky.

The aroma of honey develops in the jar, so the first thing a judge will do is to smell it as he removes the lid. After clarity and viscosity, taste is an important criteria when judging honey, and this is dependent on your local forage.

Oil seed rape honey sets solid in the jar, but if it is melted, it can be made more palatable by mixing. The honey can be seeded with addition of about 10% fine grain honey, first warmed slightly so that it can be mixed easily into the bulk honey, then stirred with a honey creamer. This is best done in a honey ripener with a tap for ease of running the honey into a warm jar.



Honey creamer

We continued with general discussion led by Andy. The new season will soon be upon us so it is as well to look through spare equipment, and have frames cleaned and ready for new wax. Bees do not like drawing old wax and will chew holes in it if conditions are not right. Once the bees are strong and the weather is warm enough for wax building clean frames can be given, or a Bailey comb change initiated.

Bee Rustling

There has been a recent theft of 40 colonies from an apiary in North Oxfordshire. The colonies are all in National boxes; lots have unique characteristics including home-built plastic floors and roofs.

40 hives were taken from near Fringford/Bicester, between 17th and 24th February 2018 .

The bees were overwintering prior to being moved for pollination and were hidden from general view, the hives weigh about 40lb/20kg each, they were only accessible across a field margin and would have required a substantial vehicle to move them (perhaps a 4x4 and trailer).

The hives have distinct markings and can be identified if found, so be wary of bees offered on the internet.

Bicester Police would be pleased to have any information relating to this: you can contact them via email – brackleybees@hotmail.com,



The cleaned out site.

The



Bob's Beelines

The weather is still very changeable, wet, cold, windy and dry. Very warm on some days, on warm days the bees are out on a cleansing flight.

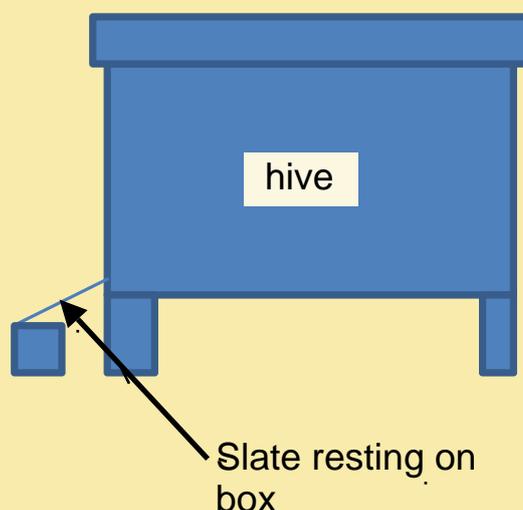
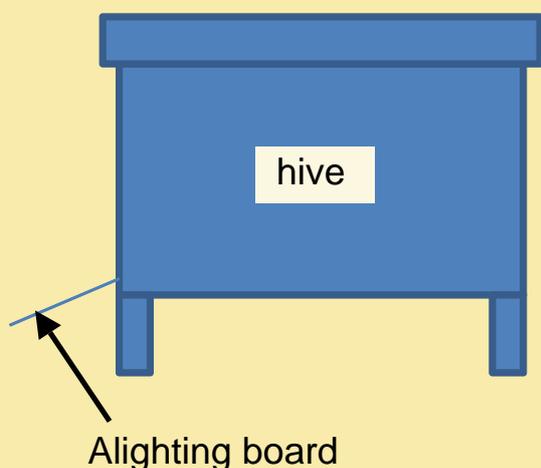
Some hives are getting short on stores, so keep a check on the hives and stores and feed candy if necessary.

On good days your bees will be out foraging for pollen. A lot of bees are lost at this time of year as they return to the hive loaded up with pollen, they return with a heavy load, tired and exhausted. If your hive has alighting board the bees will alight on the board and wait for a few seconds before entering the hive. A lot of bees drop to the ground and cannot get up again with their heavy load of pollen.

If your hive has NOT an alighting board put a box or a board or old roofing slate up to the entrance, this will help the bees.

East LAN Bee Disease and Health Problems meeting at Stoke Lacy village Hall 8th March 7-00pm all welcome.

Kath and Bob Cross





Pussy willow (*Salix caprea*) is a valuable bee plant early in the season. The willows in our garden are coming into bud, but if it stays cold the bees will not be able to forage for the ample pollen the male plants produce.

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.	Steve Utley

Committee
 Robert Cross
 Mike Healey
 Mary Walter
 Charlie Taylor
 Mary Walter

LAN COORDINATORS

South LAN:	Val Lilwall
North LAN:	Mary Walter
East LAN:	Fiona McKinley

To contact a member of the committee please look on our website for the appropriate email address.

Herefordshirebeekeepers.org.uk