



# Herefordshire Buzzword

Herefordshire Beekeepers Association

June 2023

Registered Charity No:1174917



## Events - June

### South LAN - Holme Lacy

Meetings are held Tuesdays; 6:00 - 8:00 pm

**6th June** Stores Checks, Egg Checks, New Queens post swarming, Clearing Supers

**13th June** Summer Forage – flowers for nectar or pollen

**20th June** Varroa Monitoring

**27th June** Mock Basic Assessment Practice

### East LAN

**15th June** 6.30 pm– Nicki Whitaker – Fromes Hill, Bosbury

### North LAN

Thursdays, Throne Farm Weobley. 6.30 pm

**Watch your emails for details**

## Healthy Bee Day

Talk and demonstration by the NBU

Sat **July 8<sup>th</sup>** Sutton St Nicholas village hall



Nothing new about swarm collection. Learn about the depiction of bees from antiquity onwards: [Warburg Institute](#)

## Royal Three Counties

Malvern, June 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup>

Contact [Mary Walter](#) for details

## BBKA Basic Assessment

HBKA will provide a mock assessment practice and will reimburse exam fee if successful

Details: [here](#)

Contact: [Exam secretary](#)

# LAN Meetings

## North LAN

**4<sup>th</sup> May**

Forecast was not looking good so we decided not to go and act as pin cushions for bee stings. Instead we set up an imaginary apiary with imaginary bees. We talked about why bees want to swarm and what is the idea behind swarm control. We talked about an assortment of swarm control methods, from Pagden to Snelgrove and everything in between. For some reason people seemed to leave more confused than they came in.



**18<sup>th</sup> May**

Weather had finally turned for the best and the bees had noticed it. Honey was everywhere, supers were full and queens were not very keen on staying put. Most colonies had queen cells in. The double brood colony decided to throw out a cast swarm because of a missed queen cell. On one of the colonies we performed Snelgrove swarm control - that seemed to get people excited. We had some very persistent bees following us, so coffee and cakes outside was not an option. Retreat into house it was.



Rihards Krauze

## South LAN

### 2<sup>nd</sup> May

South LAN continue to have weekly meetings at the Holme Lacy Apiary. Chris Wright gave a talk and demonstration on swarm control. Chris had prepared a flow chart and commentary on the Pagden method of swarm control. The meeting was well attended with many questions arising, and as we know with bee keepers there were many answers to the questions.

Val Lilwall



### 23<sup>rd</sup> May

The daytime temperature had peaked at 20 C and by late afternoon it was still a calm 17 C when 23 South LAN members, beginners and improvers gathered for the weekly visit to the Holme Lacy apiary. With good weather and forage conditions a strong colony was chosen for Colin Pavey to demonstrate a shook swarm; explaining why it needed to be done, some of the advantages and drawbacks of performing a shook swarm and what to do following the manipulation.

In another hive, beginners were able to see how neatly the bees can be at resealing queen cells, drawing natural chemical-free comb between a frame fitted with a starter strip of wax and wooden skewers (an interesting quantity of drone comb, economically using the bigger cell size to expend less wax to store more nectar) and packing the pollen into rainbow pockets – dark poppy, red chestnut and various hues of yellow. Before closing up and completing the hive notes, we checked the quantity of nectar coming into the super boxes now that the fields and frothy Herefordshire hedgerows are ablaze with white, pink, and yellow petals.

Seated around the lake in the early evening sunshine for our tea break we were treated to cake by Andrew, whose birthday it was, and listened to his talk on queen introduction; how to determine queenlessness, whether to use a queen cell implanted to a frame of sealed brood, how to use a mesh muff to avoid a brought-in queen flying away when releasing her attendants, the importance of UK bred queens attuned to our climatic environment and to

prevent introduced pests and disease, the methodology of introducing queens to avoid regicide and gain acceptance for the colony to be queenright, productive and survive the winter.

The regular talks are scheduled to be seasonally appropriate, and a lively question and answer discussion always follows. Thank you to Colin and Andrew, Steve, apiary manager and to Val for organising tea.

Janelle Quitman

**East LAN** - (we are looking for a new coordinator for the East LAN)

**16th May - At Panksbridge Farm, Much Cowarne**

Marlene Hewitt very kindly offered to host what was our first meeting of the year (the previous one was cancelled owing to adverse weather).

Marlene had three hives for us to open, she wanted us to check them for Varroa damage at the start of the season.

The hives were sited near a hedge that had gone into the shade by the time we arrived, not ideal conditions for opening as there was still a chill in the air.

Hive 1. Busy hive with no sign of queen cells. It had a super on which was about half full. There were many drone cells so we forked some and did find some Varroa but not enough to worry about.

Hive 2. In this hive, we found some patchy brood, and not the quantity of bees you would expect by this time in the season. It was decided that it could be down to a failing queen (but somebody else might have other ideas – ask five beekeepers get six answers). Marlene was going to check them again in a week's time to assess the situation and would decide then if she were going to force a re-queening.

Hive 3. From the time of opening this hive was quite aggressive, it could have been that it had gone a bit cold. But after checking a few frames and looking at brood etc., it was decided that they were about to swarm. So we quickly put them back to bed, but not before both the newbies present had been stung !

We then adjourned to the house for refreshments. Marlene had even made a gluten and dairy free chocolate brownie for herself and Graham to enjoy, plus quite a few others!

Thank you once again Marlene for your kind hospitality

Sue Garrett



## Scouts visit to Holme Lacy



The Bromyard troop of Scouts, their leaders and some parents arrived at Holme Lacy on a perfect May spring morning to discover what an apiary is and what goes on inside a beehive. The hawthorn was in full bloom, the grass still damp from morning dew, and, thankfully the Herefordshire clay, after all the early spring rains, had dried firm. The training model hive was placed ready for instruction beside the plethora of assorted laundered bee suits, lined up in size order all ready for our visitors.

The excited children's and adults' first lesson was how to get into a bee suit – always fun to watch - and learn why cuffs, ankles and zips need be secured against insects being trapped on the inside (a guaranteed method of getting even the most slothful into action).

After a short talk about what is expected in an apiary – of both bee and human behaviour – each group of children, and their responsible adults, was led by an instructor to their respective hives.

Beekeepers - often pre-occupied with their inspection plan - can take for granted the fascination of the workings of an active colony amongst the honeycombs. But to new eyes, seeing bees for the first time, how honey is made and where it comes from, is a rewarding way of spending a Saturday morning. One keen, clean adult who showered and shaved before the day's adventure proved very popular with the bees as he walked into the apiary smelling strongly of the finest aftershave.

Children absorb information like water into sponges. Curiosity and good eyesight make them the ideal candidates to be our Asian Hornet spotters and they were given a page with an outline of the Asian Hornet to colour in, to aid their identification knowledge, together with a question-and-answer sheet about bees, and a few word-search games and crosswords - to consolidate what they learned - when they next gather as a scout group.

There was one casualty. A bee caught up in the sleeve cuff of a woolly jumper – not the best material to be trapped in – a small sting on the thumb. A reminder how useful those cool bricks for your summer drinks bag are as a cold compress. And a little dab of antihistamine cream. And, surprisingly, the bee casualty wasn't because of our sweet-smelling shaven guest!

Have you checked your first aid kit recently?

Thank you to Steve, Colin, and Andrew for volunteering their Saturday morning.

Janelle Quitman

## **Honey Show 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> October**

If you are thinking of entering the class for complete frames of honey, we have the competition frames available, priced at £2 each. Contact:

North LAN      [Mary Walter](#)

South LAN      [Steve Utley](#)

East LAN      [Roger Gill](#)

## Final day of the 2023 Beginner's Course

The fickle spring weather proved just as contrary on the last day of the Beginners' Course. Those who attended the black and white timbered Holme Lacy village hall for the finale of the lectures were treated to Mary's home-baked chocolate brownies and her delicious date and walnut cake. Our local retired bee inspector, Colin Pavey, gave an excellent PowerPoint presentation on honeybee ailments and how to recognise them, the importance of controlling swarming, its effects on the colony, its survival, the spread of disease, feral colonies, and the honey

crop. Afterwards he demonstrated how to uncap drone brood to look for Varroa infestation.

We were lucky to have the company of our current seasonal bee inspector, Bronwyn, who explained the importance of biosecurity, her role in helping us keep healthy

bees and what to do if we need her experienced observations to look over our colonies if we were worried or suspected disease. The occurrence of Chronic Bee Paralysis seems to be on the rise, data received on a June forage dearth, the threat of imported pests such as Small Hive Beetle and the Asian Hornet means we all benefit from being registered on [BeeBase](#) so that we can be notified and advised on action to be taken.



**Colin Pavey gives a heads up on DWV**

Roger, aka our talented treasurer, gave a brief description on the use of the Snelgrove Board – named after Louis Snelgrove whose procedure was based on the Gerstung theory of swarming, that when the number of nurse bees in a colony produced more brood food than required, the colony would prepare to swarm. Roger made his own board and tantalisingly gave the beginners



**SBI Bronwen Hopkins shows that bee inspectors are not scary**

something to think about for their second year of beekeeping and for those at intermediate level.

Bob, Kath, and Mary, armed with very many years of beekeeping experience and contribution to the association, were on hand with an informative display of memorabilia, information, and useful products. During the informal question and answer session at the end of the afternoon, a query was raised about feeding. Roger pointed out that [BeeBase](#) has a plethora of information available, and it was suggested by Bronwyn,

that particularly in the first year of beekeeping, buying the correct dose of syrup feed, fondant and varroa treatment from Bob was the best course of action.

The beginners' journey continues at local association apiary visits and events. Grateful thanks go to all the volunteers who give up their time to make this enjoyable hobby a source of constant learning and making friendships happen.

Janelle Quitman



## Hive Types – Dadant

This is the largest of all the traditional hives and is popular with the commercial beekeeper. It was invented by Charles Dadant who emigrated from France to America in 1863. Generally known as the father of modern beekeeping, he invented the Original Dadant in the 1880's which accommodated 10 large frames.



Later in 1917 the Modified Dadant was born, this had a larger brood box that accommodated 11 slightly smaller frames similar to those in the Jumbo Langstroth.

Brother Adam trialled these with other designs and found that they produced double the surplus honey compared to the Nationals, thus he switched to Dadants. The brood box can hold 85,000 cells, 35,000 more than a standard National brood.

## **Dadant** - *continued*

### Pros:

- Expandable – easy to add space, ie. more boxes.
- Removable frames – easy to inspect.
- Larger frames, so there is potentially much more honey per frame.
- Honey can be harvested without destroying bees.
- Larger brood boxes allow more space for queen to lay than she should need.

### Cons:

- Very heavy when full! More strength needed when inspecting and removing boxes.
- The frames have small lugs for handling
- Larger than bees' natural habitat.



We don't currently have any Dadants in Holme Lacy apiary but we have members who are happy with them. As usual with beekeeping, you may have some different views from the above points!

Steve Utley (pictures courtesy of Lorna Radnor)

## Bob's Beelines



What a change in the beekeeping world. The weather is good for us and our bees the oil seed rape is mostly over, so get your supers off and get it extracted before it sets in the comb.

This year we could get a June gap so make sure your bees have enough stores to keep them going.

I think now is a good time to replace two or three frames in the brood chamber and remove some of the old dark ones so that the queen will have more healthy frames to lay in. The young bees will soon draw the frames out.

I am still extracting my oil seed rape a good crop this year.

There have been a lot of large swarms this year owing to a mild winter and climate change. Also if you have any swarms in the June gap give them a good feed of syrup.

That's all for now

Bob and Kath Cross

01886 880 554

## Topical tip-June

The weather over the last two or three weeks has been very good, and the bees have brought in large amounts of spring nectar. If you are within reach of oil seed rape, the honey will need extracting as soon as possible, as it will set in the combs very rapidly. I have noticed some colonies with a recently emerged new queen have left very little space in the brood boxes for her to start laying. In that case it may be necessary to replace some brood frames. If your extractor takes brood frames they could be extracted and given back to the bees to clean up. Otherwise you could open up the honey with your uncapping fork and hope they eat it. If we have a June gap your bees may need it, but generally they prefer fresh nectar to old stores."

Mary Walter

## Committee Members

**Chairman :** Tony Ravenhall

**Vice Chairman :** Deborah Smith

**Secretary :** Mary Walter

**Treasurer :** Roger Gill

**Membership Sec. :** Steve Utleay

**Committee:**, Rob Williams, Janelle Quitman, and Val Lilwall,

### **LAN CO-ORDINATORS**

**North LAN:** Mary Walter

**East LAN:** Sue Garrett - Retiring, so new co-ordinator sought

**South LAN:** Val Lilwall

**PATRON:** Councillor Ellie Chowns

To contact a member of the committee please look on our website for the appropriate email address: <https://www.herefordshirebeekeepers.org.uk/>

The Herefordshire Beekeepers Association is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Members of the committee are also trustees.

Further details at: <https://beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=1174917&subid=0>

If you have contributions to propose for this newsletter, please contact **Kirsten Ellerby** at: [news@herefordshirebeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:news@herefordshirebeekeepers.org.uk)



**If foul brood is suspected**, contact our Regional Bee Inspector (RBI),

- Jonathan Axe - Tel: 07867 151 641  
[jonathan.axe@apha.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.axe@apha.gov.uk)

Or, during the season, a Seasonal Bee Inspector (SBI)

- Liz Gardner Tel: 07867 351610  
[elizabeth.gardner@apha.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.gardner@apha.gov.uk)

or

- Bronwen Hopkins - Tel: 07796 433 626  
[bronwen.hopkins@apha.gov.uk](mailto:bronwen.hopkins@apha.gov.uk)