

High Wycombe and District Beekeepers Association

Registered Charity No. 299638

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Newsletter - April 2007

Diary

Forthcoming Events

- | | | |
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| 21st April | - | BBKA Spring Convention - Stoneleigh |
| 27th April | - | Pests & Predators - Margaret Holland |
| 25th May | - | Beekeeping with another Full Time Job. Andrew Gibb |

27th April Pests & Predators Margaret Holland

An interactive presentation and quiz with our local Seasonal Bees Officer. This promises to be an informal and lively evening.

25th May Beekeeping with another Full Time Job. Andrew Gibb.

Andrew comes from Woking, and was due to give this talk last year, but had to cancel at short notice due to illness. His topic will be of great relevance: even to retired folk!

11th July New Beekeepers Meeting

A reprise of how the beginners are getting on, problem solving suggestions etc. At the other end of the room a second group will explore the theme of bees of various types, honey and what is involved with beekeeping.

11th August Visit to John Hamer's Black Horse Apiary at Woking in Surrey

This is John's Open Day. He has excellent displays of equipment, honey processing and all the common hive types. Get there by car sharing. Watch the Newsletter for further details.

8th September Ian Homer - Integrated Pest Management Day

Ian is the CSL Bee Inspector for the Southern Region. He will be coaching us on Varroa control. There will be a Pub Lunch.

6th October Presidents' Supper

This informal evening (with an After Dinner Speaker not about bees!) will be held at Frieth Village Hall.

Watch the Newsletter for further details of these forthcoming events.

Basic Assessment

I am proposing to start the Basic Assessment lectures on Thursday 5th April at 19.30 at the Environment Centre.

Would anyone interested contact me beforehand on 01494 812344, so that I have an idea on numbers.

Clive Winslow.

Chairman's Chat

Can you give a little help?

I repeat my appeal for a **limited amount** of help with the Education & Publicity material on our display bench at The Environment Centre. This area is a huge draw to the public, particularly children. Apart from the new website, it is also our main point of contact with the general public.

A few hours, some thinking and planning are all that is involved: but it would be **so useful** to get the fresh approach that comes from the involvement of a new mind. Please give me (526557), or Sylvia Chamberlin (522082) a ring if you can help us.

Soap Making Instructions - February Meeting.

As she promised, our speaker, Dr Sara Robb, has sent me the computer files containing the full directions for her soap making process. If you would like a copy of these, please drop me an email and I will send them to you. Clive_hill@talktalk.net

HWBKA Website

Committee member Keith Wood has worked incredibly hard on our new HWBKA website: and it is now running live. www.hwbka.co.uk is designed to act as a point of contact for potential new members; and a ready source of information for existing members. Many thanks to Keith for all his hard work, and to Stewart Thorburn who did the initial scouting exercise, and to the steering group involved.

Beginners Classes

The classes are progressing well, tutored by John Crick and his team. We have 18 members. Having a few existing beekeepers on hand to chat during tea break is very popular with the students. There are two more theory Sessions to go, so if you can come along, arrive ~8:30. It is great fun and makes them much more likely to take up our interest. If the entrance door is shut, key in 7958 to open it. Later, you can get involved with the helping during the apiary practical work sessions.

Stoneleigh Bee Convention

Saturday April 21st. This Convention is a wonderful day out – and, if you've not been before, will greatly expand your beekeeping horizons. See BBKA News, or Beecraft for further details.

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School Visiting and the Teachers Pack

For over 10 years members of HWBKA have been visiting schools to help to educate local children about bees and beekeeping. To supplement this work we use the Bees in the Curriculum Teachers Pack which was published by the British Beekeepers Association. All the material may be photocopied and is an excellent resource to help the teachers use bees to enhance their work. We lend a copy of this book to the schools before our visit and usually they then want to buy one.

The information in the pack was referenced to the requirements of Key Stages 1 & 2 in the National Curriculum so on the whole our contacts have been with primary schools. However the information is also of value for secondary pupils. Although we have made contact with a number of schools in the area there are many more that we have not reached. The Association has a stock of these packs and it would be good if we could get them into more schools. We have found from experience that it is easiest to get a positive response if the school is approached through a teacher, parent or school governor. If you are a teacher, parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or school governor or have a friend or neighbour in this category please try to interest them in this book and the offer of a visit by a beekeeper to the school. You can take a book along to show them. Often parents want to buy them anyway or even to give one as a present to the teacher. Though our main aim is not to make money with the book, it is to be able to provide an educational service.

Please, telephone or Email if you think you can find an outlet for one.

Below is a copy of the letter written to accompany each book, that explains its purpose, and gives my contact details.

School visiting team coordinator
Sylvia Chamberlin,
61 Wordsworth Road,
High Wycombe
Bucks. HP11 2UR
Telephone :01494 522082
Email:sylvia.chamberlin@zen.co.uk

Please look at this book.

The British Beekeepers Association has published it for teachers and parents to provide information that can be used to teach the children in their care about bees and the many ways that bees are of value in the world.

Beekeepers are conscious of the negative perceptions of bees amongst many of the general public and of a limited understanding of their fascinating biology, social structure and vital importance as pollinators. They are keen to redress these misconceptions. Beekeepers who are also schoolteachers know that bees provide accessible examples of very many aspects of the National Curriculum. Indeed they have already been using bees to illustrate topics for many years. This book has been compiled to make this information available for all.

You should find information and activities here that are relevant and useful to children of all ages. Although it has been provided with references to Key Stages 1 and 2, the information and some of the work sheets may well be of use at the higher levels. The book may be photocopied for educational purposes.

Please look at the book and let us know what you think of it. It can be purchased at a subsidised rate of £10

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March Meeting

We had an excellent turn out, and had to add extra chairs! Several of the Beginners group came along, and were very much participating. Norman Hughes gave us a thought provoking talk about understanding and anticipating what is going on in a colony, so you stay in charge. He also introduced the genetics that underlie bee breeding. Once the prepared talk was over, we drew him into a discussion which covered topics of great use, and great mind-opening character, for both beginners and recent recruits to beekeeping. Two of the subjects explored were the FIBKA Annual Summer School at Gormanston in Ireland: and drone congregation areas (there is one at Gormanston). Norman and June enjoy Gormanston so much, they've been 14 times!

'Frame of Honey' Competition

In the last few years HWBKA has stopped holding its Annual Honey Show. As a consequence, we are losing the necessary skills of preparing and exhibiting: and the underlying know-how essential in preparing honey for sale to the public. Bucks County Association wants to try encourage showing, so we are holding a competition for 'Best Frame of Honey'. John Crick is selling marked 'Top Bars' (or empty frames) for an entry fee of £1. Members then make up the super frame, which they get their bees to draw and fill. The competition will probably be held at our September meeting, where the frames will be judged by our very own honey judge, Vivienne Brown. A useful prize will be awarded. **Come on, all you recent recruits, see if you can win!!**

Association Apiaries

For many years, the Association has had the benefit of two apiaries. These are used for education work, and for honey production. Bob Hunter has managed the Hughenden site; and Phil Wiggins, then John Crick, the Marlow one. These people have put in a much work to our communal benefit; and we owe them a large debt of gratitude. But the current arrangements now need to change: since both Bob and John wish to retire from these positions.

We have discussed this matter in committee and have decided to concentrate our efforts at the Hughenden location: where Bill B-B and Scott Rutland will look after the bees and site for honey production: and we will continue our educational work. If we can find someone else to take on the task of running the Marlow site, it could be used for honey production, and perhaps occasional teaching work. Failing this, we think the apiary could be used for new beekeepers until they find their own site.

Final decisions will be made at the committee meeting to be held on April 23rd. If you could help with this apiary work, or have other relevant suggestions, please get in touch with our Secretary ASAP.

Clive Hill

For more information visit the Bees4kids website
<http://www.bbka.org.uk/bees4kids/index.html>

Book a school visit

High Wycombe Beekeepers Association have members who will be pleased to visit your school and talk to the children to supplement the work on any of these topics. They will bring a closed portable observation hive so the pupils can observe live honey bees and they will also supply specimens etc.

Get in touch with the person who lent you this book or with the schools coordinator to book a visit for your school. (see top of page)

March 30 2007

Global Warming?

These days the subject of, unseasonable weather and arguments and counter arguments from reputable scientists on the subject of global warming seem to dominate the press along with speeches by politicians of all persuasions.

I thought that newsletter readers might be interested in an article by the very famous the late R.O.B. Manley which was printed in the British Bee Journal (now defunct) on March 4th, 1954. As you will observe he is quoting from 'Gleanings in Natural History with Local Recollections' by Edward Jesse, about the weather of 1818 and 1822.

Phil Wiggins

Weather Notes of Long Ago

R. O. B. Manley, Oxfordshire, finds in Gleanings in Natural History with Local Recollections, by Edward Jesse, 1832, some very interesting facts relative to weather of 1818 and 1821, and bees.

A DREADFUL DROUGHT

"1818.--Spring and summer have been unusually fine. On April 14th the first hive of bees I could hear of swarmed.

July 12th.--Wheat was brought into Reading market.

July 25th.--The thermometer this day stood in the shade, during the greater part of the day, at 92°, and in the sun at 116°

July 26th.--Flowers of every description have entirely disappeared.

July 27th.--The leaves of the lime-trees and horse-chestnuts are falling and trees generally have a very autumnal appearance.

July 29th.--Bees almost entirely confine themselves to their hives during the finest days of the latter part of the month, owing to the want of flowers.

August 25th.--The dry weather continues. It began early in May, and we have been without rain, with the exception of two or three showers, since that time.

September 3rd.--Owing to the dry weather, potatoes are dear and scarce, and have been selling for as much as apples. which are plentiful. Onions are so dear that they have been sold for as much as inferior peaches.

September 3rd.--There has been a fall of rain which seems likely to continue.

December 13th.--The weather has continued almost invariably fine and mild. Violets are in great abundance Two Glastonbury thorns are in full blossom in this place, and nasturtiums are still growing"

UNSEASONAL SIGNS

"December 14th.--Blackbirds and thrushes sing morning and evening as in spring.

December 20th --This day I saw sparrows busily engaged in building their nests.

1822.--Winter uncommonly mild.

March 20th.--Heard of bees swarming the beginning of this month.

March 28th.--A swarm of bees settled in a garden near Kingston-on-Thames.

June 25th.--Harvest begun in many parts of England.

June 30th -- Corn brought into market. Apricots, plums and some kinds of apples ripe.

August 15th.--Dry weather has continued for some months. Out-of-door grapes are ripe. Leaves fall as in late autumn. Walnuts ripe."

Swarms

It's that time of year again!

If you would like to be contacted when a swarm becomes available please contact me on 07966956477 or email me from the link on our web page. We no longer have a swam apiary in West Wycombe, so you'll need an unoccupied hive to put the swarm in.

Stewart Thorburn

HEATHER HONEY TRIP

Would you be interested in migrating your bee colonies on to the heather moors. I'm very interested and would like to hear from anyone who would like to join me.

If you are interested please email me on;

scott@rutland.freeserve.co.uk

or phone 07748788241

OBSERVATION HIVE FOR SALE

A chance to own a brand new, quality, hand-built 5 frame national nuc box with observation hive on top.

If you are interested please e-mail me on;

scott@rutland.freeserve.co.uk

07748788241



How the Bee Got Her Name

Genesis 2, v, 19-20:

Adam picked up the insect. placed her in the centre of his left palm, gently stroking her velvet back, he said:

"And what shall we call this pretty little thing ?" The pretty little thing immediately planted her sting. good and hard; and Adam said ?-- !!

Well, anyhow, she is called a bee, even to this day.

This may not be good theology, but it's a "theory."

F. S. KNIGHT, Bristol.

(Phil Wiggins)

newsletter@hwbka.co.uk

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