

High Wycombe and District Beekeepers Association

Registered Charity No. 299638

Chairman: Clive Hill 01494 526557

President: Will Steynor 01494 881205

Secretary: Sheila Borwick 01494 729315 shejont@waitrose.com

Treasurer: Edward West 01494 520874

Swarm Officer: Bill Bendyshe-Brown 07527 798659

Newsletter - August 2008

Diary

Forthcoming Events

- | | | |
|----------------|---|--|
| 17th August | - | BBQ |
| 11th September | - | Colony Collapse Disorder - Dewey Caron |
| 26th September | - | AGM and Competitions |
| 11th October | - | Presidents Evening - Frieth |

Sunday 17th August - Barbeque

Dear Fellow Beekeepers

I do not know whether you spotted it in our monthly newsletter, but we are planning to hold a BBQ for all members of our Association on 17th August at Bill (our swarm officer this year) and Eugenie Bendyshe-Brown's house in Skittle Green, Bledlow starting at 1 pm. The price is £12 per head. Partners and families are most welcome. Drinks will be available for a small donation or you are most welcome to bring your own drinks along if you so wish. There is plenty of room and a marquee will be in place 'just in case'! We have lined up an excellent menu, which will be prepared by professional 'BBQer'. Please bring a folding chair.

This is our major social event of the year and comes at the end of our beekeeping season, so there will be lots of stories for each of us to hear and tell. Come and dine with excellent company, and also see "Bill & Eugenie's version of The Good Life".

A map is attached, showing how to get to Bill and Eugenie's house.

Please let **Sheila** know soonest and by no later than 12th August, if you intend to come along, so that we can gauge numbers for catering purposes.

We look forward to seeing you on 17th August.

Thursday 11th September - Special Meeting CCD

We will be holding a **Special Meeting**, when Professor Dewey Caron, visiting from the USA, will be speaking about "Preparing for the Fall" which will allow him to cover the current status of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) research, and also American beekeeping methods. We have publicised this important meeting to other local BKAs and invited their members to attend. The meeting will be held at The Environment Centre as usual, starting at 7:00 pm. Places are limited to 100. If you want to come, you must ring (01 494 714460) our Programme Secretary, Julian Parker, to reserve your place. See the attached leaflet for further details.

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Chairman's Chat

2. Chairman's Chat

Thanks to our coming AGM, we have a very full Newsletter this month: but I would like to draw your attention to the following items and also **prompt you to act quickly on booking your places at our coming BBQ**; and to **collect your Apiguard ASAP** from Kenn Shearer. As to the nominations for our 2008/9 year, it would be very good if we could increase the numbers of women on the committee.

I hope your bees have given you full supers! Yours sincerely

Clive Hill

Ian Homer

Ian Homer, our Regional Bee Inspector, was taken to hospital in mid-July with heart problems. He is now back at home and his new voice-mail message says he's hoping to emerge back into the beekeeping world in late August . . . but no doubt his doctors will decide! As you will know, Ian has had a considerable workload recently due to the Berks/Oxon Foul Brood outbreak: and also his 'Bee Disease Recognition Day' on July 12th. The protracted travelling due to living in Dorset and working in our area cannot have helped him. I have sent a card with our Best Wishes to Ian, on behalf on HWBKA. Richard Ball, the National Bee Inspector is currently standing in for Ian, with the five Southern Region Seasonal bee Inspectors responding to him.

Environment Centre Help – "Beekeeper in Attendance" short sessions

The Environment Centre will be open 7 days a week during the school summer holidays. We've been asked if it would be possible for some of our members to be on hand to talk 'Bees & Beekeeping' with the public at our display bench and observation hive: and so help with manning the centre. They work on the basis of two sessions, 10 – 1 and 1 – 4: and would be delighted if members could volunteer to be present for some of their many sessions. It would cost you your time and a 20p parking fee. You would get a highly enjoyable time fielding questions, and a free "soup & sandwich" lunch should you wish. If you can help, please ring 01 494 511585 and leave a message. They will come back to you to decide a date and time that would be mutually convenient.

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Friday 26th September AGM + Frame & Honey Competitions Run honey in a Black Jar and 'Frame of Honey' Competition - preparation etc

Frames

Clean off all scrapeable propolis, wax etc, then keep the competition frame safe and undamaged until our AGM evening.

Run Honey in Black Jar

1. Provide your own clean jar and gold lid with flowed-in seal.
2. Cover all the outside of the jar with masking tape, or gaffer tape, or duct tape, or similar. The tape should go right up to the neck of the jar against the lower edge of the lid; and also cover the bottom of the jar.
3. Colour the tape Black, using a Marker Pen, or similar, so the judge will be unable to see through the jar.
4. Invert the empty jar and stand it in a well ventilated place for several days. (This is to ensure no residual odour from the tape etc can affect the aroma of the honey when the jar is judged.)
5. Fill the jar with your best honey to say 2 mm below the lid. (NOTES: Use Honey that has had NO heating. Filter the honey first, to remove bits.)
6. Screw down the lid tightly and allow the jar to stand in a warm place until about the day of the AGM. This should prevent it setting and also allow air or scum to come to the top of the jar.
7. Shortly before bringing the jar to the AGM, remove the lid and using a small spoon remove the surface scum. Then replace the lid and tighten it down.
8. Ask for an Entry Label from the Competition Organiser at the AGM. Ensure the label is stuck on the jar. The Judge will evaluate the honey for aroma, flavour and consistency (viscosity). Good Luck!

(Notes by Clive Hill)

SATURDAY 11th OCTOBER - PRESIDENT'S EVENING

This will be held in Frieth Village Hall and will have a similar format to last year.

Commencing at 7pm Supper at 7.30 followed by presentation of the President's Cup and various other awards. This will be followed by an after dinner speaker, who will talk about the re-introduction of the red kite to the Thames Valley - which should be absolutely fascinating!

This is a social evening for members and partners to get to know each other. The cost of the ticket (yet to be finalised but will be under £20) includes the meal and soft drinks, you bring anything stronger.

To book places please either phone or Email Will Steynor at 01494 881205 or willsteynor@hotmail.com All emails will receive a confirmation reply.

Honey Extractor for Hire

The Association has a small stainless steel tangential honey extractor and a settling tank plus strainer.

It is available for loan to members (£10 rental on collection).

To arrange collection call: Julian Parker 01494 714460

This equipment is more than adequate for anyone with only a few hives. It saves new beekeepers the expense of purchasing a costly extractor in the first couple of seasons: so giving time to get used to extracting before deciding what type of extractor best suits their needs, before making a purchase.

BBKA Bee Research campaign

We have sent 35 sheets, with a total of 684 signatures up to BBKA HQ. 596 of these came from The Environment Centre, the remaining 88 came from Scott Rutland's and Tim Fountain's collections at their recent events. Many thanks for your support! No doubt we will collect and send in further signatures later. Our Treasurer is sending a cheque for £600 to BBKA, to be used for their Beekeeping Research Fund. This has been collected from the individual donations paid when we fill in the membership renewal forms together with the relevant tax relief, and some further topping-up from association funds. BBKA has already had over 37,000 signatures and is now wanting us to get as many MPs as possible to support the cause, by writing letters to involve our MP in the campaign. More on this later.

Swarm update

Bill B-B tells me that no swarm calls are now being received, but we are still getting plenty of queries due to wasps and bumblebees. He is convinced we provide the public a very valuable advisory resource. The total number of real swarm calls has been remarkably low, and a good many people on the list for swarms have had to go without.

Princes Risborough School Beekeeping Project

Did you see the article in the Bucks Free Press about the beekeeping at Princes Risborough School? July 25th edition, page 19, "A Buzzin' sweet time". This reports on the culmination of the school's beekeeping project - they got some honey! The project has been led by Sylvia Chamberlin and Sheila Borwick; with assistance from Bernard Wells, Raymond Chamberlin, Simone Capell, Bill and Eugenie Bendyshe-Brown. Our congratulations to the whole team, and the pupils involved. The next, and crucial, stage will be for the school to find a new Lead Teacher, so the project can continue into the next school year.

Honey Prices again

On July 29th, Sainsbury was selling Rowse clear "English Beekeeper Honey" in clear PET 340 g squeeze bottles at £3.29, equivalent to £4.39 per lb. As I said last month, the going rate for local honey in shops in High Wycombe is now £3.50 +/- 25p per 454g (lb), with direct sales at £3 or above. If you sell your own honey, it is a quality product **must** be well presented and **labelled** as required by law. All of this takes time, care and know-how. Please don't under-rate your product.

Clive Hill

Apiguard Bulk Order

Ready for Collection

Our bulk order of Apiguard has been delivered. The price we achieved was £15.70 per pack, which is a saving of £7.30 per pack on Thorne's price, so a reduction of more than 30%. We bought 36 packs so have saved members collectively more than £260. Many thanks to Sheila for organising this bulk buy for us.

Kenn Shearer has agreed to act as our 'Central Collection Point'. You need to bring a cheque payable to HWBKA, or cash, as payment. Please will those members who have ordered Apiguard ring Kenn, to arrange to collect it from him. 01 494 450616. Once you have the material, don't hang around, it needs to be on the hives as soon as you have taken off the honey! See Monthly Notes for more info.

Clive Hill

Seasonal Tips and Reminders August 2008

Taking off the honey crop

Ensure colonies have sufficient stores for immediate future.

Honey Extraction – further know-how

Watch your Back & Toes! Take Care - Lifting & Carrying

Varroa control

The weather has been rather mixed over the last few weeks, but nectar has been coming into my colonies and converted to honey. The 2008 summer nectar flow has been later and I think more protracted than in 2007, however I don't think there will be all that good a crop for any of us. The 'main flow' usually lasts through July, then tails off rapidly in early August, but perhaps a few days longer this year. At present the blackberry nectar flow is ending, there is still a little white clover and perhaps the rosebay willowherb will flower for a week or two more. Against this, Oold man's beard (wild clematis) is now flowering in my locality, which is a pretty good marker that the main summer honey flow has ended. Once the willowherb finishes, there will be nectar enough to cover in-colony needs, but not for honey to store. So the bees will now be hunting for that little bit of extra nectar, or stray honey, from wherever they can find it - and will quickly start to rob exposed combs.

In August there are two "mandatory jobs" which need to be done in sequence:-

1. Honey removal and extracting. (Assuming there's honey to harvest!)
2. Varroa control - to ensure healthy over-winter/spring bees and to link with other beekeepers' treatment times.

Dealing with the honey Crop

Although the July Newsletter included some material on honey crop processing, these August Notes assume this task is still to be done.

Honey Removal If you haven't done so already, sometime in the first few days of August, check to see if the honey is capped. When you remove your honey crop, make sure that the bees have sufficient stores – the brood chamber should feel really heavy! When you re-assemble the hive, put on a clearer board, then remove the brace comb from the top and/or bottom bars of the frames when the supers are put back. It will then be much easier, and less messy, to take the supers back for extracting. Be careful you don't leave the brace comb trimmings exposed, or you could start a spate of robbing! In the re-assembled hive the bees will tidy up any exposed honey, and then move back down through the clearer board. Once the supers have been cleared (hopefully after 1 day, but possibly up to 4 days) take them home for extracting. When you remove this last honey crop of the year, the hives should be back to just the Brood Chamber. Avoid giving the bees un-necessary hive space. Excess bees will cluster outside the hive, but still be part of it's economy; yet the numbers will soon reduce and all fit inside the hive. Give them a small feed if you think they need it.

Handling Supers. During honey extraction, I make great use of strong flat Castor Boards 18" square, with a strong castor at each corner. These are used as base-boards for stacks of supers. After you've strapped the pile together, you can push supers around, rather than lifting and carrying separate boxes to move them. Honey extracting and moving supers about is very heavy work: so 'Watch your Back and your Toes!' I wear Safety Shoes to protect my feet in case I should drop a box, or a bucket.

Weighing Supers. At the apiary I mark each super with the hive origin, and make a record of them. Back home I weigh each super before and after extracting. I can then calculate the yield of each colony and also the total crop of honey & wax. For weighing I use a Digital Bathroom Scale. These give readouts to 0.1 kg (100g). Do check no propolis is left on the scales before they go back to the bathroom!

De-capping. The traditional way of decapping frames is to use a sharp knife to slice through the air-space just beneath the cappings. Cut upwards and tilt the frame so the cappings separate from the comb. The cappings can fall into a plastic box, or onto a Decapping Tray depending on your scale of work. An electrical Decapping Knife makes the job much faster but they are hideously expensive. A decapping fork is useful for those awkward sunken areas of comb and can be used more widely, but may be rather slow. An alternative is to use a Hot Air Gun (as in paint stripping) to flash-melt the cappings. The technique is very fast, but there is a hidden snag: it is very easy to blast liquid wax droplets about, with instant mess! You can also buy 'decapping rollers' which look like a Painter's Roller with spikes. I bought one to try it out, but found it messy and slow: so I'm keeping it for the future, if I have heather honey needing 'loosening' before extraction.

Extracting. If you are using a tangential extractor, never attempt to completely empty the first side of the comb before reversing it to do side two. If you do this, the comb will break, so part extract, then reverse the frames; part extract, then turn again etc. Apart from that golden rule, the longer you leave the combs spinning, the less honey you will leave behind in the comb. Warm honey extracts better and leaves less residue: so work in a warm room – say 30°C rather than 20°C and definitely not 15°C.

Filtering & Separating. Warm honey also filters much faster, so 30°C will be dramatically quicker than 15°C. If there are any set honey crystals in the unfiltered honey, they will slow things down enormously. If you only want to filter coarsely, then use a 250 µm (0.25 mm) mesh (hole size) filter. A 150µm mesh will filter noticeably more slowly, but will take out those little specks and make the honey look more sparkling. 80µm filters very very slowly, but the honey will sparkle even more. But sometimes you can never get rid of a haze if it is due to pollen or a protein component. Allow the honey to 'settle' for a day or two, and then remove the air-bubble scum from the top before filling to jars. The 'froth' is a 'Beekeeper's Perk' and delightful on bread, or on ice cream, so don't throw it away!

Dealing with the Cappings. You have several options here. 1. Eat them (before the honey has set). 2. Sell them to 'Health Food' customers. 3. Put them back on the hive in a tank-feeder, to let the bees recover the honey. 4. Wash them in rainwater and make Mead. 5. Melt them to separate the wax and honey – but use the absolute minimum of heat, or the flavour of the honey will be degraded.

Wet Supers after extracting. You have two options for the wet supers. Either they can be returned to the hives a few days later, **in the evening**. They will then be cleaned-up by the bees. If you do this, all the colonies in the apiary must get supers to clean, or have a small feed. They must also have the hive entrances reduced. This treatment puts all colonies at a similar state of alert and excitement and reduces the risk of robbing. Leave the wet supers on the colonies for a few days, then clear them again, and remove them for storage. The alternative routine is to store the supers still wet with honey. If you do this, you must make sure

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that the stacks of supers are bee-proof; and that drips of honey cannot seep out from the bottom.

A quick reminder to put some of your new honey to one side for honey shows.

If you can prepare honey for sale, then preparing it for show is only a little bit more difficult. If you're new, and haven't tried this before, some of our 'old hands' will give guidance on preparation for showing.

Varroa Control / Treatment (*What follows assumes the use of Apiguard Thymol based treatment.*)

Start treatment immediately after the honey supers have been removed from the colony. Follow the manufacturer's instructions given on the pack; and in the 'Products' section of Vita's website. <http://www.vita-europe.com/> Further guidance may also be obtained from the DEFRA Varroa Control pamphlet, which is accessible at http://beebase.csl.gov.uk/pdfs/managing_varroa.pdf.

There are two underlying reasons for treatment ASAP.

A full strength colony anticipates the summer forage peak tailing off in early August by making a significant reduction in the size of the brood nest. As a consequence, a given number of Varroa mites will affect a higher proportion of a smaller brood nest. In small colonies building up from nucleus size, there should be a bigger proportion of brood, but it will still be vulnerable to varroa side effects. Bees emerging in the late summer are very important to the colony, since they will over-winter then become the foraging force in the spring. Bees emerging from cells containing Varroa mites are weakened: they have short foraging lives, are likely to be affected by virus diseases; and don't live so long. A colony with a preponderance of these weakened bees will take ages to get going in the spring - assuming it gets through to the spring! So, you must time your Varroa control to anticipate the potential damage by starting the treatment as soon as possible: and give them a small feed of syrup to encourage brood production while protected by the varroicide.

You need an ambient temperature of at least 10°C for the thymol in Apiguard to vaporise and so work effectively – see below.

Using Apiguard. Apiguard is a thymol containing gel supplied in shallow trays. Because the smell of thymol will contaminate

honey and render it inedible, it has to be used AFTER the honey crop has been removed. Expose the gel by peeling back the cover. The bees have to gnaw at the gel, and spread the thymol round in the hive. Put the tray into the hive on top of the brood frames. Make sure that the bees can get at the gel. Give them headroom for this by putting an 'eke' (a frame of timber about 3cm deep, and with the same outer dimensions as your brood chamber) or an empty super over the brood chamber. (You need at least 15mm headroom above the Apiguard tray.) **Put the first Apiguard tray into your hive as soon as practicable in August, leave it in place for two weeks, and then replace it with a second tray, leaving this for a further two weeks.** Scrape any residual Apiguard residue from tray 1 into the new tray. By using this timing, two cycles of brood will be exposed to the treatment action of the thymol vapour.

IMPORTANT : During this time, either give the hive a solid floor, or put the blanking off (Varroa drop check tray) beneath mesh floor. You do this: 1. To ensure the hive stays warm, because an in-hive temperature of 15°C is needed to give a build up of thymol vapour within the hive to control the varroa mites. 2. The solid floor will also help maintain the vapour concentration. Treat all colonies in the apiary simultaneously. Put reminders on your calendar to make sure you don't forget to change, or remove the trays! Before and afterwards, check the daily mite drop to see that the treatment has worked.

Record (and keep) full details of the Treatment - eg. Product used. Batch number. Use-by date. When inserted. When removed.

When the big jobs are done.

In other ways August can be the start of the relaxed "keep an eye on things, but not too much to do" phase of the beekeeping year. As far as stores for winter are concerned, you can feed more syrup later in September or possibly even October, if it should be necessary to top up. Once the wasps start prowling for sweet food, it is sensible to reduce the size of the hive entrance. This makes it easier for the guard bees to protect the colony.

And

finally, don't forget to steal a few minutes to sit beside a hive, to relax, listen, watch, and wonder.

Clive Hill

Note. These notes try to cover the likely activities for each month. Since the subject matter can overlap with the next or previous month, useful back-history information is readily available by checking previous Newsletters in the Downloads section (then Downloads) of our website: www.hwbka.co.uk

Calling all our Beginners

The National Honey Show

Once again there will be **FREE** full annual membership of the National Honey Show for everyone who has joined a beekeeping association since 1st August last year – or is about to join during the course of this year. (Normal entry price £12) This will entitle you to visit the Show and attend lectures throughout the whole three days of the Show. It will also allow you to enter your exhibits in the competitive classes free of cost. Besides honey and hive products, there are classes for photography, baking, video and digital imaging and essay writing. In addition, there are 13 classes for entry only from Bucks County members.

The NHS is this year at a new venue, St George's College, Weybridge Surrey KT15 2QS. It runs from 30th October to 2nd November and aims to be the "gold standard" in honey shows.

Besides the show itself, it offers an extensive range of lectures, workshops and trade stalls. We have submitted the names of all new members to the Honey Show Secretary and you can all take advantage of this offer. Find out more at :

<http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/index.shtml>

BBKA Basic and Modules

We hope to have details of the arrangements for the 2008/9 local BBKA Basic and Intermediate Modules by the time of our AGM. Beulah Cullen has offered to be the tutor for some modules.

PREPARATION FOR AGM

Call for Volunteers for our Committee

Our Association year is drawing to a close, so we approach the time to consider nominations for both officers and committee members. We are fortunate that on the committee we have a broad range of experienced beekeepers and beginners, all of whom bring various skills and attributes to enhance the running of the Association. We all stand down at the AGM, but many of us will stand for re-election. However, it is good to get a little new blood each year!

During the year, we received resignations from Christine Hazell, as Secretary, who had already informed us of her intention to resign after three years of service; and from Kenn Shearer, as Apiary Manager, who sadly suffered a most unfortunate reaction to bee stings; and from Keith Wood, who moved to Kent. Christine did an enormous amount to modernise the way we operate and we owe her a great debt of thanks for all she accomplished during her period of office. Fortunately, we have been able to replace her with Sheila Borwick, who took over secretarial responsibilities in April 2008 and is willing to continue in that role. But the good news is that we have not lost Kenn either. His wife, Pauline, continues to look after their bees and Kenn has continued to provide his expertise in data management, as Membership Secretary. We are indebted to Phil Wiggins who stepped in at short notice to take over management of our Marlow apiary and achieved miracles with the help of a quickly formed working party, which included a number of our beginners. Phil has promised to continue with this responsibility for the time being, and to advise later: but we do need to find a new Apiary Manager for the forthcoming year. Keith Wood has been happy to manage our Website as an “Outworker” based initially in Kent, but at present on a Diving Course in Thailand!

So, we are looking for an Apiary Manager and some new committee members. What does this entail? Well, we have around 5 committee meetings per year. They are held at The Environment Centre and are both enjoyable and very cooperative. We ask each committee member to take responsibility for some area that assists towards our aims. Perhaps you have skills in website management, or carpentry, or communication. Perhaps you would like to give talks on beekeeping to local associations or to schools. The work is divided out according to what time members have available and their particular interests or skills. We are also fortunate to have some ‘out-workers’ where people use their skills to the great benefit of the Association.

The committee is open to new ideas and approaches and we enjoy the fresh perspectives that new beekeepers can bring. Perhaps you can spot a gap in our current arrangements – if so, please tell us about it. Any member of the current committee would be happy to talk to you about what is involved. The nomination form is attached to the newsletter, but we can also take nominations from the floor at the AGM.

Clive Hill

PROPOSAL: August 2008 for Alteration to the Constitution of HWBKA

I propose that paragraph 7 .1 of the existing Constitution of HWBKA be amended to read:- “The PRESIDENT shall not be eligible for re-election after the fourth consecutive year of office”

Proposed by Bill Bendyshe-Brown

Seconded by Sheila Borwick

Background Information

The proposer writes: “I believe it would be of benefit to the Association if the length of time a President may serve is extended from two to four years, because it adds continuity to the governance of the society. The office of Chairman is held for three years. This proposal, if accepted, would ensure that both positions would seldom become vacant in the same year; thus ensuring greater stability for the society when either of these significant positions has a change of officer.”

Call for Committee Nominations (see next page)

HIGH WYCOMBE & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity No: 299638

NOMINATIONS for Executive Committee

To: All Members

Nominations are invited for the posts of Officers and Committee Members for the Association for the Year 2008/09. Elections will take place at the AGM which will be held on **Friday 26th September 2008, starting at 7.30 pm at the Environment Centre.**

Nominations to be sent to the Secretary, Sheila Borwick, 1 Queens Head Cottages, Winchmore Hill, Amersham, HP7 0NE to arrive by 12th September 2008.

You may use the form below and may email to shejont@waitrose.com

Kenn Shearer has had to stand down as Apiary Manager for health reasons, and Phil Wiggins has stood in on a temporary basis, but plans to ease out of the role. Kenn has moved to control our various databases of records. All other officers are willing to continue in their present roles, but must be formally re-elected.

Up to five Ordinary Members should be nominated and elected from the floor at the Annual General Meeting. They fill the roles of Programme Secretary, Education Secretary, Membership Secretary, Swarm Officer and other roles as may be required.

Post	Present Holder	Nomination	Proposer	Seconder
Chair	Clive Hill			
Vice-Chair	Clive Winslow			
Secretary	Sheila Borwick			
Treasurer	Ed West			
Librarian	Katy Hart			
Apiary Manager	<i>Vacant</i>			
Show Secretary	At present a redundant office	--	--	--

Committee members

Swarm Officer	Bill Bendyshe-Brown
Programme Sec.	Julian Parker
Teas & Events	Scott Rutland
Database Info	Kenn Shearer
Unspecified	<i>Vacant</i>

I accept nomination

Name -----

Date -----

The HWBKA website can be visited at

www.hwbka.co.uk

If for any reason your copy of the Newsletter doesn't arrive do remember that it can be obtained from the website very soon after publication usually around the 5th of the month

Items for publication will be accepted as hard copies (typed, printed or handwritten) as long as they are totally legible. Normally the closing time for material will be 7am on the 4th of the month. Send them (preferably unfolded) to:

Newsletter, 22 Claremont Gardens, Marlow, SL7 1BS.

E-mails (**without attachments**) can be sent to:

newsletter@hwbka.co.uk

Website: www.hwbka.co.uk

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