

High Wycombe and District Beekeepers Association

Registered Charity No. 299638

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Newsletter - February 2008

Diary

Forthcoming Events

12th February	-	Beginners Refresher Evening
17th February	-	Oxalic Acid Varroa Treatment
29th February	-	Monthly Meeting "Hives Save Lives" - Linda Whitby
1st March	-	Bucks County Seminar
4th March	-	Beginners Course commences
28th March	-	Monthly Meeting 'Is there a Best Bee?' - Terry Clare
26th April	-	Woodworking Day
21st-26th July	-	FIBKA Summer Course

Tuesday 12th February 19:30 Environment Centre. Beginners Refresher Evening: Anticipating the Spring & Discussion on Swarm Collection.

Sunday 17th February 14:30 Association's Marlow Apiary. Demonstration and Tutorial by Ian Homer: Using Oxalic Acid solution to treat Varroa.

Friday 29th February 19:30 Environment Centre. Meeting: Talk by Linda Whitby, of Hives Save Lives – Africa.

Saturday 1st March 10:00 Wendover. Bucks County Seminar

Tuesday 4th March 19:30 Environment Centre. 2008 Beginners Course starts.

Friday March 28th 19:30 Environment Centre. Meeting: Talk by Terry Clare Is there a best bee?

Clive Hill

Recent Event Reports

26th January - Sylvia Chamberlin – Beeswax Cookery

In a late change to our advertised programme, Sylvia stepped in for a demonstration of some of the uses of beeswax which can be used in the home or as saleable items alongside honey.

Sylvia produced a simple recipe sheet which included a traditional wax polish, furniture cream and a basic skin ointment. After pointing out the necessary equipment needed, Sylvia drew our attention to the safety aspects of the process, which include using a water bath or double boiler to melt the wax, as it is dangerous to heat directly, as well as the caution needed when handling the turps or white spirit. Sylvia took us through each of the recipes explaining that carnauba wax, collected from a Brazilian palm, is added to increase the hardness and durability of the finished product. This can be obtained locally as Sylvia gets hers from Isaac Lords.

Turpentine is the traditional ingredient in polish, but white spirit is a cheaper alternative but has a different smell. Sylvia uses a 50:50 mix. The furniture cream involves slightly different ingredients and attention to technique and temperature were highlighted as very important.

Continued on page 2 column 2

Chairman's Chat

A family loss. My sister Monica File has just passed away. I mention this because she met a good many HWBKA folk on visits to Wycombe shows, and other events in the past. She became a physiotherapist, then married and had a family. The link she gave me to beekeeping when I was a child, has now been doubly broken. I remember being kitted up to see Uncle Fred and Monica examining a bee colony back in the mid 1950s. Fred was the tutor, and so calm and capable. He'd kept bees in the '20s or 30s and knew a lot, but died a year or two later. Monica was decidedly nervous, but I found the bees and WBC hive fascinating. She kept them for about 18 months, giving up after they chased her down the garden one evening! But thanks to her I saw my first swarm, and first tasted freshly extracted honey. It was 1973 when I next saw the inside of a hive, and '75 before I had my own bees: and I still find them fascinating.

January Meeting. We had a good turnout for the first meeting of 2008. June Hughes, our advertised speaker was unable to come. She has been in Hospital having a hip op, and not long been out: so we hope to have her talk on Encaustic Art as part of our 2008/9 session. Sylvia Chamberlin volunteered to fill the gap, and gave us an excellent demonstration she called "Beeswax Cookery". As in all good Demos, Sylvia called for helpers from the audience; and Freddy Bricknell, the youngest person present by perhaps 20 years shot his hand up! With Freddy's help, Sylvia then took us through the techniques, and formulations needed to make a small range of polishes and cosmetics with beeswax. The Skin Cream proved particularly popular, and several small pots of it were taken home by members for trial. There were several comments from the male beekeepers about how difficult they found it to get approval at home for using the kitchen for such activities. Could this be a 'Men's Lib Issue'?

BBKA News - February edition. Please note the article that I have written about HWBKA's Free-flying Bumblebee Colony at The Environment Centre. Sharon Blake, the editor hope that this

Continued on page 2 column 1

Continued from page 1 column 2

will stimulate other BKAs to follow our lead. It has also given her a link to the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, who will be submitting other material about BBCT and Bumblebees.

Oxalic Acid Varroa Treatment Tutorial. 17th Feb. 2:00 pm Association's Marlow Apiary. Ian Homer has kindly offered to demonstrate the use of Oxalic Acid as an emergency Varroa treatment for us. Ian regards this treatment as a "last ditch tool" to be used when everything else has failed: but a vital tool in the beekeeper's IPM array of Varroa control techniques. Getting there: Between Booker and Marlow. Map ref: SU836891. Take the B482 from Marlow to Lane End. After 1.5 miles, pass Seymour Court Lane on the LHS. When the road levels off, slow down, and watch for some Oak trees on the RHS and a BEES sign. Park near the Green Metal Gate at the gravelled area (RHS.) Mid Bucks BKA Members have also been invited. Let's hope we have decent weather! Email, or ring me if you want to come, so you can be alerted to any alternative arrangements. 01 494 526557. clive_hill@talktalk.net

Beginners Refresher Evening. 12th February 19:30 Environment Centre. Clive Winslow will be holding an open discussion session. This is aimed at our recent Beginners and improvers, and will help them anticipate the beekeeping needs for the coming Spring. Swarm Collection will also be talked over.

February Meeting – 29/2/2008. Linda Whitby, of Hives Save Lives – Africa is giving us a talk. Their vision is the alleviation of poverty in Africa. To this end they provide practical support in the form of hives, training and equipment, delivered directly to those who need it most. Beekeeping is a low cost, and low environmental impact way of helping people start economic activity to help them move out of a subsistence lifestyle.

Bucks BKA Seminar March 1st. John Catton has organised an excellent day for us again. Full details are elsewhere in this Newsletter. Do come if you possibly can; you'll have an excellent highly stimulating day, with beekeepers present from far and wide. We pay on the door, but food has to be pre-organised, so you must book with John Catton in advance. 01 494 726616. Shelia Borwick is coordinating the provision of cakes, for coffee break and lunchtime. If you can help with these, please give her a ring on 01 494 729315. She's doing the same role for Chalfonts BKS and thinks we should compete to see which association can provide the most cakes for the event! Bob Hunter is to run his usual 'Bring & Buy Stall' there too, so if you have any un-needed beekeeping items, please bring them along to sell on this stall.

HWBKA's Swarm Collecting Role in our local Community. Bill B-B, our new Swarm Officer gave a short presentation about this at the January meeting. He started by outlining the geographic area where HWBKA could feel responsible for swarm collection; then talked about his ideas on how we could be better organised in this topic; and how we need to get more people involved in swarm collection. This with the aim of avoiding overloading just a few individuals, as has occurred in the recent past. Bill is preparing a newsletter article about HWBKA's swarm role. We plan to hold a short training session to back this up; and probably start a mentor system to help people new to this role get involved.

Committee Roles. I can now announce that Shelia Borwick has kindly agreed to join our committee to take up the post of Hon. Sec., when Christine relinquishes it in the spring. While Christine has held the reins during the past few years, she's done a very great deal for us. Her fresh thinking has helped us to re-shape who does what. Julian Parker, who joined us in the autumn, has taken up the role as Programme Organiser. We are finally to reduce to one apiary, which Ken Shearer will manage; and he's also reviewing our membership and our circulation list records: ensuring that we comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. Scott Rutland is to prepare some hives for

this year's beginners, and lead the Woodworking Day. Clive Winslow has taken on the role of education organiser. Our thanks to all these, and the others not mentioned here.

Honey Jar Bulk Purchase. Don't forget to order sufficient honey jars, so that you are fully prepared! Please see the separate article by Phil Wiggins, and contact him ASAP.

BBKA Basic Tutorials. Unfortunately Phil Wiggins has only had two volunteers for these classes, so we've had to cancel them. However both Chalfonts and Mid Bucks groups hope to hold their own classes, so our members should find it possible to link with these.

HWBKA Beginners Course. Led by Clive Winslow. On Tuesday evenings at The Environment Centre. Dates :March 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th; & April 1st, 8th and 15th. Timed to finish just before Stoneleigh, which is on 19th and link with WoodWorking Day on 26th April. We want as many members as possible to come to 'Talk Bees' with them, at tea break each evening ~8:45 pm.

Clive Hill

Honey Jars for the 2008/2009 Season

I have now received firm prices for HWBKA for the above period.

Newer beekeepers should be aware that individual orders placed by members who so wish, are collated by me and the bulk order is placed with our supplier at the following prices.

Standard 1 lb Honey Jars with Metal lids
£30.30 per gross

Standard 1 lb Honey Jars with Plastic lids
£31.93 per gross

Minimum 1lb order is 72 jars

12oz Hexagonal Jars with metal twist grip lids
£18.82 per 84 jar pack

8oz Hexagonal Jars with metal twist grip lids
£8.24 per 32 jar pack

Additional metal lids only - £9.37 per gross
Additional plastic lids only - £11.00 per gross

ALL PRICES INCLUDE VAT AND DELIVERY to Bob Hunter's house at Mill House, Spurlands End Road, Gt. Kingshill, High Wycombe for prompt collection by individual members. Collection dates to be advised around the end of April after the Stoneleigh Show.

Please advise your requirements by March 31st either by phone at 01628 482110 or by e-mail at philwiggins@tiscali.co.uk
Please Note: All e-mail orders will be acknowledged by me to avoid any misunderstanding or technical blips.

Phil Wiggins

Continued from page 1 column 1

Variations on the basic recipes were also discussed which allows for a variety of finished products to be produced.

Sylvia stressed the need for proper labelling of the products, as turps must be listed where present, and borax is included in the skin ointment which can give some people an allergic reaction.

A list of useful publications was given for further reference, but this was a very good introduction in to other possible uses of wax.

Tim Fountain

Seasonal Tips and Reminders February 2008

Key Tasks this month:

1. Check hive weight by 'Hefting' – Feed Fondant?
2. Check for hive Debris
3. Any signs of flight activity?
4. Ensure hives wind secure & draining forward.
5. Check & Repair Hive stands & Fences

The days are getting distinctly longer now, but its been wintery on many days. A fair number of hazel bushes now have catkins; and in the neighbourhood, I've seen winter aconites, snowdrops and some crocuses flowering – all well in advance of 'standard timings'. Honeybees must have been out and about on a good number of days: but in the sun-shadow of our little valley, I've not seen much insect activity. However, "on Jan 26th 2008, at 11 am, and with temp 12° C", Sylvia Chamberlin says that she saw her first bumblebee queen of the year, a *Bombus Terrestris*, in their garden in Wordsworth Rd.

Despite the mild weather in January, February is another month in which the beekeeper's role should be about "keeping an eye on things" and planning for the coming season. On mild days you'll see bees flying: both to cleanse themselves, and to collect water. On days when it's not warm enough for flight, the cluster loosens inside the hive and bees scuttle about indoors, doing chores. Hence the wax debris (cappings removed to allow access to winter stores) and the odd dead bee on an alighting board.

The short day length keeps the bees in, as well as low temperatures, and with the apiary quiet, and ground soft, it is an excellent time to check your fences and

the hive stands. Are your stands at the right height for you to be able to work the brood chamber without stooping? Do they have firm legs? Check to see if these wobble, or are really tight. It is easy to drive new legs into soft ground in winter, and with minimal flight activity it disturbs the bees less. Are the stands strong enough? A stand carrying two strong colonies in the middle of summer could easily carry a static load of 250 kilos (quarter of a ton), perhaps more.

In the coming weeks the forage available will be hazel catkins, which give greeny yellow pollen, Snowdrops and crocus. pussy willow (sallow) with more golden pollen loads will follow, nowadays this is often towards the end of February.

Keep monitoring the weight of the hives because once brood rearing begins in earnest, stores consumption increases rapidly. You can "emergency feed" sugar in paste form, such as commercial icing sugar paste, bakers fondant, or candy. Position it close to the cluster. Don't give syrup at this time of year, the bees would expend too much energy converting it to honey.

Clive Hill

For All Your Beekeeping Equipment and Supplies

contact our local Thornes agent

John Parslow

Bailiffs Cottage, Bledlow, Aylesbury

Tel: 01844 344948

Send contributions to

newsletter@hwbka.co.uk

The 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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BUCKS COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity No. 297335

12th ANNUAL SEMINAR

Saturday 1st March 2008 - 10:00am to 4:15pm

Wendover Memorial Hall, Wharf Road, Wendover HP22 6HF

A location map can be sent on request. All welcome.

10:00 Meet for coffee and registration

10:30 Welcome by the County Chairman, *John Catton*

10:40 **Bees and Humans,** *Professor Robert Pickard*

Amongst his numerous positions and research roles, **Pickard** is Director-General of the British Nutrition Foundation, Emeritus Professor of Neurobiology at the University of Cardiff and Chairman of the Consumers' Association Council (Which?). He is an international authority on the biology of honeybees, former editor of the *Journal of Apicultural Research* and President of both the Cardiff Beekeepers Association and the Central Association of Beekeepers. He is also a member of the EuroFIR Council, which co-ordinates composition records on 21,000 foods in 47 institutions in 25 different countries. He lectures nationally and internationally on many aspects of the above and is a Fellow of the Institute of Biology and the Royal Society of Medicine.

11:40 **Caring for your back whilst caring for your bees,** *Kirsty McIntosh*

Kirsty McIntosh is a registered Osteopath and novice beekeeper, and feels much more qualified to deal with humans than bees! Osteopaths treat all sorts of physical ailments, and back problems are one of the most commonly presented.

12:40 **Awards presentation**

1:00 **Ploughman's lunch**

Time, also, to visit the various exhibits and sales stands

1:50 **A raffle will be drawn; proceeds in aid of CB Dennis Trust**

2:00 **Bumblebee ecology and an introduction to the Bumblebee Conservation Trust**

Dr. Juliet Osborne, Pollination Ecologist

Department of Plant and Invertebrate Ecology, Rothamsted Research

A particular interest of **Dr Osborne's** several fields of study is the bumble bee, especially its role as a pollinator. She is internationally recognized for world-leading research using harmonic radar to track insect foraging activity including bumbles, honeybees and butterflies.

3:00 **How plants have adapted to attract pollinators.**

Dr. Michael Keith-Lucas, University of Reading, Dept of Environmental Biology

Dr Keith-Lucas is an international authority on palynology, studying pollen in the context of plant taxonomy, forensic work, archaeology, the historical analysis of woodlands inc. tropical forests and their ecology.

4:00 **Closing remarks**

Cost: £10 per person, to include refreshments and Ploughman's lunch

Please pay on the door, but **please book beforehand with....**

John Catton Tel: 01494 726616 e-mail: richard.catton1@ntlworld.com