

# High Wycombe and District Beekeepers Association

Registered Charity No. 299638

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Treasurer: Edward West 01494 520874

Swarm Officer: Bill Bendyshe-Brown

## *Newsletter - October 2007*

### Diary

#### Forthcoming Events

<b>6th October</b>	-	<b>Presidents' Supper</b>
<b>18th - 20th October</b>	-	<b>National Honey Show</b>
<b>26th October</b>	-	<b>Monthly Meeting - Pam Hunter- Sex Life of the Honeybee</b>
<b>30th November</b>	-	<b>Monthly Meeting - Ged Marshall &amp; Bucks County AGM</b>

#### **26th October Pam Hunter:**

The amazing sex life of the honeybee. Pam is a member of the BBKA Executive and will be coming up from Sussex to give this Talk.

#### **30th November Ged Marshall:**

A year in the life of a commercial beekeeper. Ged is based in North Bucks, where he runs his own Bee Farm and Queen Rearing operation. During the evening we are also holding the AGM of Bucks County BKA. (See below)

#### **Friday 30th November 2007 Bucks County BKA**

The AGM of the Bucks County Beekeepers' Association will be held on at the Environment Centre, The Rye, High Wycombe starting at 7:30 pm. (It will be part of that evening's HWBKA monthly Meeting.) Any resolutions members wish to submit for consideration at the meeting must be received by the County Secretary not less than 28 days prior to this date. It is also necessary to elect the Officers and two Committee Members who are directly elected at the AGM. Two others are nominated by each local association. The current Officers are John Crick, (President); John Catton (Chairman); Mike Leon (Treasurer); Richard Simpson (Secretary). Richard Simpson has indicated his wish to relinquish the post of Secretary and nominations are therefore invited for this position. Anyone who wishes to discuss the position should contact their local Chairman or Secretary, or Richard Simpson directly on 01494 875105, or via email on [rsimpson48@aol.com](mailto:rsimpson48@aol.com)

*Clive Hill*

#### **Recent Event Reports**

##### **28th September - Elizabeth Keens – Safe Lifting**

Elizabeth is a physiotherapist who not only helps people recover from their back problems, but also aims to avoid such issues by promoting general awareness of potential problems and also safe lifting techniques.

In preparation for the talk, Christine Hazell had taken Elizabeth to see a hive so that she was aware of the issues likely to affect beekeepers.

With help from the audience, a list of basic lifting principles was discussed and includes:-

Standing with feet slightly apart

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### Chairman's Chat

#### **IPM Day**

This was well attended, highly interesting and very well organised. The day was organised by Ian Homer, we had two short lectures, three Tutorial type sessions led by his assistant trainers and a very sociable pub lunch. Ian worked our brains hard: and I felt extremely well informed, but distinctly 'brain-tired' afterwards. The objective of the day was to show us how to monitor the level of varroa mites in our colonies; explain how the mite population can be controlled; and show us how to use a range of mainly bio-technical techniques to keep the varroa population down to a manageable peak level of 1500 mites. Many thanks to Ian and Ruth Homer, Margaret Holland and Pete Kennedy for their excellent training skills, their know-how and comradeship.

#### **CCD**

In early September there were articles in several newspapers (Time, Daily Telegraph etc) which reported that US research work on Colony Collapse Disorder had started to indicate that it includes a bee virus element – a variety of acute paralysis virus. (I think everyone had half-expected virus effects.) We asked Ian Homer about this during our IPM day discussions: and he gave us a verbal sketch of the US beekeeping industry. Astonishingly different to UK based hobby beekeeping. Quite bee-abusive too! Some UK beekeepers are getting severe colony over-winter losses that have become known as 'Marie-Celeste' hive die out. Every case of this that the National Bee Unit have inspected show strong signs of collapse due to poor varroa control treatment, with virus disease effects too.

#### **AGM & Talk**

The new association year got underway with a three topic meeting and good attendance – somewhere around the 35 mark. The topics were a short talk on Back Care while lifting, our AGM, and then the judging of our 'Frame of Honey' competition.

The business of receiving reports and electing a new committee for the coming year went smoothly, but was somewhat slower than last year. I used a PowerPoint presentation to show some photos of events since we last met, and for the agenda etc. PowerPoint has now become normal for us at the start of meetings and gives good information availability and good visibility

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Keeping the weight close to the body  
Keeping the correct upright posture, with the back in its natural curve

Bending the knees to take some of the strain  
Keeping the body straight and not twisting.

(from personal experience I keep my hives on a double stand, and it is very easy to take off a super and then turn/lean/twist to put it down next to the hive, rather than making the effort to do a little side-step to be straight in front of the empty space.)

Elizabeth described the body as having a bad design for lifting, but this could be made worse by some of the efforts we go to in order to counteract the effects.

Laying flat on a hard floor is seen by some as a recovery method after a lifting session. This can actually make matters worse as the curves in the back are forced to straighten, adding extra strain. Beds that are too hard have a similar effect. She recommended the 'memory foam' type of beds as being the best for support, as they allow the back to retain its natural shape.

In the workplace, there is legislation regarding maximum weights to lift, which may be something to consider:-

For men a maximum of 25kg may be lifted from waist height, reducing to 10kg if lifting from the floor or from height.

For women a maximum of 16kg at waist height, reducing to 7kg.

For reference, a really full National super would be about 20kg.

Ways to reduce the weight to lift were suggested as:-

Sharing the weight

Use of smaller supers

Removing some frames before lifting the super

Keeping the number of supers down to reduce the overall height

Standing on a platform to bring the weight closer to waist height

Most of these suggestions bring their own difficulties however.

Elizabeth described how back injuries are among the most common, and could be divided in to two sorts; Tendon Injury & Disc Injury.

She described the discs as being like a raspberry doughnut. A 'slipped disc' is when the doughnut has been squashed or pinched, and the 'raspberry' has forced its way out. This prolapse of the filling can press on nerves in the back and give rise to other pain such as sciatica.

This prolapse can heal to some extent over time, but can take up to 3 years.

Surgery is an option but brings its own problems, and it is best to avoid the need at all.

This injury generally affects those in the age range of 20 - 50 years. Older people suffer less as the filling becomes less fluid; more like an apple doughnut. Beyond 80 years, the discs are simply doughnut with no filling. This can give rise to problems with other joints as the filling should act like a shock absorber, and also to a loss of height of perhaps 1½ inches.

Tendon or Facet Joint injury may come as a sudden muscle spasm that 'locks' the back. This is the body attempting to protect the damaged area by preventing movement. It can also appear in a milder form such as stiffness the day after damage has been done, as it can take 24 hours for swelling to occur around damaged tendons and ligaments.

Facet joint injury is much more preventable. Use of a belt or corset was not recommended as these are not really effective unless so tight that you can't breathe. This is ok for a few seconds if you are a weightlifter, but not for beekeepers. Strengthening the abdominal muscles to increase our 'core stability' (or stork-ability as my wife calls it) would be better, and Elizabeth gave us some key points to follow:-

If seated, sit upright, away from the chair back, this will allow the back muscles to work.

Brace your tummy muscles while retaining your good posture,

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for all the audience – but it takes some time to prepare each month!

Unfortunately Christine Hazell, our Secretary was unable to attend the meeting, since she has been struck down by Lyme Disease; and has been having health major problems, including severe exhaustion. Christine has asked me to tell you that Lyme Disease is an infection caught from tick bites. The ticks are associated with deer and other livestock, but can jump onto exposed human skin, then suck blood – and infect you. She is unsure if she was bitten in Bucks, or on a holiday in Scotland: but has been told there is no history of the disease where she was in the Hebrides – so beware.

It was good to see John Crick back in our audience. He has been going through a period of significant ill-health, so it was really good to see him and Margaret again. Also to see Bernard Wells, who has been unwell recently.

Your new committee has three new faces, Katy Hart, Julian Parker and Kenn Shearer. We made a remarkable transition by losing Bob Hunter. He has been on the committee since he was roped in at his first bee meeting, back in 1964. This is 43 years continuous service! Also departing were Stewart Thorburn and Stan Grierson and Duncan Tampsett. Will Steynor remains for his second and final year as President; I was re-appointed Chairman, Clive Winslow as Vice Chairman also our Secretary, Christine Hazell (but only until the spring) and our Treasurer, Ed West. Bill Bendyshe-Brown has taken on the role of Swarm Officer,

Our Ordinary Committee Members are now Keith Wood, who will continue to work on our website and Scott Rutland; plus the newcomers. So, we have a team with an excellent mix of long term experience and hopefully the fresh ideas that come from unaccustomed mindsets! I would like to express my own thanks to this new team; and to the retiring committee members, Duncan Tampsett, Bob Hunter, Stan Grierson and Stewart Thorburn, who have all given of their time and know-how for the Association and we are all much indebted to them.

### **Frame Competition**

This was the last part of the AGM evening. Since Vivienne Brown has been laid low with back trouble, Bob Hunter took on the role of Judge. There were seven entries out of the original 21 uptake of frames. (Several frames had been extracted by mistake: and some had been ignored by the bees!) 1<sup>st</sup> was Stewart Thorburn, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ron White, 3<sup>rd</sup> John Crick, 4<sup>th</sup> Will Steynor, 5<sup>th</sup> Scott Rutland. Bob showed us each frame and talked over its strong points and weak points and there was much audience participation and a little banter in the discussion – all highly enjoyable! We agreed that we would run a similar competition next year.

### **The National Honey Show.**

If you are new to beekeeping, or even if you are an 'old hand' who has never been there, I strongly recommend a visit to the National Honey Show. It is an excellent outing, with much to see and many excellent lectures to attend. It is at the RAF Museum at Hendon from 18 – 20th October. Checkout the website [www.honeyshow.co.uk](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk) for further details. It may even be possible to arrange a lift to the venue with another member.

### **Training**

Our Beekeeper Training plans for the 2007/8 year are yet to be finalised, but it will be based at The Environment Centre. It will include 'An Introduction to Beekeeping' course: and hopefully training for the BBKA Basic exam – perhaps more. I hope to be able to give you further details next month.

### **Sad News**

Dr Eva Crane, who in her time was one of the top beekeeping people in the **world**, passed away on September 6<sup>th</sup> at the age of 95. Eva founded the International Bee Research Association

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(IBRA), and it was run for many years from her home at Chalfont St Peter. I remember her coming to give a Talk to us back in the mid-1970s. She spoke about her then soon to be published reference book on honey – a major work. In later years this was followed by major reference books on several other aspects of beekeeping and beekeeping history: so we have lost a major intellect, but have gained all the reference books from her work. She was a remarkable lady. I'm sure that you will see better and more formal obituaries in *Beecraft* etc.

#### **Sub Renewals Beecraft BKQ**

Our membership renewal form looks a bit more daunting this year, thanks to the new categories of BBKA membership which we need to encompass. Are you a subscriber to 'Beecraft'? If

not, may I encourage you to take it? It is excellent value and you will gain enormously from the breadth of knowledge that the magazine will give you access to. The Beekeepers Quarterly is another but very different journal, with a very international slant. I know that several members already have their own private subscriptions to BKQ. If we can gather together about 14 or more subscribers and take it via the Association, we will be able to get a very significant price reduction.

Our Newsletter 'Going to Press Deadline' is now upon me, so I must close. Thank you again for the honour of re-appointing me to the role of Chairman. My heartfelt thanks go also to our retiring Committee members, particularly Bob Hunter; and to those innumerable other helpers who help the Association function so successfully.

*Clive Hill*

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## **I seem to belong to Three Beekeeping Associations. Why?**

### **The British Beekeepers Association (BBKA)**

This is the umbrella organisation

Its aims are:

To promote and further the craft of beekeeping

To promote public awareness and understanding of the importance of bees in the environment

The official headquarters of the BBKA is at the National Agricultural Centre at Stoneleigh in Warwickshire.

It is administered through Area Associations which have been traditionally County based. In Buckinghamshire, this is **Bucks County Beekeepers Association (BucksBKA)**. Within each area association are from one to twenty five **Local Associations**. The High Wycombe BKA, the Chalfonts BKA and the North Bucks BKA are linked together forming the Bucks County Beekeepers Association. Whilst each retains its autonomy they support each other and act together to fulfil their common regional aims. In the past the county committee was the only vehicle for communication with the BBKA. The County secretary received all the information by snail mail and then had the onerous task of passing on all the news and affairs of the BBKA to the local secretaries who then had to relay it to individual members. (*Thank you Felice.*) With the advent of email, BBKA HQ can now communicate directly with local secretaries on matters of administration. News and views come through our doors bimonthly with BBKA NEWS.

All Bucks beekeeping Associations organise educational/sales events and honey shows that fulfil the aims stated by the BBKA. In the past the Bucks BKA have put on very successful events of this nature within the County. In recent years the local groups have preferred to work on their own in their own patch. In the last 10 years the Bucks BKA have organised an annual one day Seminar in order to bring the groups together at a convivial event to hear and talk to stimulating and knowledgeable beekeepers from other areas. This has proved a popular event, attended by beekeepers of other counties. The Bucks BKA meeting in November is the statutory AGM that now moves annually round the member associations in an attempt to raise awareness of the County Association and its function. At this meeting new officers are elected. The committee itself now only meets twice per year to plan events and identify needs. The increased emphasis on education /exams within the county arose from such interchange. This committee has provided support by finding ways for the local associations to work together and share resources.

The January meeting of the Bucks BKA committee is vital in preparing for the BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting later in the month. The CV's of candidates for BBKA Executive committee places and propositions put forward by Area Associations for future actions of the BBKA executive are discussed to provide

our delegate with a mandate to vote. John Catton from Chalfont and our present county chairman will be our delegate.

From a personal point of view I can appreciate that most of you will feel that all this politics and committee stuff is a far cry from beekeeping but as beekeepers we do understand the value of bees and need a voice to protect bees and beekeeping both at National and European level. It provides for us the democratic element that enables grass roots members to have an input in BBKA policy. I have been very fortunate in being able to see much of the inside working of the BBKA. When I started beekeeping I was in awe of these "beekeeping executives". I was wrong. All these committee members are ordinary thinking people giving up their own time without payment, working to the best of their powers to keep beekeeping on track. Some discover they have amazing abilities; all make friends and feel that they are contributing to beekeeping and the environment. There is a great need for new blood in committees at all levels. Please think about volunteering at local or county level. Remember the county exec. only meets twice a year (plus 2 or 3 events). Make your mark and someone will propose you for the BBKA executive and before you know it you could be president of the BBKA! BEWARE

*Sylvia Chamberlin*

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as if you were zipping up your trousers.

Squeeze your buttocks together.

Breathe deeply in then out.

Relax your muscles.

These steps can be followed whilst seated or when walking around and could be a good excuse for a future 'photo competition Mr Chairman.

I don't recall Elizabeth suggesting how often to perform these steps, but probably more than once would be best.

After all, you only have one back, and who is going to look after your bees if you can't?

*Tim Fountain*

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The HWBKA website can be visited at

[www.hwbka.co.uk](http://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

# Seasonal Tips and Reminders October 2007

## Visit the NHS

### Ivy Honey

### Varroa mite level check

### Wax moth control

### Anti-robbing measures

### Mouseguards

October is the beginning of the winter beekeeping period: the end of season 2007, and maybe some early preparation for 2008. It can be a lovely idle month for the beekeeper. Still reasonably warm, some evening daylight, but soon perhaps overnight frosts. The bees are still quite active, bringing in late pollen and nectar. The remaining Bee Forage On recent trips from home I've seen a little Willowherb, some White Clover, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed and quite a few hawkweed flowers on the verges are still in flower at the moment. These, and late summer garden flowers such as Golden Rod, Michaelmas Daisies etc, the bees will work avidly. But in most localities around Wycombe there will have been a good nectar flow from Ivy flowers. You will notice a characteristic strong odour coming from the hives as the bees ripen the nectar, or when you open the hive. Ivy has a very long flowering period (at least a month, possibly two months) and the blossoms are worked by many types of insects, including Hover Flies, Wasps and Honeybees. You'll see patches of set Ivy honey in the brood chamber, or super: but it sets so quickly, and so hard, you'll have to melt the combs to obtain it. Ivy honey is a dingy off- white colour and must have an extremely high glucose content to set so fast. In autumn 2004 there was discussion about Ivy Honey in Beecraft. Despite it's strong flavour, it can be incorporated into a table honey blend to give a palatable product; although you will need to dilute it well with other honey and store it for a few months before it is palatable enough to use. The classic flowering period was the month of October, and perhaps into November: but Global Warming is having a big effect on this flowering period. This year Ivy started yielding in late August: and looks likely to continue until at least mid-October. Ivy berries result from the pollination activity and these will be consumed over the coming winter by Wood pigeons, other birds and perhaps squirrels. The leaves of low growing Ivy plants are frequently browsed by deer – so the plant is involved in a wide number of ecological interactions.

### Apiguard and Getting ready for Winter

You need to be getting each colony ready for it's period of winter quiescence. Remove the Apiguard tray(s) one month after the second one was put into the colony. Record this date. Clean off the varroa check tray, then re-insert it for one week: then remove it and count the mites that have dropped down. Then calculate and record the daily mite drop figure for the colony. Now leave the check tray out for the rest of the winter.

Stay with a reduced hive entrance to help the bees keep the last wasp marauders out. (Robber bees too!)

Heft each hive, or check hive weights, to anticipate stores shortages in early spring: but it's really too late for much feeding now. Then get the feeders off. Take a last chance to unite disease free weak colonies before the winter. Get your mouse guards looked out, and install them in late October or during November. I chanced having no guard a few winters ago, and left mouseguards off. Guess what happened ... a mouse moved into the weakest colony: so they are important!

Super storage and Wax Moth control Store empty supers so they are safe from wax-moth attack. The traditional way was to use PDB crystals (paradichlorbenzene) in the super stack, but because of concern about 'residues' that can transfer from wax into

honey, PDB use has been banned. As "Organic" type control mechanisms, you could spray the combs with the Certan wax moth control preparation (now available under the name of B 401 from Vita); or even put each super in a deep freeze for a couple of days. This will kill any eggs, or caterpillars, but afterwards you'll need to wrap the supers carefully to prevent any stray moths getting in. A few years back the Chairman of Co. Mayo Beekeepers in Ireland, told me that he got good control just by storing supers in a stack with a sheet of newspaper and strong polythene sheet between each of them. He had 50 supers, and plenty of practice at over-winter storage in a mild and wet winter climate – which should be ideal for wax moths. NHS - a beekeeping day out The National Honey Show (Oct 18 – 20<sup>th</sup>) is always well worth a visit. If you're new to the craft you'll be amazed at competitive honey etc. displays. This will be the fourth year at the RAF museum at Hendon location. I've found it fascinating to look at some of the old aircraft, as well as the beekeeping things: and when you get hungry, there is an excellent restaurant on site.

The NHS lecture programme is always first class. These are given in a tiered lecture theatre, with excellent acoustics and all the facilities. The Show is also a good opportunity to see Thorne's equipment range: but most of the other suppliers won't be there – so it is much less useful than the Stoneleigh Spring Convention if you want to compare equipment. But you can buy a huge range of beekeeping books (new, and out of print) from the specialist stalls; or talk to some of the more specialised beekeeping societies, or meet and talk to the NBU folk, Bees for Development etc.

Can you give me some feedback? I've been writing this column for eight years now. It's composed using a PC, so I'm able to re-cycle much basic information/structure from past material; however, as no season matches, I re-shape the column each issue. I'd love some more 'customer feedback'. If any reader wants a subject brought in, or discussed, please let me know. You can ring, or leave a message for me on 01 494 526557, or email me at [clive\\_hill@talktalk.net](mailto:clive_hill@talktalk.net)

That's all for now. Talk to you again next month.

*Clive Hill*

## Congratulations

To all those who did so well in the beekeeping  
examinations and particularly to  
Duncan Tamsett who got top marks

*John Crick*

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](mailto:newsletter@hwbka.co.uk)

Website: [www.hwbka.co.uk](http://www.hwbka.co.uk)

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