



Easter Buzzword

Volume 18 :Issue 2

Easter 2017



A very Happy Easter
to all our readers

Fake news in BBKA News?

See a spoonful of honey
p113 April edition

Sorry the ancient
Greeks got their
reports in first.

Rhododendron
honey was used in warfare
by the ancient Greeks.
Honeycombs placed in the
way of an oncoming army.
It incapacitated foraging
troops. Sweet revenge?

Copy
for the May
edition of
Buzzword
by May 14th please

Some thoughts on the NBKA conference and even beyond..

The honeybees' worst enemy. Well of course, it is ourselves.

Celia Davies dealt quite sharply with the hassle we give our bees and went on to the well-chewed bone of contention; the chemicals we use in the apiary and around the garden.

Many beekeepers know of the perils of inappropriate dosage and administration of oxalic acid. Some like to trickle acid over the frames others, it seems like to use various vaporisers some just about lethal. Yes, Oxalic acid has its faithful followers. Other products are also on the market e.g. MAQS may be a gentler alternative method for Varroa control.

The lack of viable drones for mating may have been due to ghastly weather last year but it could have as easily been the stern removal of drone comb, yes, it controls mites but does little for drone assemblies.

When it comes to tutting about the use of neonicotinoids in agriculture perhaps, we should draw breath before buying infallible

sprays and cure-all's from the garden centre for our own gardens. Some examples shown at Celia's lecture did contain neonicotinoids.

We really do disrupt the hive when examining frames, do we really need to pull them all out? It helps if we know what we are doing and what better way to further our knowledge than by thinking seriously about taking the module exams on offer.

Past examination papers can be purchased at a modest fee from BBKA to enable you to judge the difficulty level. There are a range of BBKA correspondence course on offer to tutor you and of course, if you attend the exciting and informative NBKA demonstrations through the season you can pick up even more ideas.

I am told that some of the papers are set around AS level. Just above O level but a bit more palatable than a full A Level.

NBKA Conference

We would like to show our appreciation for a very well organised day by NBKA at Easton & Otley College. We enjoyed talks by Dr Stephan Wolf— Bee Navigation & Orientation / Behavioural Effects of Bee Pathogens on Flying Honey Bees and Celia Davies - The Challenges of Beekeeping that were both very informative, influential, humorous and well received by over seventy people.

Just like to say a special *thank you* to both excellent speakers, the College for refreshments and lunch and also to the Committee members for giving their time and endeavour to making this such a pleasurable day. Well done!

Paul & Brenda Chapman

Jolly swarming weather

W

hether or not you are ready, surely the call will come soon this year to collect a swarm of bees.

First things first. Have your collecting kit ready. Now wait for your swarm coordinators call.

Collecting kit.

Box – nuc box cardboard box or skep. Then working forwards, you have to remove the bees safely from the premises. Therefore, a secure bee brood box is best do not forget to have some frames of comb, preferably undrawn. The least expensive option now seems to be the cardboard box offered by Bee Equipment Ltd for around £6.00 .(Tel 01227 8333807) These boxes can also be bought at the BBKA convention at Harper Adams University near Telford. Sat 7th – Sun 9th April. It is wonderful what a rubber band to secure the lid and a substantial plastic plug to go in the entrance hole will do for your confidence.

Your safety

More planning first. Your other kit: bee-suit and a spare or two. Smoker, smoker fuel, matches, water spray. Secateurs or a lopper – do ask first before emasculating a prize tree or branch. White cloth (or tea towel from the kitchen). Gloves. Well, if the swarm is in a prickly shrub or if there is an upset when your careful knock-down goes pear shaped the gloves will give you some comfort. Ladders. Be very careful.

If in doubt, do not risk a trip to A & E.

Onlookers. Best not. If you have spare bee suit offer it to a brave and interested one. Spare gloves too. Explain your hobby, and what you are up to. Explain why bees swarm and how some bees have not read the guidebooks to beekeeping.

Courtesy

It is good manners to take along a pot of honey as a thank-you for the householder who contacted you about the swarm. Regardless if the swarm turns out to be rather small. Goodwill is worth its weight in gold or (honey).

Politely decline to pay for a swarm; this is a regular try on by some folk. You may, ask for a donation to cover your travel expenses. HMRC advise rates of .45p mile for cars or vans. It is quite likely that you may have to return a few hours later to pick up the swarm when flying has ceased and all the bees have walked up your white cloth and into your box and settled for the night.

Back at the ranch

If your swarm is in a temporary cardboard box then they will need installing in a hive or proper nucleus box of your choice. They will need feeding. A counsel of perfection has you place your new additions in a quarantine apiary to lessen the risk of your importing disease to your other bees.

Good luck. You are an ambassador for honeybees.

Mastering the facts.

Such is the task of candidates for the BBKA exams and of course for editors too.

Norfolk beekeepers not only have two Master Beekeepers but also really have three, or was it more, the year before?

Paul Metcalf is the proud holder of the National Diploma in Beekeeping. To get that qualification he had to qualify, in ancient times, with the all the exams including the equivalent of Master Beekeeper leading up to the National Diploma. Sorry Paul.

Michael Lancefield

Cambridge BKA seminar Threats to bees and other pollinator_s

As ever this was a really well organised conference held at the Chesterton Community College. There was really plenty for everybody. A trade stand selling Thorne's equipment, a bookstall with Northern Bee Books, a delicious buffet lunch with wine and beer, as well as the main feature Four lectures with excellent speakers helped by a very good audio visual system.

The topics were - An exotic pest update presented by Nigel Semmence NBU's contingency planning officer who spoke with authority about the problems posed by the Asian Hornet and his department's response to the only known case in England.

(There was also an exhibition of Asian hornet trapping systems organised by a beekeeper from Cambridge BKA)

Paula Mielgo technical manager for Vita Europe spoke on honeybee nutrition in UK and South America.

Dr Falko Drijfhout Head of Chemical ecology group at Keele University dealt with some of the issues with neonicotinoids.

And very revealing was the lecture by David Knott, beekeeper and manager of the Trumpington Farm Company, which manages over 2000 hectares of farmland on the south and west sides of Cambridge. Farmers run a business, guided by spreadsheets about costs and returns. The expected rewards from this crop or that, guide what will be sown. The ongoing pesticide, fungicide debate versus the effectiveness of chemicals for example in dealing with pests that attack and could destroy the oil-seed-rape crop.

No one going to a conference can really expect to agree with all the speakers' ideas. Some beekeepers were concerned about coming away with more questions than they had before they went. Such is the path of academia and a clear sign of one's own intellectual rigour. (Or do any two beekeepers agree on anything?)

Look out for details of next year's one-day seminar it is both local and one not to miss.

