



# Buzzword

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## Learning and Celebrating

**T**he Federation of Irish Beekeepers' are holding their 71st Annual Beekeeping Summer Course at the Franciscan College at Gormanston Co. Meath Ireland. Sunday 30th July until Friday 4th August.

The guest speaker this year is Dr Ralph Buchler. Bee Institute, Kirchhain, Germany

The Beekeeping Course which has taken place at Gormanston since 1961 is internationally renowned attracting beekeepers from all parts of the world. The range of lectures and workshops are of the highest standard. The course has universal appeal for both the beginner and the advanced enthusiast covering a wide programme in the practical and scientific areas including workshops, hive demonstrations, examinations and the (Irish) National Honey Show.

The lectures are at Advanced, Intermediate and Beginners/Novice level. You may pick and mix the lectures to attend. You may care to take in workshops in beeswax, microscopy, mead making, queen rearing, soap & polish making, Nature walk, drone congregations, honey show, tennis or golf.

The cost €400 or about £340 + travel. Includes a gala dinner on the Wednesday evening followed by a social night with dancing refreshments & nibbles.

Michael Lancefield

**C**opy  
for the June  
edition of  
**Buzzword**  
by June 14th please

## Open wide! Apiary Demo at Crow Hill Farm, Shipdham

**S**aturday April 8<sup>th</sup> 2017, hottest day of the year so far, when 50 of the nicest beekeepers in East Anglia attended the opening of a National hive that had not been opened for 10 years and a spring opening of a WBC.

We were lucky to have Master Beekeeper Chris Evans to do the demo for us. At about 2.45, a large gathering of white suited ladies and gentlemen descended on the ten year old unopened National and the fun started. Chris removed the lid to reveal comb poking through every orifice looking like the Rocky Mountains. After cutting the top super off to reveal the super frames and a solid mass. After breaking one or two frames, one came out to reveal solid crystallised honey and no bees owing to no space for them to move. The next super was not so tight and there were quite a few bees, moth, damage by mice, and evidence of old brood and new brood, old honey, new honey, jet-black comb.

The Brood box looked quite well apart from holes in the comb. Bees well in attendance. Chris did not find the queen but it was obvious that she was there, all laying holes were well polished and bees were carrying in. After cleaning up all, frames transferred to a new hive.

How did I come by this ten-year-old hive? I found it on a farm five miles away in a wood with four other hives. Just the one with bees. It took me five hours to get it home. It being on two broken up pallets. Locals inform me the beekeeper left the country ten years ago.

Chris then moved on to one of my WBCs. This was in very good order apart from a frame that was not being worked on. Again, the queen was not found. I had removed the excluder for the winter. The hive was rebuilt adding an excluder. I was quite pleased, as I had split the hive last season just as they were preparing to swarm and the fact that I have only been a beekeeper for one year and eighteen days. We all retired for tea and cake.

Ivan Chubbock

## When bees swarm.

If the swarm you find is the first swarm or prime swarm it should be headed by an old queen. As an already mated queen she can start laying fairly quickly (three days) after settling in to her new home providing there are empty cells for her to use and the swarm is not hungry.

A second swarm or caste will be headed by a virgin queen. She will be exceptionally difficult to see as she is small and very mobile.

Before she can lay eggs she must mature until she is about 1 week old, then take several mating flights on pleasant warm afternoons, mature again for another week and start laying about three to four weeks after emerging from her cell.

If you get a caste do not expect to see eggs or brood for three or four weeks. You should not even disturb the colony until they start to forage for pollen – the protein part of their diet needed to feed larvae. Do not mark or clip queens until they are laying. Clipped queens cannot go on mating flights and marking might damage flighty queens!

If you think the colony is queen-less add a frame of eggs from another disease free colony and if you have a queen the eggs will be developed into worker brood. If in the very unlikely situation that the colony is queen-less a few eggs will be developed into queen cells.

Before the bees swarm young house bees feed madly on honey/nectar and this helps their wax glands to become functional. The young bees leave the old hive with the swarm.

When the swarm finds a new home the workers with functioning wax glands are ready to build new comb for the colony. They can be aided in this process by feeding the swarm with syrup as soon as they have been hived.

Treat for varroa when the queen has started to lay if the swarm was not from your apiary.

John Everett

## Bailey Frame Change

Bees naturally live with lots of bacteria, viruses and fungi. Changing brood comb regularly helps prevent the build up of diseases such as European foul brood, American foul brood and noseema.

Towards the end of March, beginning of April (before drone production starts) is ideal. However, this is dependent on the weather.

Put a fresh brood box with fresh frames and foundation on top of the existing brood box; ensure that there is no queen excluder in between. Encourage the bees to draw the new foundation by placing a contact feeder with a 1:1 mix of sugar/water on top of the crown board. Only feed until the comb is drawn to avoid the bees storing sugar.

The time this takes will vary (7 - 21 days). Check that comb has been drawn and then introduce a

queen excluder between the two boxes. Ensure that the queen is in the top one. Close the entrance to the bottom brood box. Any bees returning will move up to the new entrance.

The brood left in the bottom box will hatch out in the next three weeks. Then the bottom box and queen excluder can be removed. A clean floor below and a queen excluder and super above should then be put in place to keep the workers busy.

The old comb should then be removed and destroyed, the frames, floor and brood box cleaned.

Guy & Lynne Petit

## BBKA Convention 2017

At Harper Adams University

**T**he options for attending this convention are for one two or three days. It certainly makes for a very full weekend. However, many beekeepers find that the Saturday is for them the main draw. It is possible to indulge in retail therapy and to fit in some lectures.

An interesting lecture was given quite informally by Patrick Murfet (proprietor of Bee Equipment and Ivor Davies. Decisions, decisions, choosing the right kit. Patrick preferred the Langstroth system whilst Ivor was happier with the National beehive.

The emphasis throughout was to reminding beekeepers that their hobby is just that, a hobby. The choices are there for beekeepers to enjoy and gain pleasure as well as caring for the bees. The other runners, as it were, in terms of hives novel and weird were given short shrift. One question from a beginner was about painting the hive whilst the bees were inside. Ivor tactfully suggested that it might not be a good idea.

Another lecture, *Plants for Bees* by William Kirk who wrote a book of that title. It was really a complete revision of a very popular book by F N Howes. In the book, there is a list of the top ten plants for bees. This was a university level lecture given in the Weston Lecture theatre. For both lecture theatres, there was ample seating and the sound systems were of a university standard.

The trade stands were scattered over three areas and were not very convenient for carrying purchases to the car parks. A problem shared by the National Honey Show but avoided at Tradex. A good variety of bee keeping equipment and as one could expect prices were perhaps a bit dearer this year, but that is hardly surprising.

I am told that in the wide-open spaces of Facebook and the like some beekeepers had unrealistic expectations about the convention and offered some bizarre opinions. Bargain hunting is of course possible. Buying options in advance at all three main retail opportunities are widely advertised by the main traders who offer their wares pre-packaged for one to pick up, including seconds too. In the main, the equipment on offer at the stands was of a high quality reflected in the pricing. However, there were bargains to be had and some free samples too.

Throughout the campus, there were efficient and very reasonably priced refreshments.

Michael Lancefield

***Not all opinions are equal.***

Professor Brian Cox



## NORFOLK BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

### **Buzzword** diary

#### **May**

Sat 6th 9am – 7pm	Wild about Wensum @ Pensthorpe NR21 0LN.	Trevor Nash 01362 696737
Fri 12th 18.30 19.30	show committee meeting executive committee meeting	show sec 01328 851475 sec 01603 861447
Sat 20th 14.30.	Swarming. Apiary demo Gressenhall NR20 4AR	Venetia Rist 01362 869118
Wed 31st all day.	Homes within homes Norwich Castle museum	Garry Bowler 01603 861447

#### **June**

Sat 10th 14.30	Apiary demo Snoring	Pat Adie Marshall 01328 851 475
Sun 25th 10.00 -15.00.	Set up for Royal Norfolk Show.	Pat Marshall 01328 841475
Wed 28th all day	Royal Norfolk Show @ RN Showground	
Thurs. 29th all day	Royal Norfolk Show @ RN showground	as above

#### **July/Aug**

Sun 30th July –Fri 4th August	2017 Summer course @ Gormanston	<a href="http://www.irishbeekeeping.ie">www.irishbeekeeping.ie</a>
The best course available. A charming, worthwhile immersive course.		

### **Buzzword** connections

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