

North Bucks Beekeepers' Association

Affiliated to BBKA and Buckinghamshire BKA

Newsletter: September 2010

August what a mixed bag of weather. One minute our gardens are dust bowls and now we are awash. The good news is that we have received a cheque for £440.00 from Waitrose. We were one of their charities in June. The public supported us with their green tokens. It just goes to show there is great interest and concern about bees. More good news – we have received a cheque for £750.00 from Milton Keynes Community Foundation “Grass Roots Grant”. This is being used to purchase bee suits for the Beginners’ Courses and the latest in bee books. We are also able to order some flat pack hives to be used as part of our instruction at the Beginners’ Courses. So, many thanks to all who have supported us in these bids. We will use the money wisely. We are also fulfilling our promise to be present at the City Discovery Centre Open Days.

Ken Gorman has extracted honey from our apiary. He has bottled it, labelled it, tamper proofed it and best before date marked it. Again a big thank you from us, Ken.

NBBKA has a column in *Groundworks*, the newsletter of the **Windmill Hill Gardens and Allotment Association**. This explains who we are and what we achieve and how to join us. It also mentions the *Adopt a Hive Scheme* by BBKA. For your information **WHGAA** sells all gardening requisites at a very reasonable price and membership is a couple of pounds a year. www.whgaa.org

For far too long we have managed with a roll of fax paper and my painted letters stating that we are North Bucks Beekeepers’ Association. I have vowed to do something about it for at least three years! At last - making its debut at the Bucks County Show is a lovely Roller Banner, produced by a very nice lady in Bath using our photographs. Go to sales@make-a-sign.co.uk



On Thursday several NBBKA members assisted on our stand within the Waitrose marquee. Peter Haynes and I arrived at the Show ground at 6.20 a.m. and already there was a tractor dragging a car out of the mud. Andrew Beer arrived with his observation hive and we set out our stall. The nice people on the Warburtons’ Bread stand kept us topped up with hot buttered crumpets, so in spite of the rain the day got off to a flying start. The crowds arrived and the site quickly became a quagmire. Nonetheless, it was a most successful and fulfilling day. Waitrose has asked

us to take part again next year. Many thanks to all members who gave their time to take a turn on our stand and thanks to Waitrose for inviting us. We all enjoyed the day.

September

Beginners’ meetings continue. Beginners will continue to assist in the application of Apiguard and with feeding sugar syrup to the bees.

Heritage Weekend is on **Saturday 11th – Sunday 12th**. We are present at Rectory Cottages on both days. Andrew will bring his observation hive and we will have a stand displaying all things to do with honey bees. There is an opportunity to sell your hive products. If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Libby Culshaw. Libby will be take the Virtual Hive to the City Discovery Centre for a time on the Sunday in order to answer questions from the public.

The NBBKA Annual Honey Show takes place at Wyevale Garden Centre, Woburn Sands on **Sunday 26th September**, under BBKA Honey Show Rules. Judging starts at 11.00 a.m. the judge is Martin Buckle. Entries may be staged up to 10.45 a.m. They will stay on show all day. The cups will be presented at 4.00 pm and the exhibition dismantled.

The Honey Show is open to all members of the Association. All honey and wax to be produce of competitor's own bees.

There is an entry fee of 20 pence per class with the exception of novice classes (nos. 23, 24 and 25) and the Gift Honey class (no. 8). There is no prize money. Only one award allowed per entrant in any one class. Classes were printed in last month's Newsletter.

A novice is any person who has not previously won a **first** prize in a Show under National Honey Show, BBKA or similar rules. (Note: you may still enter novice classes if you came second) Joint owners may make multiple entries but will only be allowed one placing in any one class.

Lady Chesham Challenge Cup – Highest overall points total in show

Stoke Road Apiary Shield – Second highest overall points total in show

Clara Furness Award - Highest points total for wax and mead, classes 12 to 15 and 19 to 21

Albert Toms Shield - highest points total in the open honey classes excluding any class for which a specific award is made. This year this shield is for classes 1 to 8

BW Apiary Cup - winner of class 9, six jars as for sale.

Mini cup - winner of class 16, fruit cake

Arthur Foreman Cup - highest total points in novice classes

BBKA Blue Ribbon / certificate of merit - best exhibit in the show

Crafts -Please let us know in advance if your craft entry needs a lot of space, hanging up, or a special display

A simple list of the numbers of classes you wish to enter should be posted (using the entry form below), 'phoned or emailed to the **Show Secretary: Nicola Smith, 2 Manor Cottages, Lillingstone Lovell, Buckingham, MK18 5BG** Phone: 01280 860102 Email: nsmith@waitrose.com

Last-minute entries accepted on the day if time allows, but don't be too late.

MAKE THIS YET ANOTHER GOOD SHOW ! HAVE FUN - ENTER ALL YOU CAN !

Please volunteer to help with stewarding, answering questions and selling produce.

Any show competitor may place honey with the sales table for sale during the show. 10% to NBBKA funds.

ENTRY FORM

NAME.....

Please return entry form to:

ADDRESS.....

Nicola Smith, 2 Manor Cottages

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Lillingstone Lovell

.....

Buckingham, MK18 5BG

Classes to be entered (please circle numbers)

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Queenie's Kitchen this month has to be the **recipes** for the **Honey Show 26th September**.

Remember, it has to be your own honey in the cakes and fudge. Please make sure your entry fits the description so that quality cookery is not disqualified.

If you wish to convert units(approx):- 1oz = 26g; 7"= 175mm;1/4 pint is half an ordinary coffee mug full or use a beer glass.

Honey Fruit Cake:Ingredients: 8oz self raising flour, 4oz sultanas, 4oz butter, 8oz honey, 4oz currants, 2 eggs size 3, pinch of nutmeg and salt. A little milk if required.

Method: Cream butter and honey together, beat the eggs well and add alternately with sifted flour and salt. Add fruit etc., Beat well and lightly. Bake in a well buttered 7" round tin (between 6" and 8"), 2 to 3 hours in a moderate oven.

Plain Honey Cake: Ingredients: 5oz butter, 6oz clear honey, 1 tab water, 4oz soft brown sugar, 2 eggs, 7oz self raising flour.

Oven temperature 180 C or 350 F Or Gas Mark 4

Method: Place butter, sugar, honey and water into a saucepan and heat until the fat has melted, stirring all the time. When fat is melted remove pan from heat and allow contents to cool to blood temperature. Gradually beat in the eggs. Add sieved flour and mix until smooth. Do not overmix. Pour mixture into a greased and lined 7" cake tin and bake for 1 hour or until risen and firm to the touch.

Honey Fudge: Ingredients: 1lb granulated sugar, ¼ pint fresh milk, 2oz butter, up to 3oz honey.

Method: Put all the ingredients into a heavy-based pan.

Bring to the boil, stirring all the time. Cover and boil for 2 minutes. Uncover and boil gently for about 15 minutes until 'soft ball' stage is reached, at 115C(240F), still stirring all the time. A little dropped into cold water will form a soft ball.

Stand the pan on a cold surface for 5 minutes. Beat the mixture until it starts to thicken, then pour it quickly into a ready buttered tin. Mark out into squares as it cools and cut when cold.

Eight pieces to be shown on a plate.

Apiary Notes from Andrew Beer

At the beginning of September we should have taken the following steps towards helping our bees through the long winter ahead. Winter puts a tremendous strain on them and as the too-oft repeated slogan from the "red-and-blue" supermarket goes – "every little helps".

- + Extracted, returned for cleaning, and put away in safe storage, all honey supers.
- + Reduced all colonies to 1 inch entrances, nuclei stocks to 1 bee space.
- + Made certain (and repeatedly made certain) that hives and nuclei boxes are bee and wasp robber proof and that robbing is not occurring. N.B. Bees darting around hive entrances in a suspicious, evasive way or trying to enter from the sides of the entrances without being seen by incumbents, may indicate robbing.
- + Started a varroa treatment in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. N.B. National Bee Unit recommends Apiguard but there are new products on the market, e.g. Apilifevar none of which I have experienced. Input from you is welcome, please.
- + Checked immediately after honey supers were removed that hives had sufficient feed to keep them going until the September winter feed (and if necessary have been given an earlier feed)
- + Checked that every colony and nuclei is queenright, appears healthy and is sufficiently strong to survive until at least April 2011.

The above are steps we should have tried by 1st September to achieve for our bees. Sadly life does not always work out like that but providing a colony or nucleus is healthy and strong it is still not too late to finalise or undertake these tasks now in September – in October it will be too late.

So what needs to be done in September – urgently? Start, go on with, and finalise the above steps. A few notes about them in addition to what I have stated in previous months' notes. Despite your best efforts, a stock is being robbed... what then? Get sheet of glass and lean against box to conceal entrance, stuffing grass at either end of the "tunnel". Robbers will then fly aimlessly at the glass whilst residents will obtain access through the sides. That at least is the plan. The trouble is that bees, once robbed appear to carry the label "Please Rob" so it won't always work if the local bees become pirates. Supers in storage must be secured against mice, rats, bees and wasps. Store super boxes in piles, put queen excluders at top and bottom of piles, placing barrier below top excluder to keep out bees and wasps too (no spare excluders? – use anything suitable which comes to hand)

Varroa treatment – please remember (with Apiguard) that super honey combs **MUST BE REMOVED** and any opening (e.g. open wire floors) **APART FROM ENTRANCES MUST BE sealed** during treatment with Apiguard. Sometimes, particularly in hot weather, your Apiguard treatment will have wholly evaporated or have been removed by your bees – more often you will find by middle of October that your Apiguard treatment has been reduced to dried up compacted crystals. In either case, remove the treatment pad, the treatment is complete. For non-Apiguard treatments, do whatever the manufacturer tells you.

Now is the time at the beginning of September (not mid-September or later!) to give your bees their winter feed. **TIMING IS IMPORTANT.** Strong colonies need forty lbs of stores, nuclei at least 25 lbs.

First calculate the amount of stores in the hive/nucleus box. (A full national deep frame of honey weighs about 5 lbs.). Say you find a strong colony has 18 lbs of stores then it needs feeding 22 lbs of sugar feed. N.B. That is weight in dry sugar, not weight in syrup! Once you have some experience you can establish the stock's needs simply by hefting the hive. Feed syrup at a strength of 2 lbs in weight of sugar to 1 pint of water. Some beekeepers do the mix with cold water – it has never worked satisfactorily for me – I heat up the water close to boiling point in my old Burco boiler but any heating vessel will do. Then turn off, add sugar, stir vigorously. Sugar is now sold in kilograms rather than pounds, so I now use a mix of 1 kg of sugar to 1 pint of water – your bees will welcome the stronger strength! You can feed with “all over” Miller or Ashforth type feeders, bucket feeders or rapid feeders. Always, if you can, feed at dusk. Avoid/wash up any slops and re-check your defences against robbers. I now carry after inspections a five-litre honey bucket containing soda crystals mixed in water at a suitable strength – ideal, too, for cleaning up those slops of syrup. Watch these honey buckets, they may leak like a burst dam. Alternatively, the inside gauze in the bucket becomes sealed with granulated sugar and your bees go short. Do try if you possibly can to get feeding completed by 25th September at the latest. Feeding in October is not satisfactory as the bees may not have time to seal the feed before winter sets in – in which case the result is likely to be fermenting stores and dysentery for your bees. If your bees need heavy feeding (say, 2 gallons plus) start feeding about 20th August to give bees time to take it down, store it and seal it by 30th September deadline.



I met two young beekeepers in Bhutan. They purchased a huge sack of sugar from India, mixed it with cold water then poured it into homemade feeders i.e. plastic bowls containing wood shavings so that the bees could crawl out of the syrup.

They placed this directly on top of the frames.



Forage After all the rain the pickings seem slim. Hardy fuschia and globe artichokes are the only bee plants in my garden at the moment. Golden rod and sedum seem to be struggling to open. Himalayan Balsam is still flowering in the wild.

Buzz Words Did you know.....

- The “Telegraph” Garden Shop sells items for Bee Friendly Gardens, including nectar-rich plants from £5.99? Go to: [telegraph garden shop](http://telegraphgarden.com) click the heading: [Attract bees to your garden](http://telegraphgarden.com/attract-bees-to-your-garden)
- The Victoria and Albert Museum have several honey pots from their collection to view online? Go to: <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/> search and type in ‘honeypot’.

For Sale: up to five stocks (excess to requirements) each is on Commercial Deep Frames. Some stocks foul brood and small hive beetle checked. NBU and pronounced healthy. These can be used with National equipment or if desired can be put on National Deep Frames in Spring by the Shook Swarm Method. Floors, deep boxes & cover boards not included in sale and are to be returned in Spring. Please contact Andrew Beer 01525 240235 andrewbeer@tiscali.co.uk Please call Andrew to discuss and if desired he will assist in the transfer.

If you would like to comment upon or contribute to our Newsletter, contact Libby Culshaw 01908 375968