

North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

Newsletter February 2012

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Calendar at-a-glance

15 th February	Dr Sara Robb lecture: Honey Potions (inc soap making)
23 rd February	Beginners' course commences
3 rd March	Bucks County Seminar
20 th March	Committee Meeting
21 st March	Nick Grey lecture on preparing products for sale
22 nd May	Committee Meeting

Articles

Editorial

Constitutional Matters. At the committee meeting of 24th January some important administration was discussed. It was noted that some important matters discussed at the October AGM had not yet been enacted. Thanks in part to some members pointing this out. The committee will be taking urgent action to resolve these outstanding issues and plans to hold a special general meeting to present its resolutions to the members. One of these actions will likely be to make some changes

to the existing constitution of the association to ensure that it is relevant and practical. We recognise that many members' primary interest is in bees, and not in constitutions and administration, but these matters are important for the running of the club. Further announcements will be made via the newsletter and website.

Rectory Cottages and website calendar

Unless otherwise noted, it is highly likely that all NBBKA indoor events be held at Rectory Cottages, Church Green Road, Bletchley. The Google calendar that we use for our website (www.nbbka.org) will always state this when relevant, but sometimes it has trouble turning this into the correct place and once indicated that we would be meeting in Long Island, New York. Rest assured that the correct address is Rectory Cottages, Church Green Road, Bletchley, MK3 6BJ.



We are working with Bucks County to ensure that members have a place where they can see an amalgamated calendar of all events run by Buckinghamshire BKAs.

Beginners' Classes



The annual beginners' classes will start this month, with the indoor lessons again taught by Sue Bird. We still need assistance with the outdoor sessions, which generally continue throughout the season. If anyone (of any experience) would like to help, or if you would like to be our apiary manager, please contact any committee member ASAP to volunteer.

The beginners will have a practical session indoors, teaching them how to assemble hive parts. If anyone would like to assist with this, please turn up with a tack

hammer to the Hazeley School (sorry... *Academy*) on 1st March at 7pm.

Wind-proofing your hives



With the very strong winds in December, members may have seen hives blown over or roofs blown off. Here is a way of ensuring that your hives are wind proof. A ratchet strap can be purchased very cheaply and will ensure that your hive will not only not come apart, but will remain attached to its base. The author mounts his hives on two concrete paving slabs separated by four bricks in the corners, thus creating a gap under the upper slab that will allow the strap to hold the hive to the upper 40kg slab. This is very wind-proof, far better than bricks on the roof. To keep the woodpeckers away, a wire cage just larger than the slabs can be lifted onto the whole structure and secured to the ground with old tent pegs.

Seasonal recipe - special honey bread



We need to keep hearty and warm this month so try special honey bread. The tot of rum in it coupled with the honey, aniseed and cinnamon may help to ward off colds. Recipe from Libby.

- Heat the oven to 150C/Gas 4/300F.
- Grease a loaf tin, line it with greaseproof paper and grease again.
- Measure 11 oz warmed, liquid honey into a mixing bowl. Add 5oz sugar, 2fl oz boiling water and beat until the sugar has dissolved.
- Sieve 10 oz light rye flour with 1 tab of bicarbonate of soda and a pinch of salt into the honey mixture. Beat hard for 5 minutes.
- Beat in 3 tabs dark rum, 1 tab ground aniseed, ½ teasp ground cinnamon, ¼ teasp almond essence, 2 oz ground almonds, 4 oz chopped crystallised peel.
- Pour into the loaf tin. Smooth the top with the back of a spoon dipped in water.
- Bake in the middle of the oven for 1 ½ hours. Don't open the oven door during this time as the wet, heavy dough sinks easily if the temperature drops suddenly.
- When the bread is cooked, it will shrink away from the sides of the tin. Allow the bread to cool in the tin for 15 minutes. Unmould it onto a rack. Immediately peel off the paper and turn the bread the right side up. After cooling, the loaf should be wrapped tightly for 48 hours to allow it to mature.

On the subject of cooking, Lakeland (www.lakeland.co.uk) is selling a HONEYCOMB CAKE TIN. It makes a tear and share cake in the form of several hexagonal honeycomb sections with bees on.

County News

NBBKA is a constituent association of the Bucks County BKA (BCBKA), along with Mid Bucks, High Wycombe, and Chalfonts associations. Recently Ken Neil and Andrew Beer represented us at the County meeting. The minutes are on our website here:



The main report:

http://www.nbbka.org/newsletters/archive/files/BCBKA_Executive_Committee_report_2012-01-06.pdf

Or a shorter URL: <http://tinyurl.com/75jazyg>

The supplement:

http://www.nbbka.org/newsletters/archive/files/BCBKA_Executive_Committee_report_2012-01-06_supplement.pdf

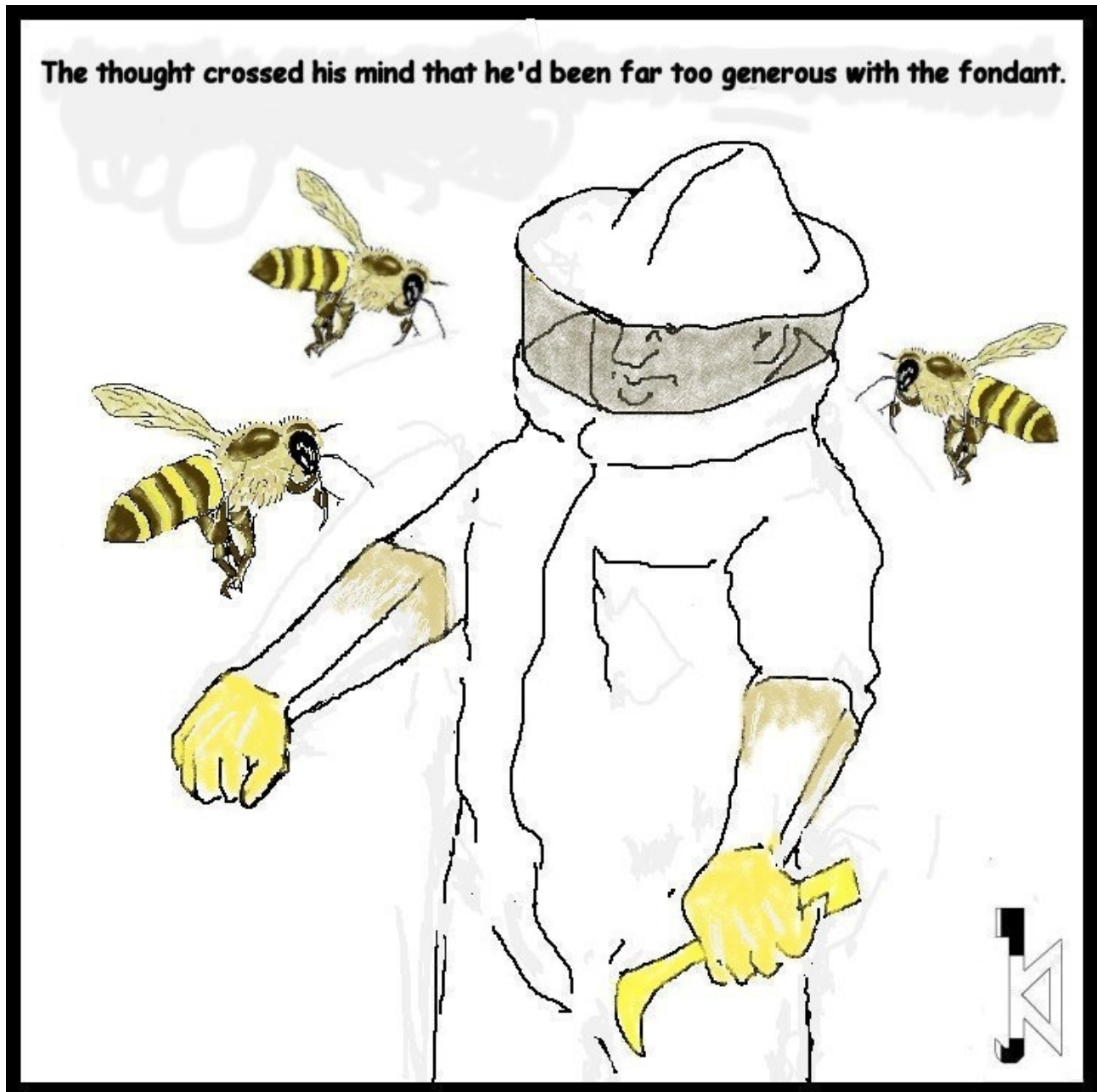
Or a shorter URL: <http://tinyurl.com/8yksdu8>

Thanks to Ken and Andrew for representing us.

Library and equipment

Libby will be winding down her involvement in the association and will shortly be handing over the baton for library and equipment management. If anyone would like to take on these roles, which will likely include the storage of the equipment and books, please contact the Chairman.

Bee Cartoon by KJN



For Sale

Honey in 30 lb tubs: Unfiltered, straight from the extractor - £63. Filtered, liquid, ready for bottling-£72. Five tubs or more: £60 and £69 respectively.

Overwintered bees, full brood chamber colonies, 2011 marked queen: available April, £150.

Five frame **nuclei**, 2012 home reared, marked queen: available late May/early June, £130: bees are on DN5 self-spacing frames, (for WBC/National hives) and good comb. No deposit needed; orders dealt with in order of receipt. I have fewer colonies this

winter, so supply will be limited. The bees can be supplied in second hand, **cedar equipment**: floor, varroa screen and sliding varroa sheet, brood chamber, wire queen excluder, heavy duty crownboard and roof for an additional £80. There may be a few supers, fitted out with clean frames and foundation for £25 each.

Tel: 07779801774. Email: kennethgorman@tiscali.co.uk

Martin Buckle



Libby writes:

Our longest serving member, Martin Buckle, has been in hospital and is now recovering at home. We have shared many happy moments with Martin as he has led us through microscopy courses, a skep making weekend and demonstrations on dealing with wax and preparing for honey shows. Martin has been a regular Honey Show judge and has taken on various committee roles over the years, including that of being Newsletter compiler and apiary manager.

Martin, we send you our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

Left: Martin uses a torch to examine a jar of honey as he judges the 2010 NBBKA Honey Show.

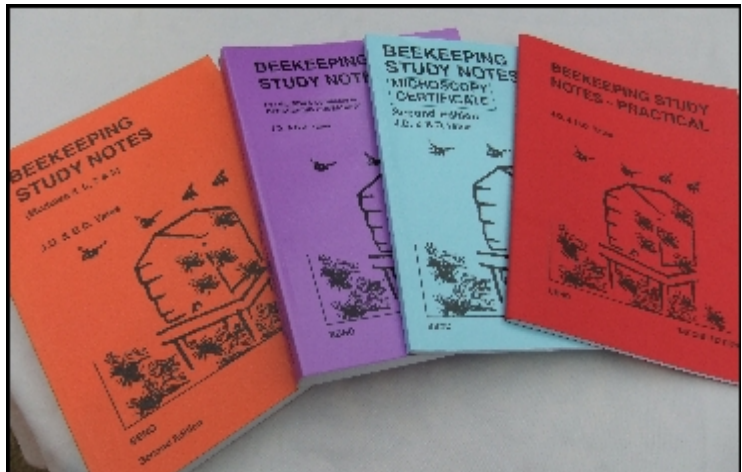
Library - recent additions

Fiona has kindly purchased, on our behalf, the following books for our library:

Beekeeping Study Notes by **J.D. & B.D Yates**
Several Volumes.

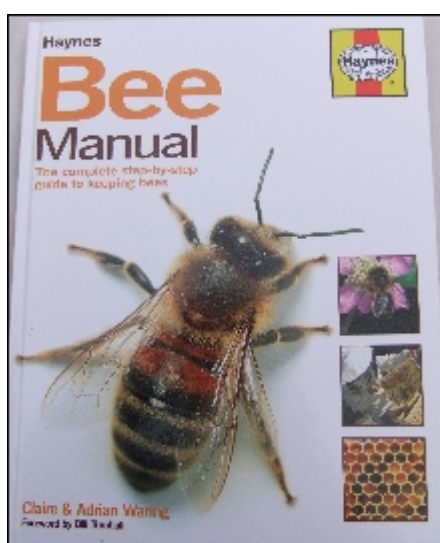
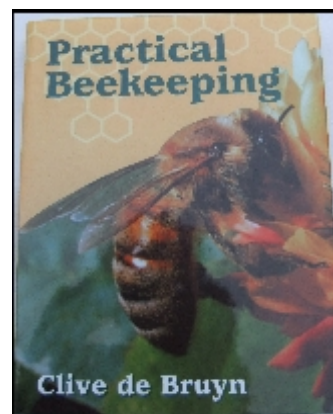
Practical: This book covers, in detail, every section of the syllabus including the inspection of the apiary, equipment and honey bee products, practical beekeeping, oral questioning, microscopy and general topics.

Microscopy Certificate. This follows the same style as the other Beekeeping Study Notes. Not only does it explain the basic information on how to get the best from a microscope for closer inspection of the honeybee, it clearly describes how to dissect the bee, how to prepare the slide and how to examine the parts to aid detection of such things as nosema. There is a chapter on the diagnosis of AFB & EFB. If pollen identification is your field of interest, there is a most interesting chapter on that. Don't forget, we have microscopes to loan out to members.



Practical Beekeeping by **Clive de Bruyn** is well known for his entertaining and informative workshops on queen rearing. There are lots of photos and clear line drawings. The text is clear and straightforward.

This book covers everything, even a plain and easy explanation on the classification of the honeybee and other insects and a section on how different weather affects bees. If you are a bit hazy about what you should be looking for when inspecting the colony, there is an excellent full page diagram on cross-section of a brood frame. A valuable addition to the library.



Another, more than useful, addition to our stock is the **Haynes Bee Manual** by **Clare and Adrian Waring**. It is the complete step-by-step guide to keeping bees with beautiful colour photographs to explain everything visually.

If you are new to beekeeping and you only possess one book, this is the one to have. The photos are the clearest of all bee books and you will gain a greater understanding more quickly.

When you need a bit more detail then go for Clive de Bruyn.

Apiary Notes from Ken Gorman

Current food consumption. During December and January, food consumption by colonies, as measured by weighing, has dropped to an average of five pounds during the two months-what you should expect in a normal winter.

Mite populations. Most colonies are dropping no mites. I used the wet oxalic acid treatment, in early/mid January, on eight colonies where there seemed to be a significant mite drop; the results were as follows:

Two colonies dropped no more mites.

Three colonies dropped in the region of 25/50 mites.

Three colonies dropped well in excess of one hundred.

Colonies dropping these numbers now would be entering spring build-up with significant mite populations, which will enter the cells of the new brood. Without further action this could build up to threat levels by late summer.

There is still time, just, to use oxalic acid, using the dribbling technique, if you know that there is a problem and as long as you are quite clear about the amounts to be used. The margin between what can remove mites and what will kill the bees is not wide. Also, if applied when there is a build up of brood, the treatment can kill young brood in open cells.

If in doubt, wait until early spring and use HIVECLEAN. This employs the same dribbling technique, is not as critical in its application and uses the same method to remove mites. The bees displace the mites when removing the applied substance from their bodies. Do not apply more than one method and do not use oxalic acid treatment more than once in a beekeeping year. Remember also, that only APIGUARD and APISTAN are sold specifically as tested, approved varroa treatments and the use of these other applications is entirely at the beekeeper's risk and discretion. Equally, to do nothing when there is an imminent threat, invites bee losses.

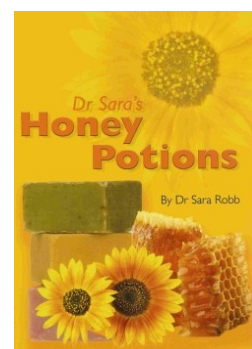
KEEP MONITORING!



Future Events

“Honey Potions” from Dr Sara Robb

Dr Sara Robb gives us a presentation on "honey potions", including **soap making**. 15th February 2012, 19:00, Rectory Cottage Bletchley. Dr Robb also has a book of the same name:



Bucks County Annual Seminar

Bucks County Seminar, Saturday **3rd March 2012** at the Memorial Hall, Wendover. Another reminder about the Seminar. A really great day out and not all about beekeeping. At last year's seminar by way of example, our lecture was about the pros and cons of intensive farming and gave advice that without it, many more people around the world would starve - something perhaps we beekeepers in Britain may forget. Again there will be talks by leaders in their fields, and much much more - the 2012 season starts here!

Cost £12 per person including ploughman's lunch. To book, contact John Catton, email richard.catton1@ntlworld.com or telephone him on 01494 and pay on the door. NBBKA are running teas and coffees and afternoon tea. Sandwiches and cakes will be gratefully received. We are also running a competition on beekeeping teasers. If you are coming can you please also let Andrew Beer know - your help would be very, very welcome. Email andrewbeer@tiscali.co.uk or tel. 01525 240235.

Nick Grey Lecture

Nick Grey on preparing honey and other products for sale. Rectory Cottages, **21st March**, 7pm.

NBBKA & Bucks County Honey Shows and AGM

To provide Bucks County Members with a very full and we hope interesting and rewarding day, the County Committee is arranging for both the County Honey Show and the AGM to be held together on **13th October 2012 in Stewkley**. Details are still being planned: the following is a provisional programme.

- 9 am onwards: Entries for Honey Show arrive. Tea and coffee bar open.
- 10.15 am: Honey Show judging starts.
- 10 am to 12.30 pm: Talks and Workshop sessions.
- 12.30pm onwards: Lunches.
- 2 pm: Talk by distinguished speakers: Dinah Sweet, President of BIBBA and Welsh BKA
- 3.15 pm: Honey Show: Prizegiving
- 3.40 pm: County AGM
- 4.30 pm: Afternoon Tea

For the event we are taking over Stewkley Village Hall, and during the morning session the neighbouring Swan Public House and further facilities at the also nearby Stewkley School will be available if needed. A suitable field close at hand will provide free parking for some 80 cars.

The County Spring Seminar, based in South Bucks, is now a leading event in the "Bee Calendar". The Bucks County Honey Show and AGM is planned to be a second leading event, in the north of the county, with the North Bucks Association playing its part. Please make a note of the date of Saturday 13 October now. If you would like to be part of the North Bucks organising team, please tell Andrew Beer, tel. 01525 240 235 or email. andrewbeer@atiscali.co.uk

One point to note: **North Bucks BKA Honey Show** will also take place in Stewkley as an adjunct to the County Honey Show, rather than at Wyevale, Woburn Sands. Some members, we know, will miss the successful Wyevale event, but given that it is North Bucks' "turn" to organise the County events, we hope members will appreciate the additional burden there would be for NBBKA were they to run two separate honey shows, and will welcome the increased activities offered by the shows being combined.

Next Month

Thank you to all the contributors for this month. Articles gratefully received by webmaster@nbbka.org by the last week of the month.