

North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

Newsletter July 2016

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Calendar at-a-glance

13 th July	BBQ party
25 th September	Honey show

Seasonal notes

June will probably go down as one of the wettest. Feedback suggests that some honeycrop has been taken during the month most probably the residue of the oil seed rape. Can we possibly get a scorching July? – a silly question you may think and one most easily answered with hindsight? Or is it such a silly question? Writing these notes at the end of June, low-lying areas are a quagmire and spring/summer growth of plants has been phenomenal. What I am suggesting is that even if we get only a modicum of a warm July, those nectar giving plants will be exuding nicely. In fact there is no need for a sweltering July, a steamy windless one will do just as well. The success of the 2016 Bee season now depends, in my view, on what weather we get in the next three or four weeks (or in Milton Keynes/other conurbations with their expected later flows five/six weeks). Perhaps we will enjoy another 2013. Things then, crop wise, were looking pretty grim at the end of June at which point the weather, plants and bees went into overdrive and it finally turned out to be a very good year. We shall see.

A swarm in July

A swarm in July is not worth a fly (as the saying goes). Here is a method used by Rob Manley. Manley reasoned that in July you wanted honey and not bees – the bees could be sorted out August onwards so this is what he sometimes did. A swarm was hived on one super i.e., no brood chamber. The swarm hopefully being a large one was immediately given an additional super, a queen excluded being placed between the two super boxes, the queen being detained in the lower super box. Old drawn but disease-free combs are ideal for the supers. Now look at the situation. There is no brood initially

to feed and there is this tremendous honey flow I have 'promised' you. What are the bees to do? Being a swarm they will frantically go into the fields and could in a very short space of time bring in a useful crop for extraction in late July/early August. What next? After removal of all supers and the queen excluder, a deep box with frames, a few drawn hopefully but otherwise fresh foundation, is placed over the bottom super containing queen and brood. Start feeding, the idea being to get the colony to draw out all foundation a.s.a.p. Colony is then prepared for winter in usual way and at first full inspection in spring, the colony is normally found established in the top box (in this case the brood chamber you have provided) and the super below can be removed.

Any frames in the super used for brood rearing will need to be stripped out and sterilized for re-use, but the others can then be given back to the bees with their first super. NB any frames which contain stores (which could be the syrup you gave the colony the previous year) must not be placed in this super to avoid any risk of those stores getting into the food chain.

Summer BBQ

Our Party on 13th July by very kind invitation of Steve Snook. I do hope you take this opportunity to come along to Steve's Party and enjoy the food and company on offer! I firmly believe that we can achieve little with our beekeeping if we operate in the vacuums separated from each other so this is a great opportunity to meet and to share those stories which always seem to get better with the telling!

Honey Show

A very important date for your diaries. The **Bucks County BKA Honey Show** which this year is being organized by North Bucks BKA! Beekeepers will be coming from all over the county as well as Beds and Northants. The Honey Show will be at Buckingham Garden Centre on Sunday 25th September. In mid-July we will be sending out full details but can I please ask that:

- You note the date and venue 25th September, Buckingham Garden Centre, now.
- You enter the show with your exhibits. Can't get to the show? We will take your exhibits to and from the show.
- We will need volunteers to help with setting up on Saturday 24th and on Sunday 25th, and a few willing hands to dismantle the show and return equipment etc., on Monday 26th September.
- Finally, does anyone have a van we could use for transport, please.

We really do want a massive turn out of members and their exhibits which is the major event NBBKA organizes for the County BKA once every four years. More to follow, but please "Diarise to come on 25th September"!

Disease Recognition Day

For various reasons this has had to be delayed. However, I am hoping we shall be able to organize a session in August / September.

All the best for now
Andrew.