

North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

Newsletter January 2017

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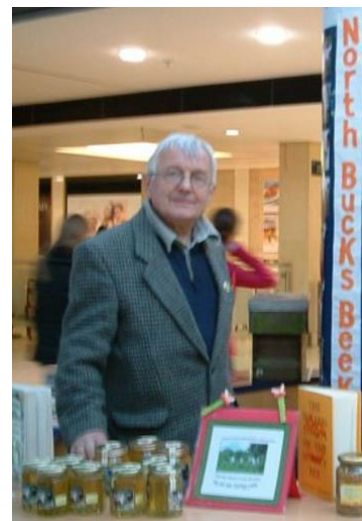
Calendar at-a-glance

21 st Jan onwards	Microscopy course http://www.buckscountybeekeepers.co.uk/2017-microscopy-study-group/
11 th Feb	Bucks Country Spring Seminar (10:30) and AGM (15:30), Saturday 11th February 2017 at Wendover Memorial Hall
1 st Mar	Beginners' course starts
14 th Mar	Swarm Control lecture, venue TBA

Editorial

Ken Gorman

Sadly our past chairman Ken Gorman passed away last month. He was one of the area's and indeed the country's most experienced beekeepers, from whom many of us obtained bees. He will be missed.



Renewals

Your committee has again chosen to freeze subscriptions rates. Renewals are now open, please use our website to complete the process, it only takes a few clicks. Start here: <https://www.nbbka.org/renewal/>

The returns process will be closed at the end of the month, and if you do not complete your return your membership (and benefits such as insurance) will lapse.

Next year the subscription may change due to an additional fee to be levied on us by Bucks County.

Education

We are delighted to have seen exam success from some of our members recently, including Bob Pool, Sarah Mist and John Bussey. Well done all.

If anyone would like to take the Basic Assessment this year, please contact Fiona at education@nbbka.org

Our beginner's course is nearly full and will start on 1st March. If you would like to come along to help it would be greatly appreciated, please contact Fiona as above.

In our library, we have a great variety of books from 1903 to 2008. The entire inventory of books and DVDs is listed on our website and members may login to place a reservation.

See the list on our website at

www.nbbka.org/Library/



Christmas Dinner

Thanks to Nick Hinson for arranging a very enjoyable social evening before Christmas. Andrew was presented with his 60-years BBKA certificate:



Committee

Minutes of the November and January committee meetings are available on our website. Nick Hinson is currently acting Chairman and Daniel Clarke has been elected as Secretary by the committee. The next meeting is 21st February at the Shoulder of Mutton pub in Calverton

Seasonal notes for January

Here is an excerpt from a previous' January newsletter.

- *Are your colonies/nuclei secure? January often produces a few warm days – have a look soon after midday – some activity may be observed. Perhaps pollen being taken in, wax particles dropped by the entrance during snowy and frosty periods, wet, thawed patches on roof – all signs that all is well. Also check your hives after gales and heavy snow – brush away sufficient snow to allow bees access/egress.*
- *Keep hefting and use my “grunt test” (see previous notes). If you grunt, your bees should be alright but be warned! Check, too, that you can see food around the cluster (a torch helps). Cluster at top of frames may indicate food exhausted on those frames. If you can't see food, put a slab of fondant above cluster and add more as required until the cluster breaks up – usually late March or until the Spring flow starts. N.B. If you have an eke above the cluster, you will find that you can reach the bees on a coldish day without them knowing it!*
- *Woodpeckers, mice, rats, attempting to gain entry? Add netting or whatever comes to hand to ward them off. N.B. Mice and rats entering will soon see off a colony and smash combs to bits.*
- *Colony/nucleus sadly dead? Remove the hive and speak to experienced beekeepers as to the advisability of a “post-mortem”. Again, ask if bees appear restless or if faeces present on combs hive body and take beekeepers' advice as to clean-up measures.*
- *Hives on weakened or wobbly stands? Go to the bees on a cold (but not freezing) day. Block hive entrance, gently move the hive aside, sort out the*

stand or replace old one, replace hive and open entrance.

- *Hives need re-positioning, etc.? Go to the bees on a cold but not frosty day after, say, two weeks confinement by weather whilst weather still confines bees; move stands as desired.. Bees will re-orient once flying resumes. N.B. Never attempt when bees have been flying freely.*

- *Back at home base – vital tasks:*

1. *Plan your beekeeping for the coming season. For example, you have three colonies and want to increase to five? Buy in the necessary equipment - perhaps taking advantage of suppliers' sales. Don't use second-hand equipment unless from a reliable source. For each hive you will need up to three supers.*

2. *Continue repairing/cleaning existing equipment; have all boxes covers roofs, etc. scraped clean of wax, propolis and other debris and washed down with a strong soda crystals/water mix. N.B. If any disease is suspected, take advice about cleaning.*

3. *All misshapen, defective, blackened combs and all brood combs 2 years plus: Strip out all wax (try pulling the wire out first – it saves getting it mixed with molten wax and general debris later) and treat frames as above or better still sterilise in boiling water. Then melt down the wax for re-use. Cleaning wax is a messy job. For small quantities try a bain-marie and then drain the wax through a kitchen strainer. (N.B. There are other methods for small quantities). The job probably will need doing twice. For larger quantities you will need specialist equipment. Cleaned wax can be exchanged for foundation through an equipment supplier*

- *The bee season is just 90 days away. You need to make your final preparations now.*

- *A plea to those who are seeking a colony, nucleus or swarm this year. Please, please get yourselves organised now.*