

# North Bucks Bee Keepers' Association

## Newsletter Mar-Apr 2018

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### Calendar at-a-glance

20 <sup>th</sup> March 2018	Celia Davies talk "World of the honeybee queen" (new venue & time)
Tuesdays	Beginners' course
8 <sup>th</sup> May	Committee meeting
23 <sup>rd</sup> September	Honey show

### Editorial

#### **Committee News**

Next Committee meeting: Tuesday 8th May 2018. The Barge, Woolstone.

Your subscriptions to renew or created your membership have been processed, with BDI and membership certificates issued by email. If you did not receive yours, please check your spam/junk folder and then contact [membership@nbbka.org](mailto:membership@nbbka.org) for help. Welcome (back) to NBBKA.

#### **Swarm Collection process**

Please ensure your entry on in your 'Profile' section of the Members Area on our website is up to date. In particular:

- Contact number.
- Whether you can collect Swarms or not

- Whether you would like to receive Swarms or not.

Andy Fenner is going to manage the process with members of the public again. He lives near Buckingham, so he would greatly appreciate members who can collect swarms around the centre and east side of Milton Keynes. If you can help with this, please let Andy know [fennerfamily@hotmail.com](mailto:fennerfamily@hotmail.com) He will be manning the phone which the public can ring 07342 930851.

It is imperative that if you wish to receive a swarm, you **MUST** have equipment ready by the beginning of April.

### ***Winter Talks***

Celia Davies is a renowned Beekeeper, Author and BBKA Examiner. Her talks are always informative, challenging and very practical. We are very pleased that she will be delivering her second talk of the winter to us in March.

**Celia Davis talk Tuesday 20th March 2018.** 'World of the Honey Bee Queen'. The structure and life of the honey bee queen. Practical ways to ensure that colonies are headed by fertile, productive queens.

Please note the venue is not as previously advertised. If you have already registered with Eventbrite you should have received an email advising the **change of location**.

Tuesday 20th March, 7:45pm start

Broughton Sports Pavillion

139 Tanfield Lane

Broughton

Milton Keynes

MK10 9NJ

We are opening this talk up to Bucks County BKA members, and also Beds BKA members. As we have a limit of 100 people in the hall, please reserve your **FREE TICKET** via this link.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/celia-davies-talk-to-north-bucks-beekeepers-the-world-of-the-honeybee-queen-tickets-37664322001?aff=erelpanelorg>

## ***Summer/Autumn 2018 Talks and Events***

We are thinking ahead to better weather of spring/summer 2018. Resurrection of 'Noggin & Natter' nights and a BBQ are in our plans. If you have any requests for events/talks from April onwards, please let any of the committee know.

**Beginners Course 2018:** This is currently taking place – with 20 students this year. It is always good to pair new beekeepers up with more experienced people, so if you would like to help out please let anyone on the committee know by emailing [chairman@nbbka.org](mailto:chairman@nbbka.org)

**North Bucks BKA Honey Show.** Sunday 23rd September 2018. Buckingham Nurseries. Please put this date in your diary, and have a think about which classes you would like to enter.

## ***DEFRA Survey***

You are invited by DEFRA to complete their short queen bee survey:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/DefraQueenReplacementPracticesSurvey>

## ***Cosgrove Apiary***

Thanks to everyone who helped to lay the new base for the shed before Christmas.

Regular sessions at the apiary will continue around Easter – weather depending.

## ***Theft of Beehives from Bicester***

This has been passed to the association, please be aware of this, and protect your hives where possible.

The bees were overwintering prior to being moved for pollination and were hidden from general view, the hives measure about 18" (500mm) cubed and weigh about 40lb/20kg each, they were only accessible across a field margin and would have required a substantial vehicle to move them (perhaps a 4x4 and trailer).

Please be vigilant and let Bicester Police or me know if you are aware of any suspicious activity relating to this – you can contact us via email – brackleybees@hotmail.com

### ***BBKA Exams***

Fiona Eelbeck is planning a day for BBKA Basic Exams on Saturday 7th July. If you are interested in taking this practical exam, please let Fiona know. eelbeckbees@gmail.com A coaching session will be set up to take you through the syllabus.

#### **BBKA Exam Dates for Modules 2018/2019**

ALL MODULE Examinations: 10th November 2018 (Applications in by 30th September 2018).

Future module dates:

2019 March 23rd, November 9th.

2020 March 21st November 14th

Advanced Certificate in Beekeeping Husbandry 8/9/10th June and 29/30 June 2018 and 1st July depending on numbers (Applications in by 28th February 2018).

General Certificate in Beekeeping Husbandry date by arrangement with the Examinations Board Secretary (Applications in by 28th February 2018)

Microscopy Certificate 24th/25th November 2018 other dates as required (Applications in by 31st August 2018)

BEE HEALTH CERTIFICATE By arrangement with the Local Examinations Secretary (Applications in by 31st March 2018 last date for Assessment 31st July)

BEE BREEDING CERTIFICATE date by arrangement with the Examinations Board Secretary (Applications in by 28th February 2018)

Basic and Junior Certificate date by arrangement with the County Examinations Secretary (Applications 1 month before assessment last date for Basic Assessment 31st August)

## ***'Bees Abroad' Charity courses***

Courses are offered by Bees Abroad and run by our expert volunteer beekeepers to raise funds for our projects. The fees will support our work in the relief of poverty through beekeeping. For more details about the courses see <http://beesabroad.org.uk/product-category/training-course/>

### **Course 1: Options for Beekeepers – conventional v natural / sustainable approaches**

Suitable for those with and without beekeeping experience.

Course Tutors Jane & Richard Ridler – BBKA Master Beekeepers & Bees Abroad Project Managers

Dates Sunday 20th May (World Bee Day) & Saturday 14th July. Start/Finish 9.30 to 4.30

Venue Writtle University near Chelmsford, Essex. CM13RR

Price £89 includes refreshments and lunch

Book via Bees Abroad on-line shop at <http://beesabroad.org.uk/product-category/training-course/>

### **Course 2: An Introduction to Top Bar Hives – includes make your own**

Course Tutors Dawn Williamson & Paul Bloch – Bees Abroad Project Managers

Dates Saturday 7th April. Start/Finish 9.00 to 17.00

Venue Fell Edge Farm, Skipton, West Yorks. LS299JX

Waged: £45 Unwaged: £25

Cost of materials to make one hive: Waged: £70 Unwaged: £50

Light lunch and refreshments included. Accommodation is available

Book via Bees Abroad on-line shop at <http://beesabroad.org.uk/product-category/training-course/>

## **Apiary Notes/Tasks**

March and April are critical months for the colony. The increase of brood; and decrease of adult bees (dying off after winter) means that in very cold spells the remaining bees may struggle to keep the brood warm. They may also struggle to forage for enough pollen to feed the brood. Keep a close eye on the hive, heft to ensure there are enough stores, and consider feeding a solid pollen substitute such as Nektapol at this time.

Swarms start to leave the hives around early April. If you wish to receive a swarm, please make sure you have your equipment clean and ready to use by then.

Early spring is also the best time to move the colonies into clean equipment. By changing the floor, brood body, cover board – and the use of a clean queen excluder can dramatically reduce disease in the hive. Clean the old equipment by scraping out all the old wax and propolis, and either scrub well with boiling water and washing soda crystals (using appropriate gloves and eye protection), or scorch with a blow torch. Do this promptly as this is the equipment that you will need for your swarm control.

Early spring is also a good time to mark (and clip) the Queen if you didn't manage to do this last year. This makes finding the queen so much easier when the hive is much fuller in the summer.

A very useful checklist was created by Ted Hooper (Guide to Bees and Honey). If you are newish to beekeeping this is worth printing and laminating, and having with you in the apiary:

1. Has the colony sufficient room?
  - a. For the Queen to Lay [Swarm Control]
  - b. To store Honey [Add Supers]
  - c. For the Bees to rest in the hive overnight [Add Supers]
2. Is the queen present and laying the expected quantity of eggs? [Disease, Space]
3. Is the colony building up in size as fast as other colonies in the apiary? [Disease, Space]
4. From April until end July, are queen cells present? [Swarm Control]
5. Are there signs of disease or abnormality? [Disease]
6. Has the colony sufficient stores until the next inspection? [Food Stores/Feeding]