

north staffordshire beekeepers association

(www.northstaffsbees.org.uk)

July 2010 NewsLetter

Next Meeting:
Sat 10th July 2010.
Start at 2pm.
Summer Social
(Location restricted)

“Chairman’s Chat” July 2010

Congratulations to Nick and his team for hosting Dave Buckley from South Cheshire, our guest speaker at the Leek Bee Breeders Apiary at Longsdon in June. I was impressed with the technique for swarm control, putting the swarming queen in a new brood box with foundation, and then the remainder of the brood (and queen cells) in a brood box on top, using a top board with a side entrance. Because there were quite a few swarm cells in this brood, he split the cells and made a 5 frame nucleus as well. All the flying bees would return to the queen and quickly draw out the foundation, the swarming instinct quelled, and very little check in honey production. The only drawback that I could see would be finding the queen. I came away resolving to make a bigger effort next spring to find and mark our queens.

July 10th is the date of our Summer Social. If the weather stays warm as it is at the moment, then we should all be in for a pleasant afternoon. We need you all to bring a dish along, a call to Pat Twigg on 01630 673299 will ensure that we have sufficient variety, but we want to see you all there. Please make the effort.

In the last NewsLetter, there was an appeal for volunteers to staff the stand at two shows in the Staffordshire Mooreland’s but I gather that to-date, not enough people have come forward to make it viable and if we are to attend the show, we do need more names. If you are a new or relatively new beekeeper, you might be concerned that you do not have sufficient experience or knowledge but for several years, many new beekeepers attended the events and did an excellent job and enjoyed themselves at the same time. Public relations is a very useful and enjoyable activity but we do need sufficient people ensure that everyone have plenty of free time to enjoy the events. I would ask you to give it your urgent consideration and get in-touch with Dave Teasdale

Looking forward to seeing you at the Social and at the shows!

Dave Cheek davidcheek@talktalk.net

Dates for your diary:

Saturday 10th July - Start 2pm
NSBKA Summer Social

at the home of: Cherry & Brian Tomkins

INVITATION

ALL members of the North Staffordshire Beekeeping Association and their guests are cordially invited to have an afternoon off from the gardening, decorating, shopping and even beekeeping to come along to our home and enjoy yourself.

Cherry and Brian Tomkins

NB – dress informal but NO bee suits allowed

(See Map on Page 2 for directions to “High Leyes”)

August – No meeting

Wednesday 1st September

The Friends Meeting House, Newcastle
Joint meeting with our friends from South Cheshire

Doors open 7pm for 7.30 start.

Guest Speaker – Gerry Collins from Doncaster

North Staffs Beekeepers welcome Gerry back into our midst after many years during which he has achieved a national reputation as a beekeeper and an excellent speaker on all aspects of beekeeping. This will be a meeting that you should not miss!

Beecraft Magazine



At a recent meeting, Dave Cheek caused some laughter when he admitted that as a result of him reading a copy of this magazine which he found really useful and interesting; he had taken out a subscription at the published price even though information about a discount offer had been previously published in our NewsLetter.

For those who have not heard about Beecraft, it is published monthly and is an excellent beekeeping publication full of useful information for all beekeepers.

The offer is still available but if you would like to look before you buy, contact Sue Jakeman on 01733-771221 or Email her at secretary@bee-craft.com, you can obtain a free copy. Alternatively, if you have access to the Internet, have a look at the website and look at the masses of other information available.

If you would like to receive Beecraft through the offer, contact David Teasdale.

Another day in paradise

Saturday June 10th 2010 saw the demonstration of practical beekeeping by Dave Buckley of Cheshire beekeepers at the Longsdon Apiary.

It was a beautiful warm sunny morning and a few of us had turned up a little early to tidy the old shed, (to give a good impression). Unfortunately Dave also turned up early and caught us on the hop.

We needn't have worried; our guest could see all the hard work the working parties had put in over winter to make the apiary a first class site. Also it is an unbelievable beautiful and tranquil spot. So the hard work Nick had done tidying went unnoticed.

The meeting was very well attended, as indeed most apiary meetings are nowadays.



A fine frame of bees,
Note no gloves no smoke

As Dave started his demonstration everyone became enthralled by his skill and natural craftsmanship and he imparted his knowledge willingly and with an easygoing manner. Someone said it seemed to be a natural gift Dave had for handling bees. (Dave pointed out he had been doing it for something like 40 years).

Dave didn't wear gloves saying he could that way feel any bees under his fingers and move them gently aside before lifting the frames. He also was very sparing in the use of smoke and on some hives not using any.

In response to a question on marking and clipping the wing of queen bees, Dave demonstrated his technique using a drone. He lifts the bee by the left wing held between forefinger and thumb of his left hand. He can then manipulate the bee with his middle fingers, whilst marking and trimming with his right hand. He pointed out to us beginners that we would not be stung as the queen reserves this for the drones. He stated is preference to do both marking and trimming at the same time.



Dave starts his demonstration. Enthralled beginner in background

Dave advised us newcomers that it is good to practice queen marking and wing trimming using a drone. This is indeed a good idea unless like me you are too sentimental and reticent about killing the drones, that way finding the queen is even more difficult in a hive containing a dozen or more large marked bees.



Queen cells



Nick don't let beekeeping go
to your head – like your smoker

Dave pointed out examples of sealed queen cells royal jelly and chalk brood. He was very complimentary about the condition and good nature of the bees. This made us beginners feel quite proud, even though we have had no input on such things.

This was an excellent demonstration by a gifted and patient teacher. My great regret is that, I was so enthralled I

The beginnings of a beekeeper

Four years ago I met a man who grew sweet peas, who explained growing flowers helped to keep his bees happy and himself supplied with honey, he also enjoyed watching them.

Eighteen months ago I started reading books from the library about bee keeping. Twelve months ago I saw two men in a field with funny white suits on, I went to them and asked them how to start bee keeping, they told me about N.S.B.K.A. and the meetings in Newcastle once a month during the winter, and suggested I attend, which I eventually did.

Through those meetings I learnt about bee hives, frames and bee space, and also of a beginners' beekeeping course at Keele University, which I attended. I then started going to apiary meetings and saw first hand how bees and hives work, I also spent a whole morning cleaning old frames in the rain which surprisingly I enjoyed.

On Wednesday 16 June, the opportunity occurred to assist in honey extraction, with no less than the two white suits from twelve months ago. Working all day handling the supers, uncapping the frames talking to everyone, has dispelled almost, if not all, my concerns about keeping bees myself. I feel I have the confidence to be a beekeeper.

'Soon to be Beekeeper'

Dave Grooms

Your NSBKA NewsLetter

At a recent Committee Meeting, the NSBKA NewsLetter was discussed and it was reported that more than half of our members now receive their copy of the NewsLetter via Email rather than a printed copy and that some members might not be aware that this option was available which if members opted for the Email copy could result in saving trees and your Associations funds.

Whilst a printed copy of your NewsLetter is always available in its printed version by post, if you would prefer to receive your copy via Email, just contact Ray Day on 01782-867352 so that he can make the necessary arrangements.

We would also welcome your thoughts, comments and views about the NewsLetter to enable us to ensure that it is useful and interesting for **YOU** and we would also welcome any written articles, pictures or suggestions for articles to be published in **YOUR Newsletter**.

Useful Website for Swarms and Bumblebee information and advice

It is appreciated that not all members have access to the Internet but for those who do have access to it, there is a very useful part of the BBKA Website http://www.britishbee.org.uk/swarm_help.php where you can find a vast amount of useful information about bees, swarms, wasps and bumblebees and other links to equally useful Bumblebee information sites.

The site is informative and worth a look but it has a greater benefit if you are asked about the subject by members of the general public because you can refer anyone to the site so that they can be better informed and thus, possibly prevent the wasteful and unnecessary destruction of bee's i.e. valuable pollinating insects

We should be encouraging people to protecting pollinating insects and the site says it all!

Meet the general public at the shows – Volunteers Needed!

To-date, we have had some people offers of help but we need more people to be able to attend the shows. Whilst we would like to attend, the deadline for informing the organisers is 30th July, and if more people are not able to help we will (reluctantly) have to withdraw. **The two events are:**

**14th August (Saturday) –
Manifold Valley Show – Irlam**

**30th August (Bank Holiday Monday)
Rushton Spencer**

If you can get help – please contact Dave Teasdale know ASAP

July Beekeeping Tasks

- Swarms can still occur so maintain your regular inspections and take actions if required.
- Keep adding supers as required but not to excess as you need to ensure that the combs are capped.
- Check the Varroa status of your colonies. Infestation levels can vary so ensure that you check all of your colonies.

Remember – if you need help or advice – just ask – don't suffer in silence because we have all been there and probably will be again!

Beehive Thefts in the Midlands

It has been reported in the current copy of Beecraft that this year and currently, there has been a high incidence of beehives and bees being stolen in Derbyshire which is too close for us to be comfortable.

I have always said that beekeepers are the “salt of the earth” because they will help anyone, sometimes at the cost in respect to them leaving tasks which they should be doing in order to help others. So it is sad to recognise that these thefts must be being undertaken by beekeepers because in order to do this, the persons must have knowledge about beekeeping and have a way of disposing of the stolen property.

Whilst a determined thief cannot be stopped, you can make it more difficult by marking all of your equipment i.e. boxes and frames and some beekeepers have used “Smartwater” to mark hives which is a product that is detectable under ultraviolet light and can be traced back to the beekeepers address.

Don't make it easy for the thief so keep your eyes and ears open for anything suspicious. If you are a victim tell the police immediately and warn us so that we can inform other beekeepers. Equally, if you hear about hive etc being sold from a strange source, follow it up.

Take care where you place your bees and it is probably a good idea not to advertise the location of your bees. It is a sad situation but bees and equipment are valuable.

DT

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