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July 2016

WVBKA Charity Registration Number: 517008

Cancellation of summer trip to the National Botanic Garden of Wales

Unfortunately, due to the lack of response we had to cancel the summer trip that was planned for 19th June to visit the National Botanic Garden of Wales. This was very disappointing for those of us who had booked to go as it really is a lovely place but there you are. We are certainly not the only ones with this problem as lots of other clubs have had to cancel trips as well.

Diary Dates

July 8th

- Apiary meeting 6:30pm

July 16th

- BBKA Basic Assessment

July 17th

- Talk by Val Vivian-Griffiths: *Queen Rearing at the apiary, followed by a BBQ*

July 22nd

- Apiary meeting 6:30pm

August 12th

- Committee meeting

August 17th

- Apiary meeting 6:30pm

September 9th

- Apiary meeting 6:30pm

September 10th

- Kington Show

September 23rd

- Apiary meeting 6:30pm

October 9th

- Honey Show

Comments on the first of a series of ‘bee events’ for WVBKA – 17th June

The apiary team are planning practical meetings every two weeks, this summer. This was the first and it was most successful. There was a good turnout, although I didn’t count, there must have been over a dozen folk turned up for a bit of theory, a bit of practical and a bite to eat.

Dave Williams started the ball rolling, dusting off his microscopes and giving us an introduction to microscopy. Several folk brought frozen bee samples with them which were unceremoniously ground up with a pestle and mortar – 30 bees with a ‘dash’ of water. Measurements were not too accurate but we got the gist of what was going on! There was no sign of Nosema, but we did have the opportunity to look at a prepared slide of a bee’s cornea.

Party time next – despite the torrential rainfall earlier in the day, June, Jane and Peter had done a fine job with the BBQ. Washed down with a little stubby of lager (thanks Dave) this was most welcome.

The evening ended with Peter giving a short demo of ‘hiving a swarm’ – Dave (junior) had captured one earlier in the day. We watched in fascination as the swarm were knocked onto a sheet and proceeded to crawl up a board into the hive. The ‘find the queen’ prize went to Andi and ‘queenie’ was promptly dabbed with white marker, before the swarm was sold. Dave generously donated proceeds to the club.

It was a great evening and thanks to the apiary team. I’m already looking forward to the next meet on 8th July and I hope to see you all there.

Juliet Parker-Smith

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Swarms Season is upon us

If you want a swarm or are willing to collect swarms from peoples gardens in your area please let June know on 01981 550320

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Queen Colour of the Year 2016 is: WHITE

Apiary meetings

The first of our new style of apiary meeting was held last week and we had a very good turnout. I'm sure the BBQ and refreshments may have been a lure but hopefully we have set the ball rolling with interesting meetings that members will want to come to and chat with other beekeepers and ask questions.

After some discussion we have decided that the format for future meetings will be two sessions per month from July through to September. These will be on Friday evenings, starting at 6.30pm and held on the second and fourth Fridays of the month. There will be an article put into the newsletter ahead of the month's sessions giving a bit of background and outlining the topics to be covered.

The sessions will be a mix of discussion and practical, and should be relevant to the time of year. Below is a tentative plan of meeting ideas but if there are

more pressing issues from members then we can adjust the schedule. The idea is for these meetings to be based on topics that our members want to brush up on or learn more about – so you need to give us some ideas as well as us making plans.

Spontaneous events may be added to the schedule based on what is happening with the bees and these will be advertised by email shot to members. Please make sure your email address is up to date on our system – contact Lee Howarth with any changes.

There will be tea and coffee (or beer) and a discussion session afterwards, enjoyment and learning from the sessions will be important. There will be opportunity for members to stay and chat as an alternative to going in to the bees if they prefer.

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Apiary meeting dates

July 8th *Making increase and setting up a nuc*

David Williams has volunteered to lead this one. Depending on timing, this could include transferring from the nucs David has set up into the new brood boxes.

July 22nd *Taking honey - how and when.*

To include clearing, preparation and extraction of honey, plus bottling and labelling basics.

We normally have a practical honey extraction demo, so maybe we will follow the route of previous years and see who wants to attend, then fit it around someone's extraction day at their home.

August 12th *Handling bees, finding and marking queens.*

August 26th *Varroa – how to do a Varroa count, what treatments are available and how to use them.*

September 9th *Settling the bees for winter, potential problems, feeding and feeder types.*

September 23rd *Over winter plans - oxalic acid treatment, giving candy, equipment cleaning and storage.*

In addition there is a session on Sunday July 17th at the apiary starting at 3pm when Val Vivian-Griffiths will talk about her ideas on queen rearing. The meeting will be followed by a BBQ and hopefully a pleasant evening to sit and chat about bees.

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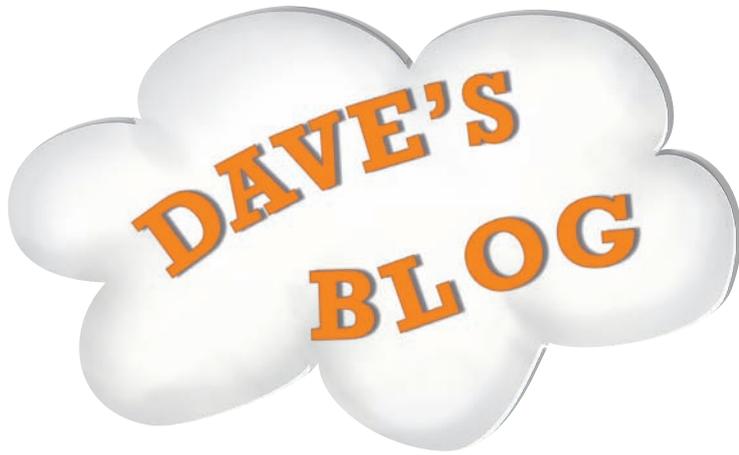


Honey extraction equipment for hire

The WVBKA has a honey extractor available for hire, as well as an electric uncapping knife.

A deposit of £50 plus a hiring fee of £10 is required for the extractor. For each subsequent hiring in the same season, a fee of £5 is chargeable. The knife is hired out at £10. Deposit for both the extractor and the knife is £50. To check if the equipment is available for hire, you can contact June on 01981 550320.

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July notes

No doubt many of you will have experienced some swarming. If you have followed my advice then you will probably have a laying queen by now. If for some reason you have failed to get a nice laying queen, put a frame of eggs from one of your queen-right colonies in as a test frame. This will enable you to judge whether you have a queen or not, it is quite a simple procedure. If queen cells appear on the frame which you have put in, then that is a clear sign that you have no queen present, at this point you will have to decide whether the colony is strong enough to rear a queen. If it is not strong enough, just simply unite it with a queen-right colony using a sheet of paper between the two brood boxes.

At the meeting on Friday evening, we talked about tools for diagnosing Nosema. No evidence was found in the samples which we tested, or at least I could not find any. I will get some prepared slides so we can see exactly what we are looking for. Due to my advancing years I have forgotten some of the procedure. I am in debt to Rob for his help and after a little while it all came flooding back. We will do this again sometime – practice makes perfect. According to my research, there has been a considerable advance in the diagnosing of Nosema.

A little bit about the apiary; it now contains eight colonies for our use and no doubt they will be used for demonstration later on. They have been established for your use and it was very gratifying to see many new faces at the meeting. The committee would like ideas

put forward for future use, simple manipulations such as; adding supers, splitting colonies, queen raising to name but a few. Of course we can build on these adding relevant topics as required. Remember these are your colonies and are for your use; there is no limit to what can be achieved with the right input from the membership.

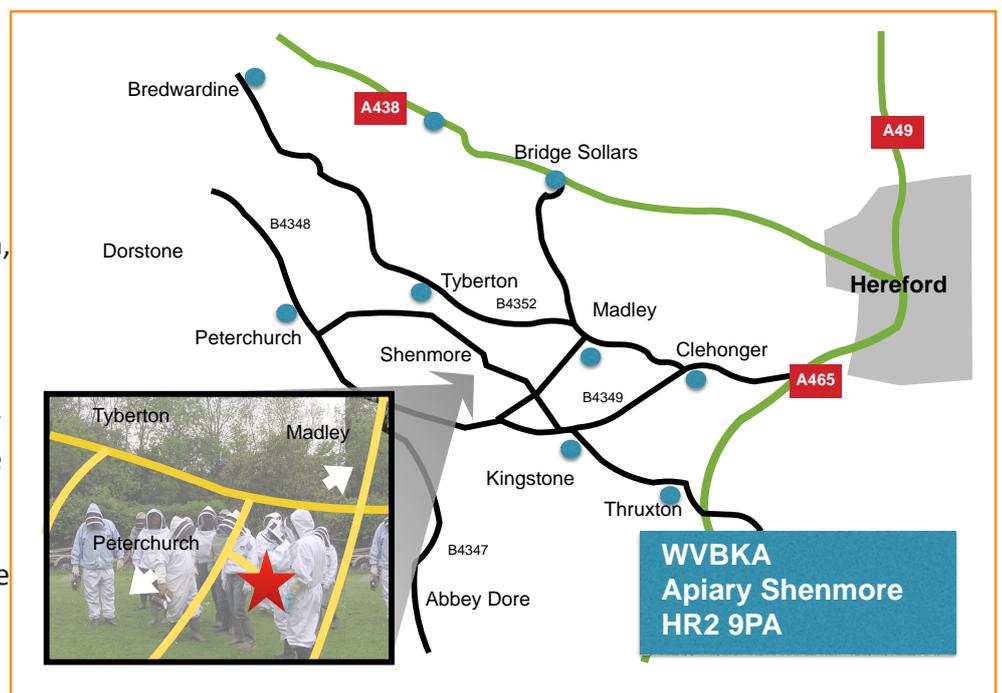
We have made a good start so please do keep it up. I am in my twilight years and I would like to see the apiary developed in such a way that it will take over when I finally hang up my gloves.

The emphasis is on enjoyment in our mutual interests and to this end I would encourage you to come along and enjoy what we have put on. The sausages were quite good and coupled with a beer, all went down very well. Of course, it goes without saying that any beekeeper wishing to study is also welcome and we have the expertise ready, waiting and available. It's up to you. I will do my best to help and guide where I can.

I have been doing a bit of research on queen rearing and there are some very interesting articles, quite modern in their approach to this subject. We will expand on this and take this forward as no doubt many beekeepers would like to gain some expertise in this direction.

Dave

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Simple Wasp Trap

What you will need:

- 200ml thick syrup
- 200ml vinegar
- Banana skin
- 2 ltr PTE lemonade bottle or similar

Method

Step 1 Pour the syrup and vinegar into the bottle. Add the banana skin and seal.

Step 2 Pierce a 1cm (approx) hole in the side of the bottle about 5cm down.

Step 3 The bottle can then be hung near the hive or placed upright at the side or at the back with the hole towards the rear or side of the hive.

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WVBKA Articles

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER SO PLEASE
CONTRIBUTE TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS.

We need your photographs, articles, crossword puzzles, seasonal advice, recipes - anything relevant will do.

Just one article a year from each member will provide enough content to keep the newsletter interesting and varied.

You can email articles to the Chairman, Peter Woodward at: wvbkachairman@gmail.com

The deadline for articles is the 22nd of the month

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Please note that in order to save on the costs of ink, the images contained in the printed version of this newsletter will be in greyscale.