



Newsletter

Registered Charity No. 1121231

March 2021

Editors Gwyn Marsh and Dorothe Jones

Stewart Spinks Managing Grumpy Bees

No-one likes dealing with a hive that comes out to greet you, sting or that follows you for yards from the hive.

Stewart gave us some insights into the reasons why hives are nasty and some strategies for dealing with them. He suggested that there was a difference between an aggressive hive and a 'grumpy' hive.

He has identified two possibilities, genetics and the beekeeper. A short introduction to genetic inheritance showed why bees bred for their calmness can turn aggressive. The only solution for this is to re-queen.

On the other hand, a hive that only occasionally bothers us could be regarded as grumpy. Bees are sensitive to vibrations and will react to anything they are unsure about. How many of us put our smoker, hive tools and beehive on top of an adjacent hive and then wonder why that hive begins to bother us? Sometimes a seemingly calm hive can become tetchy during an inspection. Perhaps we should look to our manipulation skills.

Initially it might be difficult to decide whether a hive is aggressive or grumpy. Hive records will help to determine this by noting hive behaviour on inspection. Careful and gentle inspection methods will potentially solve a grumpy hive problem, but will not change the behaviour of aggressive bees.

Certainly food for thought, buzzy hives might not always be the bees' fault?

Bucks County Hive Inspections Programme 2021

Sean Stephenson will be doing some live hive inspections followed by a manipulation during the months of April, May and June. The dates and a rough outline of the programme are below. Login details will be sent to all nearer the time.

All sessions will be live streamed from the hive and recorded to watch later if you can't attend the live stream. The link to the recordings will be on the website.

Wednesday, April 21st 3pm (note afternoon time) - Full Disease Inspection followed by manipulation (possibly shook swarm)

Wednesday, May 19th 7pm - Inspection followed by manipulation (possibly Demaree method of Artificial Swarm)

Wednesday, June 16th 7pm - Inspection followed by manipulation (possibly uniting colonies, moving colonies, marking & clipping Q)

Exactly what we will see on the day depends on the bees.....

Local Bees for Sale

Martyn Townsend has 20-30 overwintered nucs for sale on Standard DN4 British national frames (Hoffman self-spacing 432mm x 356mm). Martyn's bees have been inspected regularly.

For collection in April, in Hazlemere.

6 Frame nucs £220

5 Frame nucs £200

These can be re-queened with this year's queen for beginners for later collection.

Your name will be put onto a list, first come first served.

Contact Martyn on [07771745014](tel:07771745014) or by email marty45@btinternet.com

Chesham Bois Apiary

"An Experience in Queen Rearing"

Training / Education targeted at Bee Keepers with a minimum of 3 years' experience of managing more than two colonies.

Based at the Chesham Bois Apiary where we currently have 4 colonies on BS National (Double Brood).

Focus of course:

Hands-On manipulation of colonies to create best environment for colony acceptance of Queen Cells
Making of Wax Queen Cups for Grafting
Grafting
Fabrication of Cell Bars
Use of "Genter" System of Queen Cell production
Filling of Apideas.

Maximum of 8 people – (Covid 19 rules will apply)

Expressions of Interest by email to: apiarych@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Tidy-Up Day – Chesham Bois Apiary

Chesham Bois Apiary is going to be a lot busier this year with planned delivery of Education and Training Events.

To do this, we are going to require the help of club members to give a few hours of their time to help with some strimming / land management and to clean some equipment ready for the new season.

Please contact: apiarych@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk if you can help.

BBKA Research Event

BBKA Members are invited to a research day. The event is free but you need to pre-register; book tickets here:

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/Event/research-project-presentations-march-27th>

Drs Rinke Rinkeoog and Matthew Pound. University of Northumbria. This project arose as a follow on from the previous project where urban and rural sites were compared. They are studying whether green infrastructure, provided by businesses, in urban environments can sustain bees and other pollinators. The work includes assessing pollinator diversity across a range of sites in the city centre. In addition, they are analysing pollen in honey and intend to use SEM.

Dr Barbara Smith. University of Coventry. Dr Smith is planning to evaluate the effect of particulate matter (pollution) on honey bee colonies by placing sensors in apiaries which will monitor the presence of particles of 10 microns and smaller ones of 2.5 microns. She is wanting to recruit beekeepers in the Midlands to take part in this study and to provide samples of bees and hive products.

Dr Barbara Smith's talk will be of particular interest to beekeepers in Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Northamptonshire and Leicestershire with two or more hives as Barbara is seeking volunteers to take part in the project.

Dr Juliette Poidatz. University of Exeter. Dr Poidatz and her group have a large project working on various aspects of the Asian Hornet some of which Peter Kennedy presented at the recent BBKA Asian Hornet conference. but this smaller project funded by BBKA is looking specifically at the prey of the hornet. Work to date on this topic has mostly used microscopic remains of species which does not give a true picture. The aim here is to use next-generation DNA barcoding using the COI gene to identify the prey species accurately. They are working with partners in France, Jersey and in the UK who are collecting samples from hornet nests.

Kind Regards
Leigh Sidaway, General Manager

Bees Might be Older than we Thought

Scientists recently made an interesting discovery in Germany. A fly with intact stomach contents, found in 47 million year old deposits, is the first definitive evidence of pollinating insects. An article, with images and analysis of the stomach contents can be found here:

<https://www.sciencealert.com/scientists-just-found-a-47-million-year-old-fossilized-fly-and-we-can-see-it-s-last-meal>

Flowering in the Garden this Month

What a difference a few weeks make. The snowdrops, witchazel and crocuses are over. In their place the daffodils have appeared in full flower as if from nowhere. The hives still have fondant on to supplement the early spring blooms and to help them cope with the cold, wet and windy days when foraging is probably not high on their agenda. Not all these plants are favoured by honeybees, but the bumbles seem to like them.



Daffs



Hyacinth



Bullace



Forsythia



Cyclamen



Comfrey

Committee News

Practical Beekeeping Course

Sean still has places on this excellent course

Sean Stephenson is hoping to run a Practical Beekeeping Course this year Covid permitting. Each of the Bucks Associations can have a maximum of three attendees.

Dates Part I **4 and 11 May**
Part II **5 and 6 June**

Requirements for attendees are:

Must have attained their Basic Certificate.

Kept bees for three (3) years.

Must not have done this course before.

Cost - £50 to include a queen cell and an apidea.

Full details and application form: -

<https://www.buckscountybeekeepers.co.uk/practical-skills-21>

Apiary site available

There is an opportunity to site hives in the following location: -

Wheatsheaf Farm, Seer Green 30 Acres of farmland and a wildflower meadow
Contact: Jenny Cartwright 07932 784753

Please make direct contact if you are interested. If you take up the offer, please let us know so that we can amend our records. Other offers are currently being investigated and will appear here in future issues.

If you are looking for somewhere to keep your bees or conversely know of any suitable sites, then please contact a committee member.

Club Secretary Vacancy

We are still looking for someone to fill this important role on our committee.

The basic job involves; Preparation and sending out of minutes and agendas, attending and taking minutes of our monthly committee meetings (currently on Zoom). Dealing with any correspondence and liaising with other committee members.

Enthusiasm and a willingness to devote your time is more important than being an experienced beekeeper. Extensive knowledge of bees is not required!

Currently all our committee and wider club management are fully occupied in their roles, so it would be really nice if someone out there would be prepared to take this on. Help and support will be given to help you ease in to the role. We are a friendly bunch!

If you feel you could make this valuable contribution to the running of your club then please contact our chairman Gillian Jones: -

chairman@chalfontsbeekeepers.co.uk

Tel: 07773 366206

Gillian was previously club secretary and is now doing both jobs!

She will be happy to chat to you and fill you in on all the details of the role.

Facebook

Please feel free to join the conversation on our Facebook page here:-

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/177933745556905>

All contributions, photos welcome

Diary Dates

Club Meetings

These will continue to be via Zoom for the time being. Links will be sent out the week before the meeting. All meetings scheduled to start at 7.30pm.

March 23rd

David Evans aka The Apiarist

'Bait Hives for Pleasure and Profit'

David is currently writing the Readers' Questions Answered in BBKA magazine.

April 27th

Dr Julia Hoggard

Bee Stings

May 25th

Keith Pierce

Master Beekeeper, Ireland

'Apideas (mini mating nucs). Their operation and maintenance'



Keith has been beekeeping for more than 25 years, selectively rearing Dark Native Irish Queens *Apis mellifera mellifera*. He says "My selection program is based on the ability of my bees to over-winter strongly, together with disease resistance, docility, productivity, colour and more.

My home and main mating apiary is just on the outskirts of Dublin city, with the bees foraging over the extensive area of the Phoenix Park and the Liffey Valley, including the gardens of suburban Castleknock.

My queens are naturally open mated, but I have been flooding the vicinity of my apiary with drones from my own native dark bees. Each year I over winter more colonies of bees than I need, keeping only the best and requeening those that do not come up to my criteria."

Other Events

27th March

10.30am

BBKA Research Event

Go to bbka.org.uk events to book a ticket.

1st April

7.00pm

Dave Goulson

Gardening for Bumblebees

£6 - Live stream access only ticket

£18 - Live stream access and a copy
of 'Gardening for Bumblebees' (RRP £16.99)

Click [here](#) to book.

16th – 18th April

The BBKA Spring Convention,

A 'virtual' armchair event.

Tickets will be available soon – see the BBKA website.

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/spring-convention-2021>

Sunday 26th September

Bucks County Honey Show

Hosted by Mid Bucks Beekeepers. More details to follow.

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