

Norfolk Beekeepers' Association

Buzzword

Volume 9 Issue 3

Safeguarding beekeeping in Norfolk.

May 2009

Bonus Ball

Sorry but no winners either on 28th March or 4th April. The winning numbers were 14 & 21 respectively and not chosen by anyone. A total of £60 goes to NBKA funds. Thank you for your support. The Treasurer.

NEW LIBRARIANS.

With effect from 1st May Mr & Mrs Charlie Hull will be the NBKA Librarians. They live at Suffield near Aylsham, and can be contacted by email bees@wideskies.co.uk or telephone 01263 761243. Their full address is in the 2009 Year Book. Any books out on loan at present, when due for return, need to be returned to Mr & Mrs Hull. I would like to express my thanks to them for offering to take on the Library now that I have become Treasurer. The Committee also express their thanks to Mr & Mrs Hull for taking on the Library.

Graham Ford.

Copy for the June edition of *Buzzword* to the Editor please by May 14th 2009. Thank you.

New chairman for NBKA

One of my first duties as Chairman of NBKA is to welcome the new committee members; Jane Hancy, Jackie Harrison and Elaine Gibb. Ladies, welcome to the team. We look forward to working with you. Of course, saying "hello" also means saying "goodbye" and, on behalf of the Association, I'd like to pay tribute to Eric George who stood down as Treasurer at the AGM after 18 years in post. Eric's (and Jean's) contribution to the Association has been immeasurable and he will be very much missed in all our activities, particularly at Committee meetings although I trust that we'll see him again at demonstrations and the Norfolk Show. I would also like to thank my predecessor, Don Cooper, for all his work as Chairman and to thank Graham Ford for taking over as acting-chairman and keeping us all in line over the latter part of last year.

We start the new beekeeping season in what can only be described as "interesting times". So far the weather has been in our favour and we are hopeful of a better year in 2009 than 2008 however, poorly mated queens and disease are still very much at the forefront of our minds and we will continue to actively support the BBKA in their efforts to establish a properly thought through program of research into the problems faced by us and our bees. Colony losses don't seem to be as high as last year but I urge everyone to complete and return the survey form which accompanied last month's *Buzzword* as we need to know where and why we are losing colonies. Similarly, if you do suspect disease in your colonies or lose colonies to disease, please contact either your Seasonal Bee Inspector or the Regional Bee Officer. They are there to help us.

Your Committee have worked hard to produce an interesting and varied events programme and I hope that we will see lots of you at meetings.

Best wishes for a fun and rewarding season.

Carolyn Liston

I have over 10 acres of land at Billingford, south sloping, overlooking 17 acres of lake. I grow mixed fruit trees, no spraying. Am interested in offering a site to place hives, with the possibility of learning a little about beekeeping.

Do you have anyone who might be interested ?

From: Tim Perry (anangailx@yahoo.co.uk)

Norfolk Beekeepers Honey bee pest and disease day.

Saturday May 30th

At Easton College and Graham Ford's Apiary at Caister St Edmund. led By Andy Wattam Regional bee Inspector.

A chance to learn something about the Pest and Disease Problems confronting beekeeping today.

Meet at Easton College 10 am, signs will direct you to the meeting place. At about 12.30 pm move to Graham's apiary, please bring sandwiches for your lunch.

The afternoon session should start at about 2 pm. If you can not make the morning then come for the afternoon. Any questions please contact Paul Metcalf on 01603 759346.

Apiary visit at Toftwood (Swarm Control)

Just to confirm the apiary site for my demo on the 9th May.(2.30pm)

The apiary is up Herne lane which is adjacent to the 30 mph limit as you approach Toftwood from Shipdham. There is a large pylon at the entrance of the lane. The apiary is located at Smiths Farm which is the second building on the left hand side. I will put up signs on the Shipdham Road out of Toftwood.

Trevor Nash

Spring Opening Up

40 members of NBKA gathered on a lovely spring afternoon to open the hives at Ken Buck's apiary on Buxton Heath. Paul Metcalf deftly demonstrated the steps that one should take when opening the hives for the first time in the spring, namely to check that the queen is present and laying, to treat with Apiguard for varroa and, where the colony is weak or, if the queen is not present, how to unite it with a stronger colony.

Many thanks to Ken for the use of his apiary, to Paul for giving us the benefit of his experience and explaining not only how to follow the various procedures but why we should. Finally, a huge thank you to Mrs Buck and her helpers for an excellent afternoon tea which rounded off a very enjoyable afternoon.

Carolyn Liston

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On buying-in a nucleus ...what to look for

Most of us at sometime will buy-in extra bees as a nucleus or maybe we are going to act as suppliers. Here are a few thoughts on quality.

1. The drawn frames. These should be in good condition having only been in use for a season or two. Very old frames heavily propolised with very dark wax are undesirable and will not help disease control. (try writing the year on the top bar of each new frame as you put it in a hive to help you keep a check)

2. The Queen. Ideally the queen should not have yet laid for a full season e.g. a July queen sold the next Spring. If she is a new queen of the year then she should have been retained long enough to show that she has mated successfully and is laying normal worker brood. Older queens *may* be acceptable but the buyer needs to know their age and history (e.g.. has headed a full size colony and laid to the maximum or has been more restricted in a smaller colony). They say 'the ram is half the flock' well a queen bee must be *at least* 95% of a colony. Any old queen that comes to hand will not do!

3. Health. Obviously the stock must have been thoroughly checked for disease before any transaction - *check with the Bee Inspector if you have any doubts.* The nucleus should be as free of varroa as possible e.g. having just been treated before delivery. A record of treatments given to the parent stock in the last 6 months can also be usefully passed on e.g. 'treated with oxalic acid in Dec.' and warning given if immediate treatment on receipt is going to be required.

4. Strength of nucleus. A young queen in prime condition on a frame of healthy young brood, plus two frames of mainly sealed and sealing brood and a frame with good sealed stores (somewhere one of the frames should have a decent deposit of pollen) plus enough bees to cover the brood adequately and a good excess besides.

Such a nucleus will go off like a steam train and delight its new owner.

5. Character of the strain. All our geese are swans to us. Some 'sharp' bees, however good at gathering honey, are not suitable for absolute beginners or tiny back gardens. Some strains are too prolific for a single brood box most years whereas others manage nicely in one and some put in propolis by the pound (ideal if you intend to make a business selling it)

6. And afterwards.... How nice to get that courtesy call 'Just to say those bees you sold me are doing well' or 'Has that nucleus you purchased settled ok?'

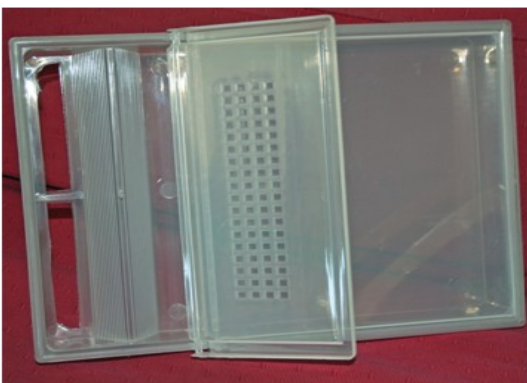
Is this *too much to ask?* Well '*let the buyer beware*' and the seller too if they want to stay in business.

Elaine Gibbs

Prices for Nucs this year appear to be very high, I was quoted Friday (not that I want any) £140 for 4 frames!!! Makes you think doesn't it.

Graham Ford

Nuc feeder seen at Stoneleigh 2009



An inexpensive nuc feeder seen at Stoneleigh. On offer at £3.00 from National Bee Supplies. It would fit easily on a five frame nuc. You would need to make a simple crown board from a piece of plywood to enable you to refill the feeder without getting too much help from the swarm or developing nuc.

Stoneleigh offers.

Bees offered by Maisemore apiaries. 6 comb nucleus in a non returnable box £144 collect only from Maisemore in Gloucester.

Andrew Till also of Gloucestershire offered 5 frame nucs at £120 for collection from Tewkesbury. As Graham says it certainly makes one think!

Foraging

I'm one of those *sad* beekeepers that love to watch my bees foraging and returning to their hive. Retirement has some benefits.

This afternoon the sun broke through the sea fret and the temperature shot up.

The bees were having a ball replenishing their pollen needs.

Bees forage for four things:-

1. Nectar, the sugary solution from nectaries that provide the bees with energy and make the wax glands work. It can be evaporated to be stored as honey.

2. Pollen is the protein part of the bee's diet and is often in short supply in the spring. It's vital for brood rearing. Young bees need it to make brood food as well as for their own metabolism.

3. Water is a must in the spring to dilute honey to 50% solution so it can be used by bees.

In the summer water is needed to keep the

hive cool. It is evaporated in the hive maintaining the brood area at no more than 35°C - almost our body temperature.

4. Propolis or bee glue is used as an antiseptic like a varnish in cleaned brood cells, it's used to seal holes and to glue frames together and some bees reduce their hive entrance with propolis to make the hive easier to defend.

One hive today was not bringing in pollen whilst its neighbours were all bringing in leg fulls.

When I opened the hive all the brood was drone brood. The queen could have failed to mate or had run out of sperm. The queen was killed and the colony joined to another small colony.

Plenteous pollen loads are good indicator that things are OK 'queen wise' within the hive.

John Everett

DON COOPER

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**East Ruston. Date for your diary
Monday 13th July, 11am**

We have been lucky to secure Alan Gray for an introduction to his garden at East Ruston. Situated quite close to the coast the garden has something to appeal to everyone from wild flower meadows to formal topiary. It really is a treat to wander at will.

As the visit is on a Monday (he is a busy person!) the garden is not open to the general public and for those of us who work now is the time to book a day's holiday. Ticket price is £12, cheques payable to Norfolk Beekeepers. Come and enjoy a day out. Please send your cheques to my address. Dunton Cottage, Broad Road, Worstead, NR28 9RU **THANKS**

Lynne Pettit.

Growing Bee Friendly Plants.

Last year I planted a small area of our land with a mixture of bee friendly plants. I bought Borage, Mustard, Phacelia and Buckwheat and planted them all together. This year I have done the same but also added wild poppy that I collected from a neighbouring hedgerow. The first four seeds came from Kings and three are marketed as *Green Manure*. No doubt other

seedsmen supply them. They were left to flower and set seed.

I did not get a record honey crop but it was pleasant to see numerous bumble bees as well as our honey bees exploiting the bounty. Pick your own customers were fascinated by the foraging insects and the colour.

It's still not too late to do the same this year
John Everett

There is a growing realisation that correct nourishment for our bees is vitally important. Much nonsense has been written in the press about a crisis in beekeeping. The simple fact of the matter is that we have had two very poor summers and bees were ill nourished. The poor honey harvest underlines the logic of this view. Looking back we also heard of poor queen mating. Were some beekeepers adding to the problem by drone

culling? Even the drones that survived some beekeepers ministrations were ill nourished as were their sisters. There is a clear relationship between our bees' health and the ravages of varroa triggered diseases. By encouraging the planting of bee friendly trees, flowers and shrubs we can all do a great deal to help our bees to thrive.

Editor

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NORFOLK BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Buzzword diary

May

- Sat 9th 2.30pm **System of management for swarm control.** Toftwood apiary. Event organiser Trevor Nash 01362 696737 NBKA
- Sun 17th 10am-4pm **Healthy bees are happy bees.** Theory & practical day at Anmer village hall and Flitcham, apiary WNKLBA
- Sat 30th 10am **Good husbandry for bees and beekeepers with Andy Wattam.** Easton college & then on to 66 Caistor Lane, Caistor St Edmund. Bring packed lunch . Organisers Paul Metcalf. 01603 759346 and Graham Ford 01508 493430 NBKA

June

- Sat 13th 2.30pm **Alternative methods of swarm control.** Easton College apiary Paul Metcalf 01603 759346. NBKA
- Sat 13th 2.30pm **Preparing honey for exhibiting,** with Jill Tinsey at Etling Green, Dereham. WNKLBA

July

- Wed/Thur 1st & 2nd **Royal Norfolk Show. Contact Pat Marshall 01328 851475 NBKA**
- Sat 11th Thorne's Wragby sale 9 -4 One needs to be sharp on time and have a shopping list ready for an exciting hour or so of buying pleasure.. Lectures and refreshments after as well as the retail shop at full prices too.
- Sat 11th **Apiary tour** to be arranged by Keith Morgan Wnklbka
- Mon 13th 11am **Visit to East Rusdon Garden.** Organiser Lynn Petit 01692 536017 NBKA
- Wed 29th **Sandringham flower show & Wnklbka annual honey show**
- Mon 29th to Sat 25th **FIBKA course at Gormanston:** Lead lecturer Celia Davies. Full programme for beginners, intermediate and senior beekeepers. Probably the best beekeeping course in Europe. Send reservation for with deposit or full fee to Michael Wolfe Railway House, Middleton, County Cork . Tel 00353 (0)21 4631911. E mail Eddie O'Sullivan: easbee@indigo.ie Cost 310 Euro plus return travel to Dublin.

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