



NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2017

www.dorsetbees.org.uk

WDBKA OUTING TO BUCKFAST ABBEY & THE BEE DEPARTMENT SUNDAY 23RD JULY



Your committee are organising a trip for you to Buckfast Abbey, south Devon on Sunday 23rd July to visit the Bee Department with Clare Densley, the Abbey's head beekeeper. There is a maximum of 12 beekeepers who can visit the Bee Department at any one time. Clare Densley is willing to take 2 groups if there is enough demand, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. There is a charge for this of £5 per person.

Your committee have agreed that WDBKA will pay this £5 charge for full members. Spaces are strictly on a first come first served basis. Friends of WDBKA are welcome to join us but will need to pay the £5.

Anyone visiting the Bee Department must bring a clean bee suit, wellingtons and Marigold type gloves.

We intend to book a mini-bus which Trevor has kindly offered to drive for us. We will have room on the bus for 15 WDBKA full members only. Anyone wanting a seat on the bus will have to pay towards the cost which will in the region of £5-£8 each. Again, spaces on bus will be on a first come first served basis.

Others may prefer to drive themselves, which is fine, directions are attached, but you will still need to contact me if you wish to visit the Bee Department as I will need to book a space for you in one of the groups.

We will all need to be there by 10am.

For those of you that have not been to Buckfast Abbey before there is lots to see and do - <https://www.buckfast.org.uk>

We hope there will be enough interest so we can have 2 groups of 12 to look at the bees. If friends, partners and non beekeepers wish to come along too for a day at Buckfast they are very welcome to join in.

Please contact Carole Brown Secretary (details bottom of page 6) asap to book a place. Final details will follow regarding minibus pick-up points when plans are finalised.

More Ramblings

I do hope that you and your colonies are thriving and in good health.

The Apiary bees have been busy and are doing well. Kevin has been kind and has been to teach the students while inspecting the bees. Our 4 colonies at the time of writing are still 4 with 8 other boxes of bees. I never count my chickens before they hatch and certainly not my young queens until they have been laying for 3 weeks. Now it is a colony and one can celebrate. It is easy to deal with too many colonies, much more difficult with too few unless you go into queen rearing

Another of last year's queens has failed (we lost 2 in the spring) but hopefully at least one of her 3 daughters will succeed in getting mated properly, weather and sufficient healthy drones permitting.

The 4th colony arrived just before the final student apiary session. Bees were going in and out of the wax dustbin so I asked Bryan who was wearing a bee suit to please stop the robbers. He asked me to look; there were mounds of bees in the bottom and on the edge, a bee bearing a load of pollen. Now burglars do not bring gifts and pollen is only brought in, in any quantity, when a laying queen is present. So we threw them into a hive. Later we moved the swarm into a nuc as it wasn't huge and the bees didn't seem happy. The new home settled them. We found eggs in the waste wax in the bottom of the bin so knew we were right and had a swarm not a cast. We went back after 72 hours, popped in to see if we had a marked queen (the probably failed one might have absconded) and fed them. We found a beautiful unmarked queen laying and her daughters very busy wax building and foraging, unlike the rest of the apiary bees who decided to keep dry indoors. This little colony could have another brood box on top to expand into before she is hived. It is much warmer up there, better for drawing than having to draw frames laterally in a hive. We could keep her if she's nice as we could do with some new blood. Care with hygiene is important though so I would suggest visiting her last.

Questions arise from this; where did the swarm come from and why was it so small? Small swarms must have come from a small nest, from a colony that could not expand so was forced into swarming or of course it could have come from a colony that had been already artificialled and still had the swarming urge. A swarm issuing from a small nest could be from a feral colony that chose or was forced to make the best of a small cavity. Or, of course, from a beekeeper's hive where the beekeeper had failed to give the colony sufficient space for the bees and brood so they were forced to swarm.

Maybe there was too much ivy honey clogging up the brood nest that he/she failed to move. That to me is a major sin. To produce good queen cells the colony needs a huge number of nurse bees to stuff those queen cells to the brim. The queen cells left behind by this swarm must be miserable and might well only produce a scrub queen. Or, as I suggest it could have come from an artificialled colony and the swarm has absconded with the old queen. Again, either a queen cell was not spotted on the queen's frame, a queen includer was not used or the urge to swarm was still there.

If the hive was left with young queen cells then again a scrub queen is a likely outcome. One should not let bees in nucs make queen cells, there are not enough nurse bees. When I do an artificial swarm I put the queen into the new box on the old site, I might put her on one of her frames that has plenty of space on which to lay otherwise and preferably I would put her onto a drawn comb without any of her own old frames, except stores. The problem with the brood frames in the old nest is they still must make the bees think of swarming, the urge and message is still there in the comb I believe. The other problem of course, if you put the old queen in, with more than one of her brood frames that doesn't have queen cells on, you have not thought of varroa control. This problem I believe should at all times be in the back of one's mind. Swarms and also artificials are a great time to reduce varroa levels as you get that brood break; swarms especially, as most of the varroa are left behind. If you artificial and leave her with one frame you could then later remove it when sealed and destroy it or maybe put it with the qcs and then treat the brood when it has all hatched about 28days after the artificial was done or the swarm left. I use Apibioxal routinely now on the young colonies at this time. The brood has all hatched and even if the young queen has started to lay, none has been sealed and the acid does not damage eggs and young brood. You might not have to treat again until the winter!

Don't waste nice virgins. If you go in and find queen cells hatching and don't want a cast then open all the other queen cells and release the young queens. No sealed queen cells no cast/swarm! If you ran the hatching queen or one you had unsealed into your hand or a cage then you could either run her into a hive where you wanted to replace the queen (she will kill the old lady) or into a queenless colony and often they will accept her. It only works with a just hatching queen as she hasn't taken on the smell of the parent colony.



Best wishes to you and your bees.

Sarah More

BIG THANK YOU

Geoff: thank you again for getting your cauldron up and running for us to use. It is so good to know that our frames are boiled up with washing soda in extreme heat and then can be used again in a very clean and disease/virus free state. The rolling boil is great to see. It was great afternoon in the brilliant sunshine.



FACEBOOK & OUR WEBSITE

At our committee meeting on the 27th April we agreed that our details of the WDBKA events plus things of interest be posted on both Facebook and the website.

One thing we would like to know from you: does anyone object to their photo being posted on either?

Please let me know by the end of May 2017 if you have any concerns.

Thank you -

No one has contacted me, so I assume you are all happy to be posted!

Brian's First Crop

My first 2017 Supers being uncapped and extracted today,

Rather than slicing the cappings off with a knife as I always do, I am trying an uncapping fork (only ever used it for uncapping drone brood before).

After a thorough clean you just scrape it across the frame as per picture. Seems to work well, gets in all the wavy bits and minimal cappings so more honey for you!

Think it is well worth trying. Second, I have a tangential extractor, so I have to turn frames round to extract both sides, but it took me a while to realize that there is a right and wrong way to load them. You want the top of the frame away from the direction of travel so the honey is flung out of the angled comb, not forced into it. Hope you have a lot of frames to practise with!



Thank you Brian Godfrey

TIME TO CHECK YOUR STOCK OF HONEY JARS/LIDS
&
varroa treatments

The Association will be doing a bulk order next month.
Hilary has kindly found the best prices. Please see attached .

SWARMS

If you would like to go on the WDBKA Swarm list for 2017 please let me know either by phone or email - Carole - Secretary



THE BIG SWARM WEEK

Well what a week - I don't think I have so many swarm calls about bees for years - from all over the County.

Many of course were people who do not know the difference between a honeybee, bumble bee or wasp, sadly. It all takes time to explain, then if they are honey bees one has to find a swarm collector in that area. Sometimes that can prove tricky as the person who wants a swarm is often not at home - so have I to go down the list again! But we get there in the end and the bees will have a good home, except for those which go into chimneys, guttering and other very difficult places.



Spot the cat looking for the bees!!



Textbook swarm shoulder height



West Bay Harbour swarm



Members BEES FOR SALE

Sarah More and Brian Godfrey have bees for sale on both 14x12 and standard national frames.

Please contact them for details on 01297 489489 Sarah - 01297 489313 Brian

WDBKA BEES FOR SALE

There will be nucs for sale in a few weeks time with last years and this years queens from the apiary.

If anyone is interested please let me know - it will be on a first come first served basis. Prices will vary.

Apiary Visits for Everyone

Hilary and I have decided that we will post 2 weeks at a time for the Rota for any member to come along to join in the fun. The dates will be posted on Facebook/our Website/ Email - so please keep an eye out for the dates and times.

WEST DORSET BKA EVENTS COMING SOON

DATE	TIME	EVENT	WHERE	DETAILS
SUNDAY 4th JUNE	12noon	Apiary visit for all	Netherbury	CLEAN SUITS Gloves & Wellies PLEASE
SATURDAY 10th JUNE	11.00am	Apiary visit for all	Netherbury	CLEAN SUITS Gloves & Wellies PLEASE
SATURDAY 17th JUNE	2.00pm	Open Members meeting at Carole Astbury's Apiary with Tea & Cakes	Highfield House Chedington DT8 3HY Tel 01935 891437	CLEAN SUITS Gloves & Wellies PLEASE
SUNDAY 6TH AUGUST	2.00pm	Open Members meeting at Annabelle Jackman's Apiary with Tea & Cakes	Spick Hatch West Milton Bridport DT6 3SH Tel 01308 485247	CLEAN SUITS Gloves & Wellies PLEASE