

Welwyn Beekeepers Newsletter

January 2017

News



Whilst we all take a break from active beekeeping other than the occasional check on the hives there are plenty of things to keep us busy: the AGM followed by our Social Evening and a number of courses where we

would appreciate it if you could spare some time to help out with catering during the refreshment breaks.

AGM & Social Evening

The AGM is taking place on Tuesday, February 21 at 7.30 for 8 pm at Christchurch Parkway Halls, 110 Parkway, WGC AL8 6HN. Following the AGM we will show you the short film "On the Banks of the Beane". The film highlights how decades of unsustainable water abstraction at the Whitehall Pumping Station, just north of Watton-at-Stone, has completely devastated the upper reaches of our beautiful and historic chalk stream, the river Beane. The film ends with the good news that OFWAT had agreed the Affinity Water plan to reduce abstraction at the Whitehall Pump Station by 90% by 2018. Dr. Ronnie Erskine-Brown from Hertfordshire University who is also one of our beekeepers at Bayfordbury, appears in the film and has kindly agreed to give a short talk about the film.

It would be lovely if a large number of members turn out for the AGM as well as to support Ronnie.

...Thoughts from the Beekeeper

By Peter Folge

To Insulate a Hive or Not to Insulate:

This is a much asked question and causes confusion and debate amongst beekeepers. Before discussing this in more detail, I stopped insulating hives 20 years ago and apart from seeing less damp within the hives, especially when using OMF's there has been little difference.

....Cont.

AGM & Social Evening

Tuesday February 21, 2017
7.30 for 8 pm

At Christchurch Parkway Halls,
110 Parkway, Welwyn Garden
City AL8 6HN

HELPERS NEEDED

We are looking for people to help out with the catering at our forthcoming courses on Tuesday/Wednesday evenings during February and March (see all dates under "Training" on the second page). Please contact Mike Goodhew at training@hertsbees.org.uk if you can spare an evening and help.

Thank you

HERTS HEALTHY BEE DAY

We have been allocated 10 places for the Herts Healthy Bee Day on Saturday, May 13. Please contact Mike Goodhew at training@hertsbees.org.uk if you would like to attend.

Around the Apiaries

Apiary Training

All Apiary training has now been suspended until next spring. Details will be emailed when sessions re-commence.

... Thoughts from the Beekeeper ...continued

Keeping things simple, the only time where a top layer of insulation can benefit, especially a small colony, is in early spring Feb-Apr. This is when the colony starts brood-raising and needs to generate substantial amounts of heat within the brood nest. Insulating a hive in winter could raise temperatures inside, causing bees to remain more active throughout the winter, consuming food reserves. They may also start raising brood too early which could lead to winter losses by isolation starvation. This is where bees protect their brood by keeping it warm, consuming the food around their nest and then when a cold snap hits, they cannot travel over the cold surfaces to reach stores and starve to death.

Insulation left on in summer is not good practice as the colony is now very large and along with the brood, generates a lot of excess heat inside, therefore plenty of ventilation is required. Insulation, if used, should be absorbent to prevent condensation building up, leading to mouldy combs and damp conditions. Coarse sawdust, shredded newspaper or even dried grass within a breathable bag or tray can be used and can easily be changed if this becomes wet overtime.

Training

For Non Members Interested in or Contemplating Beekeeping

March 2017 Beginners Beekeeping Course

Tuesday Evenings 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th March, practical session Saturday 18th March, at Christchurch Parkway Halls WGC, Apiary session in April tbc

For Members

New Season Preparation course

For beekeepers starting into their second year or those wanting a refresher.

Wednesdays 22nd February, and 1st and 8th March 2017 – 7.30 to 10pm - £15
Christchurch Peartree Halls, Tewin Road, Welwyn Garden City

Swarm Collecting course

Do's and don'ts, what to expect and equipment to use.

Wednesday 29th March 2017 – 7.30 to 10pm - £5
Christchurch Peartree Halls, Tewin Road, Welwyn Garden City

Basic Assessment Preparation course

A very useful 2 evening checkpoint for those with at least 2-3 years' experience. Ideal preparation for BBKA Basic Assessment.

Wednesdays 15th and 22nd March 2017 – 7.30 to 10pm - £10
Christchurch Peartree Halls, Tewin Road, Welwyn Garden City

BBKA Microscopy Appreciation Taster Day

An introduction into the use of microscopes supporting beekeeping.

Sunday 5th February University of Hertfordshire's Bayfordbury Campus
£55 includes use of equipment and materials, and a buffet lunch

Healthy Bee Day

Presentation by Regional Bee Inspectors providing up to date information regarding pest, diseases and associated actions and treatment.

Saturday 13th May, 9.30 am - 4 pm,
University of Hertfordshire's Bayfordbury Campus

If you're interested or have questions on any courses above, please contact Mike Goodhew at training@hertsbees.org.uk