

Welwyn Beekeepers Newsletter

April 2018

NEWS SUMMARY

....and it's still raining and cold outside and we have not yet been able to get back to "normal" beekeeping activities for this time of year.

However, we are looking forward to:

- Our next social on Tuesday, April 24 at Christchurch Parkway, WGC AL8 6HN.
- The Herts Garden Show at Knebworth House from May 5-7
- Continuing with the planning for the Herts Show at Redbourn on May 26&27

We have been busy with:

- Completing the Beginners, New Season, Swarm Control and Basic assessment courses
- the HBKA Spring Show and AGM
- Attending the Oaklands College Lambing Weekend as well as the Easter Activities at Welwyn Roman Baths
- Preparing & searching new apiaries
- Addressing the impact of winter losses

Regular items:

- Thoughts from the Beekeeper
- Around the Apiaries (will start again soon)
- Training
- Events

Next Social: April 24

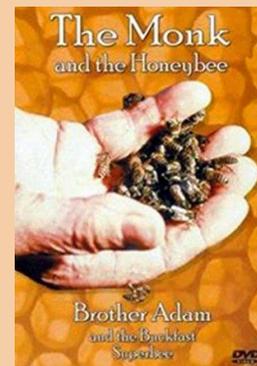
During the first part of our next social evening we will be watching the film *Brother Adam and the Honeybee*. It is the remarkable story of Brother Adam, the legendary Benedictine monk, who devoted his long life to a quest to breed the perfect honeybee. The film was made in 1987, in Brother Adam's 90th year is a glimpse of a remarkable man to whom beekeepers and bee breeders owe an enormous debt.

During the second part of the evening we would like to take the myth away from the work of a bee buddy or an apiary manager by talking about and explaining both roles in detail. We look forward to seeing lots of you on the 24th.

www.welwynbka.org

Next Social Event

Tuesday April 24 - Film



followed by

Discussion: the work of a Bee Buddy and/or Apiary Manager

7.30 for 7.45 pm
at Christchurch Parkway, 110 Parkway, Welwyn GC AL8 6HN

RSVP: Lieva Nation at
welwynbees@gmail.com

Sunday July 1

Panshanger Park Walk

accompanied by 2 guides explaining the history of the site and helping us to spot the local wildlife

Open to all members, their families and friends.

Confirm your attendance with Lieva at welwynbee@gmail.com and let her know whether you will bring a picnic or have lunch at the White Horse in Hertford (booking essential)

Training: Courses Summary

We had over 70 attendees for the beginners course this year. This was remarkable as it was the first time that the course was a "Welwyn only" event. In previous years it was always run together with St Albans. The feedback from the attendees was excellent. A big thank you to all the speakers running the proceedings at each of the evenings and the practical session, the helpers who ensured the room was ready and the refreshments available at the intervals and the members who attended and made themselves available for questions from the attendees.

Normally around a third of attendees will take up beekeeping and we are therefore looking for more bee buddies to be available to help the new beekeepers. Make yourself available to be a buddy and if unsure come along to the social where we explain the buddy system in detail.

The New Season Preparation (37 attendees), Swarm Collecting (28 attendees) and Basic Assessment Courses (22 attendees) were jointly run with St Albans and North Herts and very well attended. Thank you to all the Welwyn members who contributed to the success of these courses.

Events: Oaklands College Lambing Weekend, March 10-11 and Easter Activities Welwyn Roman Baths April 9

The two events attended resulted in sales of £278 and £82 respectively. Both events were geared towards family events - mainly involving smaller children and the activities Ann Shepherd involved the children in especially at Welwyn were very popular. Thank you very much Ann.

Apiaries



Unfortunately, as a result of Glaxo selling the site, we had to close our apiary at North Mymms Park. We have been able to move the hives to a new apiary in Potterells Brookman's Park (see photos of the team doing a sterling job with the move and setting up the apiary. Discussions and planning for a new apiary at Panshanger Park are progressing well and are entering their final stage. Work with regard to searching new apiaries



as well as expanding existing apiaries is ongoing and if you are a new beekeeper and interested in having a hive at any of the apiaries please contact Mike Goodhew at training@welwynbka.org for information and availability. Mike is overseeing all apiaries and will do his best to accommodate your wishes.

Supply of Nucs

As a result of the prolonged and somewhat erratic winter, beekeepers have lost a larger number of colonies and many are relatively weak. This will have the knock-on effect that the supply of nucs will be delayed or may even be limited. New beekeepers will therefore have to wait much longer for their nucleus to get started. As a potential solution to combat this problem Peter Folge is proposing that members with good natured bees can help by raising one or two of their own nucs and make them available for sale to new beekeepers. Peter F. with the help of Peter Hills has agreed to coordinate. Please get in touch with Peter F. if you are able to help with this? (the_beekeeper@hotmail.com).

Swarm Collection

A reminder from Lieva Nation (Swarm Coordinator) that she needs to be informed of all swarms that have been collected by members (other than their own swarms that members will keep). As in previous years, Lieva is keeping a list of people interested in receiving a swarm and swarms are allocated accordingly. Furthermore, knowing where and how many swarms have been collected and then distributed will give us a picture of what is happening in our area and potential problems can be flagged. Lieva's email is welwynbees@gmail.com.

Thoughts from the Beekeeper

By Peter Folge

April is the month when beekeeping really gets under way. Bees should be seen flying on a fine day bringing in plenty of fresh pollen which is always a good sign of brood in the hive. Feedback has been coming in from various sources that there have been many losses over this winter (mine are 27%) Reports indicate heavy signs of dysentery, possibly Nosema and typical signs of winter starvation. Many colonies that have survived are weak and quite far behind compared with last year, when the first swarms were being reported. The BBKA have been randomly selecting beekeepers to fill in a questionnaire with regard to losses. If you get one of these, please do your part. Continue to keep an eye on food/honey stores as there will be little nectar around for another 2-3 weeks, depending on the weather. Floorboards should now have been cleaned and frames with bees can be transferred into a clean brood box if you have one at hand.

There is also a shortage of honey, (some having had a poor season last year) as demand has been very high and more people are becoming aware of the possible health benefits through media coverage. Remember if you still have some don't just give it away to get rid of it. The bees and the beekeeper have worked hard for it!

I hope to see you all sometime in the Apiary.

Forthcoming EVENTS with WBKA involvement

Saturday – Monday, May 5-7	Herts Garden Show, Knebworth House
Saturday and Sunday, May 26 & 27	Hertfordshire County Show, Redbourn

Training

Apiary Training

Weather permitting we are planning to restart the apiary training at the Knebworth Golf Club Apiary as follows:

Saturday, May 12, 10.30 h	Members monthly training (and then each second Saturday in the month)
Saturday, May 19, 10.30 h	and each Saturday with the exception of second Saturday in the month This is primarily aimed for those new members that would like to gain some practical experience before deciding if beekeeping is for them, and those new members who would like some supportive practical training in their early stages of beekeeping.

Healthy Bee Day

Presentation by Regional Bee Inspectors providing up to date information regarding pests, diseases and associated actions and treatment. Intended for beekeepers with at least 2 years+ experience.

Saturday 12th May, 9.30 am - 4 pm,
University of Hertfordshire's Bayfordbury Campus

WBKA has been allocated 14 places for this event which have been filled up. We are keeping a reserve list in case of cancellations or additional places if other branches do not take up their full allocation. Please email Mike Goodhew at training@welwynbka.org for information/updates.