

Welwyn Beekeepers Newsletter

December 2018

NEWS SUMMARY

.... Hopefully you are all set for Christmas and have no frantic last minute purchases nor preparations to make....

In the New Year we are looking forward to:

- Finalising the preparations for our spring courses
- Holding our first social evening of the year as well as the AGM on Tuesday, February 12 at Christchurch Parkway, 110 Parkway, WGC AL8 6HN

We have been busy with:

- The Aldenham County Park Frost Fair
- The Christmas Dinner

Regular items:

- Q&A with Peter Folge
- Thoughts from the Beekeeper
- Around the Apiaries (will resume in spring)
- Training

A massive thank you to Bookers

Peter Folge and Mike Goodhew have been able to collect lots of sugar for our bees from Bookers on several occasions in the last few weeks. The donation of sugar is greatly appreciated by all and we thank Bookers for their generosity.



www.welwynbka.org

First event in the New Year

Social Evening and

AGM

**Tuesday
February 12**

7.30 for 8 pm

at Christchurch Parkway,
110 Parkway, Welwyn Garden City
AL8 6HN

Detailed information to follow

Reminder

It is not too late to have your say and let HBKA's committee know what you would like to be offered as a Hertfordshire Beekeepers Association member. If you have not yet done so please complete the short questionnaire using the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WZXPM68> or go back to the

Newsflash sent out on November 28 and follow the link there.

Event: Aldenham County Park Frost Fair



After attending the Hatfield Frost Fair for a number of years, we were lucky to receive an invitation from the organisers of the Aldenham County Park Frost Fair. This Fair is new and replaces the Hatfield Frost Fair. As it was run for the first time, it was a lot smaller than Hatfield but managed to attract a number of the stand holders that have previously exhibited at Hatfield as well as a good flow of visitors. Whilst it was further away from our “core area”, access was easy and parking was good as it was very close to the stands. With sales of just over £900 it was an event worth attending. A big thank you to Andy Crossley for coordinating the event and to all the members who helped out over the 4 days.

Summary of events during 2018

A huge “thank-you” to everyone who has helped out at the various events this year. It is great to see the stalwarts who continue to turn out to make the events so successful. Also, very big thanks to the new faces we have seen through the season. It’s great to hear new beekeepers chatting enthusiastically with the public.

Honey sales were down somewhat compared to last year, but that seems to be a reflection of the situation in the events world in general. It’s good to see that the level of interest in beekeeping remains strong though, with many budding apiarists signing up for more information.

Social: Christmas Dinner



Thanks to Lieva’s exceptional organisation skills we all enjoyed a wonderful evening at the White Horse in Welwyn. We had the dining area all to ourselves (maybe the word spread from last year that we like it loud and entertaining....) Hot topics proved to be reviewing the “bee year”, the inevitable comments/views on Brexit and, of course, catching up with news from other members. A big thank you to Lieva - the evening was a great success.



Q&A with Peter Folge

Q: Is it possible to move hives in the winter apiary without using the recognised rule of a metre or several miles?

A: The “Less than 3 Feet” or “More than 3 Miles Rule” is really only applicable in certain circumstances.

If, for example, the beehives are close to other hives in the apiary then hives should be moved only a few feet at a time every 2-3 days. This includes slowly rotating hives to make entrances face another direction. This will prevent confusion and bees drifting into other hives which could cause fighting, robbing and the spread of disease. However, if it’s the only hive in the apiary, longer distances can be applied. In the middle of winter when bees have not been flying for some time, beekeepers have been known to carefully move colonies across the apiary/garden in one go with no ill effect.

The 3 mile rule would take effect if say the colonies were located in flat or little undulating landscapes such as a plain or prairie or landscape without trees or hedgerows. During the active season, generally beehives that need to be moved to another apiary only need to be moved about one mile. This is normally adequate. I have done this on several occasions with only some drones and the odd worker finding their way back.

The time **not** to move hives is where the risk of a virgin queen could become disoriented and lost coming back from her mating flight.

When transporting hives especially long distances in hot weather, make sure bees have plenty of ventilation by using either screen boards or open mesh floors, as a colony will quickly overheat and die. Also make sure they have some water. This could be a moist cloth or using a water mist sprayer through the top screen board.

Thoughts from the Beekeeper

By Peter Folge

Winter Tasks: Now that propolis has become hard and brittle it is an ideal time to scrape down and clean equipment such as queen excluders and boxes. Keep an eye on mouse guards so that they do not become blocked with dead bees preventing air movement (solid floors) or workers from getting out of their hives. Beekeepers who are concerned that they left their varroa treatments a little late may wish to apply some oxalic acid on a fairly mild day during December or January. This can be achieved by carefully lifting off the crown board and trickling straight down over the clustering colony. This method should be fairly quick and easy. Always read the products instructions.

Training

For Non Members/New Members Interested in or Contemplating Beekeeping

March 2019 Beginners Beekeeping Course

Tuesday Evenings 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th March, practical session Saturday 16th March, at Christchurch Parkway Halls WGC, Apiary session in April tbc

For Members

Sunday, January 27, 2019 Use of Microscopes in Beekeeping Taster Appreciation Day

An opportunity to experience working with the different types of microscopes and understanding their uses

University of Hertfordshire's Bayfordbury Campus

New Season Preparation course

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

Wednesdays 27th February, 6th & 13th March 2019

Christchurch Peartree Halls, Tewin Road, Welwyn Garden City AL7 1BW

Basic Assessment Preparation course

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

Wednesdays 20th & 27st March & 3rd April 2019 – 7.30 to 10pm

Christchurch Peartree Halls, Tewin Road, Welwyn Garden City AL7 1BW

Swarm Collecting course

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

Tuesday 2nd April 2019

Christchurch Peartree Halls, Tewin Road, Welwyn Garden City AL7 1BW

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 11th May 2019

University of Hertfordshire's Bayfordbury Campus

Please email Mike Goodhew at training@welwynbka.org if you have any queries or would like to attend any of the courses.