

Welwyn Beekeepers Newsletter

May 2019

NEWS SUMMARY

.... The ever-changing weather is keeping us beekeepers guessing as to what our bees are up to next. We could forget our "bee worries" for a little while with....

- Our Social evening on April 30
- Holding the first apiary sessions for the attendees of the beginners' course

... we are looking forward to:

- The Nosema Testing Day on May 18
- Attending the Herts Show at Redbourn on May 25&26
- Planning the Apitour on June 29

Regular items:

- News from the Committee
- Q&A with Peter Folge
- Thoughts from the Beekeeper
- Around the Apiaries (to resume the next newsletter)
- Training

COLOSS Winter Loss Survey

Please read the attached email from Anthony Williams and take the time to complete the survey to help keep track of our bee colonies. Access the survey through the link in the email or click here: <https://www.bee-survey.com/index.php/368949> Thank you.

Would you like a swarm?



With the swarming season having kicked off in style, Lieva has been kept busy with taking calls about swarms resulting in numerous callouts and swarm collections.

If you would like a swarm please get in touch with Lieva at welwybees@gmail.com or call her on 07949 624354.

www.welwynbka.org

Next Social Event

APITOUR with Peter Folge

Saturday, June 29

The popular apitour day is back! We shall have a day visiting members' apiaries, inspecting their hives as well as spending time discussing the day's events over lunch.

Would you like to have your bees looked at? If so, contact Lieva Nation @ welwynbees@gmail.com and she will see whether we can fit you in.

Watch this space for the detailed itinerary nearer the time.

Reminder

Nosema Testing Day

UoH Bayfordbury Campus

Saturday, May 18

Have a sample of your bees from your hives tested at the drop in clinic.

Contact Mike Goodhew at training@welwynbka.org for further information and to let him know whether you will participate.

The next Newsletter will be sent out towards the End of June to include the news from the next committee meeting to be held mid-June.

Social Event: Film Evening and Q&A with Peter Folge

Over 30 members attended to view a film on Asian hornets in a cramped room. The film lasted around 40 minutes and was followed by a question and answer session by Peter Folge. After a short break in order to replenish drinks, we showed the ever-popular film on Taylors of Welwyn. This was an eye opener as to how the area around Welwyn and Digswell has changed in a relatively short period of time as well as health and safety rules. Thank you for all those who attended.

Beginners' Course Apiary session

So far, a third of the attendees from the beginners' course had their first hands on experience with bees at the Knebworth Apiary on Easter Saturday. Beautiful sunshine and adequate temperatures on the day provided the perfect setting whilst Peter Folge and Nick Leech lead the session, expertly leading through a hive inspection and addressing any queries raised at the same time.



News from the Committee

The committee met on April 25 and the following was discussed:

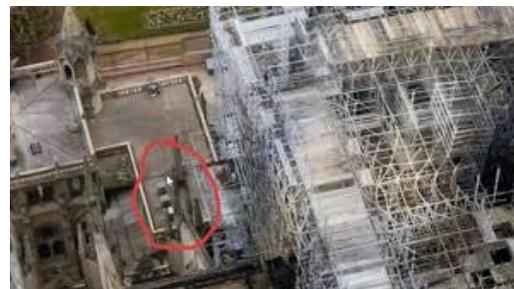
- **Training:** All spring courses have been completed and the remaining apiary sessions for the attendees of the beginners' course are scheduled. The Healthy Bee Day and Nosema Testing day are the last remaining Spring training days. Peter Folge and Nick Leech have stepped in to run informal apiary sessions at the Knebworth Apiary on the 2nd and 4th Saturday each month (see entry under Training below for details).
- **New Apiaries:** Mike and Lieva have again been attending meetings with owners of potential sites. Discussions are progressing well.
- **Events:** The planning relating the Herts County show was discussed. It was decided to purchase a card reader to facilitate the purchase of honey via bank card rather than only cash at the various events we attend.
- **Bee Improvement Programme:** Peter Folge is looking into purchasing queens from a reputable source within the UK rather than importing them this year.
- **Social:** Planning for the Apitour on June 29 has started with a firm itinerary to be worked out in the next few weeks.

Notre Dame Bees Survive



Extract from the CNN article on the BBC website published on April 19: Paris (CNN) The bees that live on the roof of Notre Dame are alive and buzzing, having survived the devastating fire that ripped through the cathedral on Monday, the beekeeper Nicolas Geant confirmed to CNN. "I got a call from Andre Finot, the spokesman for Notre Dame, who said there were bees flying in and out of the hives which means they are still alive!" Geant said. "Right after the fire I looked at the drone pictures and saw the hives weren't burnt but there was no way of knowing if the bees had survived. Now I

know there's activity it's a huge relief!" Notre Dame has housed three beehives on the first floor on a roof over the sacristy, just beneath the rose window, since 2013. Each hive has about 60,000 bees. Geant said the hives were not touched by the blaze because they are located about 30 meters below the main roof where the fire spread. "They weren't in the middle of the fire, had they been they wouldn't have survived," Geant said. "The hives are made of wood so they would have gone up in flames. Wax melts at 63 degrees, if the hive had reached that temperature the wax would have melted and glued the bees together, they would have all perished." While it is likely that the hives were filled with smoke, that doesn't impact them like it would with humans, Geant explained. "Bees don't have lungs like us," he said. "And secondly, for centuries to work with the bees we have used bee smokers."



Q&A with Peter Folge

Q: There are many new members starting with nucs and keen to get their first crop of honey so,

1) Even when weather and forage is good will it speed up drawing out foundation and expansion of brood if syrup is feed for a long period and for how long should it continue?

2) Is it absolutely necessary to wait until the nuc has expanded and drawn out all the foundation frames in the brood box before adding a super or is it OK to one when bees are covering all frames with still some undrawn?

A: You will know when there is a good nectar flow on in your area as there will be no bees collecting water from their favourite bird bath or pond etc. This is because nectar is very high in water content about 85% - 90% and this excess water needs to be removed to turn nectar into honey. When examining a colony and nectar can be seen dripping out of the frames this is a good indicator that bees are likely to draw fresh comb without having to feed. A strong colony will draw a box of brood foundation within a week. There is no need to feed a colony sugar syrup in these conditions and I would suggest that it's not a good idea as any excess syrup will end up being stored in the frames and could end up in the extracted honey. If the weather conditions are not perfect during the drawing process and frames are not being drawn out then certainly a small feed can be given to the colony to encourage them to produce wax. The incoming and availability of light syrup or nectar will also increase the queen to lay enabling brood expansion. Only during late summer when all honey processing has finished, should heavy feeding be carried out. At all other times you should only feed when absolutely necessary by keeping an eye on stores during routine inspections.

With an expanding nucleus colony, I would suggest not placing on a super unless the bees are becoming crowded below. Adding space too early will slow the build-up of the nucleus colony. Bees tend to move upwards and instead of remaining below building out the comb for the queen to lay in, they move into the supers doing little for colony growth. Having said this, if there is no or little nectar coming in then it does not matter how strong a colony is, it will not draw and waste energy drawing new foundation but it will still require space to move into. This is where previously drawn comb is useful or controlled feeding can come in handy.

Thoughts from the Beekeeper

By Peter Folge

Colonies have grown rapidly this spring and have started building queen cells. Due to recent bad weather, bees have now been confined in their hives for two weeks with no or only a few beekeeper inspections and on the next fine day many will take to the air and swarm before the beekeeper has a chance to stop them. Keep an eye out for Bee Paralysis. These confined conditions can cause a rise of this viral disease.

Forthcoming EVENT with WBKA involvement

Saturday May 18, 11 am – 5 pm	World Food Festival, Welwyn Garden City Town Centre
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Saturday – Sunday May 25&26, 8.30 am – 5.30 pm	Hertfordshire County Show, Redbourn Showground
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Apiary Training

Informal members training sessions are held at the Knebworth Golf Club Apiary every second and fourth Saturday each month with a start time of 10.30 am. Peter Folge and/or Nick Leech will be at the apiary on these Saturdays inspecting their own hives. Members are welcome to join them and are asked to make their own way down to the apiary to meet Peter/Nick.

Please email Mike Goodhew at training@welwynbka.org if you have any queries regarding any training related issues.