



NEWSLETTER – April 2024

STEERING GROUP MEMBERS 2023/2024

Tim Bullock	- Chairman
Stephen Greenaway	- Vice Chairman, Spray and Swarm Liaison.
Clive Harris	- Treasurer
Kathy Hobson	- Secretary, Membership Secretary
Justin Downes	- Newsletter Editor
Nicola Perrett	
Mick Carter	-AHAT Leader
Website Manager	-Christopher Wilkinson

APIARY NOTES - Tim Bullock

As we go into May hopefully the weather will stay warm as we come into our 'peak season' for beekeeping. Now is the time that colonies are more likely to swarm, Are you ready? Once a colony has entered swarm preparation mode, nothing is likely to stop them so just knocking back queen cells will only stop swarming for another week – the more you do it the sneakier they will get about where they build the queen cells, so eventually you'll miss one. The key thing for us is what's their reasons for building queen cells – are they superseding the current queen, have they already lost her or are they just trying to expand the colony number?

Splitting a colony that is in swarm mode is usually the best solution. We either end up with 2 good colonies so can expand our number, or there are two colonies that could be united once one of the queens has been destroyed (usually the older one, but it might be that the new one fails for some reason).

As supers start to fill add more, if bees have space, they are less likely to swarm. Once honey is capped off then supers can be removed and extracted. If you don't expect to have much oilseed rape honey, then there's nothing to stop you from just adding more supers and do a 'mass' extraction later in the spring. If you do have lots of oilseed rape honey, then it's best to extract as soon as supers are capped so hopefully it hasn't granulated...

When inspecting it's worth having a plan, what am I looking for, what do I want to achieve by inspecting. The key ones are the queen there and laying? Are they running out of space? Is the laying pattern a normal shape? Is there any sign of disease? Etc. Don't forget to keep colony records up to date, including now recording and reporting the presence of varroa.

SDBKA Apiary – Park Farm

The apiary is currently being tidied up by cutting weeds down and weed suppression fabric being laid to prevent regrowth. Two NUCS are due to arrive on Sunday 21st April and will be installed into clean hives ready to be used by members under Mick Carter's guidance. If you feel this, is you contact Mick on his email, and he will add you to a WhatsApp group which will keep you informed of developments.

SDBKA Apiary – TWIGS

The colonies at TWIGS are doing well. If you would like to come along to gain some more experience Nicola and Kathy will be at TWIGS Saturdays or Sundays (weather dependant of course) contact Kathy to check when we will be there. The first Taster Day is 11th May and we have 11 people attending. There is still room on the Starting Beekeeping Course (8th and 15th June) for any new beekeepers. Please let Kathy know if you are interested.

The steering group have been in discussion regarding the trees at TWIGS and the ongoing risk they may pose to members of the public. There are number of complexities surrounding land ownership and responsibilities which have compounded the issue.

TWIGS Open Day

Just a reminder that the first TWIGS Open Day of the year is this Sunday 21st April. We open the shed so members of the public can look at our bees. They also ask lots of questions so it would be great if members could come and help. You are welcome to bring honey if you have some to sell. The day is from 11am until 4pm. If you can help, if only for an hour or so, please let Kathy know

Asian Hornet Notes

2 pull up banners have been purchased by the club for use by individuals while doing talks about the Hornet. Mick Carter has done a number of talks about the insect and if you are a member of a group and would like him to do a talk, please contact him via his email again. Mick also has a small number of Gard Apis traps for sale at a discounted price of £15 if you would like to help by monitoring for an incursion.

michael_carter32@yahoo.co.uk

BBKA Swarm Talk, Tuesday 23rd April 2024, 7.00pm – 9.00pm

The BBKA are pleased to invite members to attend a BBKA zoom event on swarming. Speakers include

- Jane Medwell, BBKA Trustee: Essentials of Swarm Control
- Ian Campbell, BBKA social media Manger: The Social Media Side of Swarming
- Tim Wylie, the apiarist atelier: Feral bee colonies in buildings – the issues, the challenges, and the consequences

Further information is available on the BBKA website: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/swarm-talk>. A recording will be available after the event.

Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84137025876?pwd=9XXuM3WKHRHoXO01MhEQMrwgHqYxxq.1>

Club Meetings

The next club meeting is on 25th of April where we will be discussing Flo & Rose Hives The schedule for the next two months is:

30 May 24 – Drones

27 June 24 - Queen issues

Meetings are held on the last Thursday of each month in the Skittle Alley at the Haydon Wick Club, Blunsdon Road, Swindon SN25 1JD, start time 7.00pm. Please come along, all are welcome.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

If you feel you would like share anything of note or which may be of benefit to other members, then please let me know.

Justin

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