



Newsletter

April 2017

Well, the first swarm of the year arrived on the allotment site this week! Not ours I hasten to add. Considering the not very warm weather I don't understand how they built up to swarm level already. And will there be drones around to mate with the new queen? I guess they know best.

This is our hornet trap, complete with a bait of the remainder of some old mulled wine with sugar solution (I don't keep cheap beer in the house). Haven't caught any hornets in it yet, though we have had two European hornets nestling in our hives.



Back in the day..

This month's seasonal snippets from branch meetings of yesteryear.

10th April 1943

The Summer Programme was scheduled to include meetings at the Grammar School Wigan, Quarry Bank High School and Stonebridge Lane School as well as at members' apiaries.

The Honey Show was to include six categories, including various honeys, cake and beeswax. The entrance fee was 1/- per entry, with the proviso that a class would be withdrawn if there were less than six entries. (I would never have won anything!) It was proposed that a collection be made at each meeting, in aid of the Red Cross Agricultural Fund.

1982

Branch meetings included a March film evening at Calder College and an evening social meeting in April with '...Tallstory etc'.

Meetings and Events

Don't forget our next branch meeting next Saturday on 29th April at Rice Lane City Farm, where Graham Royle will talk about bee diseases. Please note the new start time for this meeting as **1.30pm**.

The following events are taking place in the wider area over the coming weeks:

22nd Apr **Preston** - Discussion and Demonstration on Asian Hornets and Traps followed by Practical Swarm Control, Viki Cuthbertson, 2.30pm at Apiary, Myerscough College.

Sun 23rd April **East Lancs** - Mead & Bait Hives, The Lancashire Mead company (with mead tasting) and Dave Heaton. **2pm at Off-shoots Permaculture Project**, Towneley Park, Burnley, BB11 3RQ.

23rd Apr **Ormskirk** - Healthy Bees Day, 9:30am , Out Apiary, Fir Tree Farm, Pimbo Lane, King's Moss, **St Helens** WA11 8RG

Sat 13th May, **Preston** - Practical Testing for Diseases, Speakers Paul Noblett and Viki Cuthbertson at Club Apiary, Myerscough College. 10am to 1pm.

Sat 20th May, **Ormskirk**, - Swarm Control, 2.00pm Out Apiary, Fir Tree Farm, Pimbo Lane, King's Moss, **St Helens** WA11 8RG

Sun 21st May **East Lancs** - Details to follow - 2pm, Acres Block, Hanson Cement, West Bradford Road, Clitheroe, BB7 4QF.



Varroa destructor, aka 'Triffid mite'

At the National Convention at Harper Adams University earlier this month, Eric came across a model varroa mite scaled up to show how big it would be on him if he were a bee. And yet, the bees have no idea that these monsters are crawling all over them...

Spotlight on ...

Peter Wass

I've twisted Peter's arm slightly to persuade him to let me feature him in this month's Newsletter so will try not to embarrass him too much. Twenty or so years ago he used to buy honey from an elderly colleague and when he found out that the bloke produced it from his own bees his interest was piqued. On Peter's first visit to the bees it turned out they were just about to swarm. Rather than take his cue to leave, he got suited up and stayed to see what happened. That was it, there was no going back. He bought three nucleus colonies, which he installed in the garden, much to the dismay of his wife, Elaine, when she returned from the caravan with the kids. His neighbours also soon started to complain about the yellow splashes appearing on their newly washed and pampered cars. But we all know how Peter explained it away as the work of spiders (rather than bees on cleansing flights). Eventually he could protect the bees' reputation no more and they had to be ejected from the garden. He now keeps his half a dozen or so colonies in an out apiary next to rape fields. But he is always ready to help others with their colonies and, in fact, on the day I spoke to him recently he was arranging to mentor one, possibly two, beginners and on the same day had been to help out with someone else's struggling colony.

Peter is now retired but has been a draughtsman, a computer programmer, a teacher in basic computing and a gardener tending to up to 70 private gardens. He loves sport and plays a lot of table tennis now, but he was a very good amateur footballer when he was young, then he took up cricket, winning the league with St Helens in 1978 and often captaining his teams. He combined his enthusiasm for both gardening and sport when he became a groundsman at Bootle and Ormskirk cricket clubs.

Peter reluctantly took up the reins of the Chairmanship of our association three years ago. Thankfully he stayed. Incredibly modest, but quick to show appreciation to others, you can always bank on glowing praise from Peter. It can just be very hard to live up to.

Nucs available

In case anyone wants to get bees this season and is struggling, one of our members knows of nucleus colonies being available from a contact in Wales. They are British black bees and would be ready for the end of May-June. The cost is quite high at £200 a nuc, but they are guaranteed, so even if a queen fails they will be replaced. I understand local beekeepers highly recommend these nucs from this breeder.

If you are interested please email contact@liverpoolbeekeepers and I will put you in touch with our contact.

Swarm collectors

I will be updating the swarm collectors list for BBKA this week. If you are thinking of offering your services please read the BBKA Swarm Collectors' Protocol first to make sure you're clear about the responsibilities and commitments involved. In particular, you should be ready to give advice to the public and you should not receive any payment for collecting or passing on swarms other than reasonable expenses. Let me know by 30th April if you're still interested.

See you Saturday!!
Tracey

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