



## April 2020 Newsletter

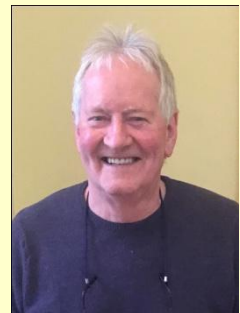
Strange days indeed, fellow beekeepers! I usually start a Newsletter with a "What's On" guide... well there's *nothing* going on for the foreseeable future!

Both April and May's Branch meetings relating to Queen Rearing are **cancelled**.

All beginners' practical sessions are **cancelled** until further notice.

### MARCH BRANCH MEETING

Sneaked in just before the lock down, we had a very informative talk by Stuart Hatton - who went through all the bee-friendly plants we should have in our gardens. I've attached a pdf with them all listed for those who couldn't make it. Hatton Lodge Apiary is well worth a visit (when the restrictions are lifted!), Stuart stocks lots of beekeeping equipment as well as plants.



### BEEKEEPING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Beebase have sent you all an email linking to their document about COVID-19 and Beekeeping. If you haven't received it I have attached it to the newsletter. Read it carefully, print it off and carry a copy when going to tend your bees at your apiaries.

### ADVICE ON COLLECTING SWARMS

24th March 2020

BBKA Chair Anne Rowberry says:

"The swarm collection service will still be in operation during the pandemic. Swarm collection can go ahead but you must take into account social distancing. Risk assess the situation and do not take unnecessary risks as health services will be under pressure due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. As always, only collect when it is safe to do so. We are working with DEFRA."

"Bees are livestock and should be tended."

"You may visit your bees for welfare purposes such as for checking feed or queen cell preparation."

"You must take into account social distancing and safe access. Also swarming, please do not go into houses, roofs etc, or go through houses to reach swarms."

"We are working with DEFRA. NBU inspectors will still inspect if you have disease concerns."

### **OFFER OF HELP**

**One of our Beekeepers, Kate Willis**, has kindly offered to help anyone and can be contacted through our Facebook page or via our website.

### **ASIAN HORNET**

Be on the lookout for the Asian Hornet. It has been found in Hamburg Germany - on the same Latitude as Leeds - so our faint hope that it could not stand the cold up here seems to be unfounded.

### **BEEKEEPING ADVICE FOR APRIL**

from 'Dr. Dave Harrison' our resident Apiary Manager

**"He's forgotten more than most of us know about beekeeping" so listen up for his latest pearls of wisdom....**



"Hello everybody, strange days indeed. But the bees don't care about this virus - they've got their own problems with mites and predators from the far east! Now before I get onto the bees, let's all heed the advice on our safety during this lockdown (make sure you've read all the advice). If you can get to your bees and it is safe to do so - it's worth putting at least one super on to keep them busy because you don't know when you will be able to get to them again! If you are lucky enough to have any frames with drawn comb then get them on, if not then nice new frames of foundation will do just fine. Put a sheet of newspaper between supers - once they've filled one they'll chew through the paper and get started on the next one. If, as instructed at our preparation for the winter meeting you put a spare super beneath the brood box, this should be removed along with mouse guards, etc. Remember to put your queen excluder back on top of your brood box. Also check that your bees have a supply of water nearby. Bees prefer a container with pebbles in it - an old bin lid or similar or a drip tray. We've just had some lovely days of sunshine and they're all out on their cleansing flights - but then suddenly we've had a little cold snap - starvation can be a problem. Make sure you have enough stores - if not feed

them syrup 1:1 (see March's Newsletter for how to make it). You should have cleaned all your equipment ready for the new season - no excuses now! Print off a hive record card and - fill it in every time you visit your hives. Well, that's enough for now - stay safe! Time for me to Buzz off!"

Thanks Dr Dave, take note everyone.

## **HISTORICAL**

**This is the first time Branch meetings have been cancelled for anything other than inclement weather since the Second World War.**

During the Second World War, after the blitz on Liverpool, it became more and more impractical for the Lancashire Beekeepers to meet. Travelling was the main issue. So the LBKA was divided up into 12 districts. Liverpool was one of the 12 - although at this time it was referred to as District 11 of 12: The South West District - and they had their first meeting as such on May 2nd 1943 which was held at the Gas Showrooms in St Helens.

The Chairman was Mr Dutton, Mr Hunter was the first Secretary, Mr Cross was Honorary Secretary. Other committee members were Mr. Banks, Mr Shuker, Mr Marten, Mr Prince, Mr Muir Wilson, Mr Lawrence Pilkington, Mr J Sim, Mr E Ball, Mr Nicholls, Mr Cooper and Miss Freeman - the only female on the committee (from the Vicarage, Huyton).

Mr Shuker was one of the most respected members of the LBKA. He was an advisor and Foul Bood officer and a very experienced beekeeper and exhibitor. In his obituary (1958) he was described as "a man of sterling qualities and possessed a heart of gold, always willing to give help and advice" and "A grand old man, he was sadly missed". He was said to have only missed one annual general meeting. Like a lot of beekeepers he was a competent woodworker, to the extent that he made a coffin for one of his closest friends! He was famous for riding a tandem and it was estimated that he and his wife travelled over 50,000 miles on it together, visiting members all over the county and even staying for holidays with them! He gained a reputation for producing top quality wax products and the 'Shuker Cup' for the top wax exhibit in the Liverpool show is named after him.

Mr Nichols Our Very own Dave Thornton knew Mr Nichols from these early days and describes him as "a great stalwart of the society. Among other things, he ran an agency supplying members with beekeeping equipment from Taylor's of Welwyn. I took over this agency from him when he decided to give it up. Taylors were eventually bought out by Thornes and I continued to handle their products until about 1998."

We are also thankful for to him for the "Nichols Trophy for the Best Exhibit of Mead".

Travelling was difficult during the war years. Very few people had cars, and those that had them were careful that their precious petrol ration was used sparingly. Last buses tended to leave at about 8pm - and to have any chance of getting on one, passengers had to be in the queue before 7pm. Therefore evening meetings had to be carefully planned. As already mentioned Mr Shuker and many of the committee members cycled to meetings during the war.

11<sup>th</sup> July 1942: Mr Nichols suggested meeting be held on the Saturday nearest the full moon! This suggests that they were using moonlight to travel after dark. It was also proposed that they hold meetings in different parts of the district.

6<sup>th</sup> Feb 1943: Mr Shuker noted the difficulties members were experiencing getting to meetings and proposed that no meeting be held after October and that summer meetings should not start before 4 o'clock.

#### Sugar rationing!

3<sup>rd</sup> Oct 1942: Members, concerned by the inadequacy of the sugar allowance, decided to approach the local food office. No sugar was forthcoming!

7<sup>th</sup> Nov 1942: Mr Ball urged that a letter be sent to the Ministry of Food for an extra allowance of sugar for the district beekeepers.

5<sup>th</sup> Jan 1943: LBKA members received a request for donations to the Red Cross Agricultural Fund.

6<sup>th</sup> Feb 1943: Members voted to donate regularly to the Red Cross Agricultural Fund.

10<sup>th</sup> April 1943: A regular collection for the Red Cross Agricultural Fund was proposed and seconded. Members agreed they would donate at each monthly meeting.

8<sup>th</sup> May 1943: The sugar allowance for spring feeding was finally made available! The sugar obtained was denatured - and not fit for human consumption - but okay for bees. It was green(!) and therefore produced honey with a green tinge.

A valuable lesson for all our members - beekeeping and agriculture are inextricably linked. If we scratch their back, they'll scratch ours! ☺

***Stay safe during these testing times.***

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