



# BDBKA News



Issue 8, October 2017

## Upcoming Events

**14th October 2017**

**Barnet Beekeepers 1936 Video 'A Year In The Apiary', 2pm**

In the October monthly meeting we will be showing footage of Barnet Beekeepers from 1936.





**25th November 2017**

**BDBKA Honey Show, Lunch & AGM**

This years AGM and Honey Show will be held together as part of the same event. Committee members will be elected for the year ahead.

---

**13th December 2017**

**Christmas Social At Whalebones, 7.30pm**

Please join us for our Christmas Social. It is a great opportunity to meet other members and chat about our beekeeping experiences over the past year.



---

**14th January 2018**

**Beyond The Basic By Bob Smith.**

Middlesex workshop at Harrow Art Centre. Times to be confirmed.



---

**10th February 2018**

**Wasps And Asian Hornets**

Learn how to make wasp and Asian Hornet traps. An Asian Hornet nest was found and destroyed last year in Gloucestershire, it is important to be vigilant.





**24th February 2018**

**Middlesex Federation Day**

To be held in Ealing. More details to come.

---

## **Note From Chair**

I am pleased to be writing my note for the new look Newsletter. You will have noticed a longer than usual gap between issues and this has given Adam Armstrong time to reorganise and revamp the presentation. It looks very good and thanks to Adam and Mary Block who have spent time producing an attractive and eye-catching format. We are keen to broaden the range of contributors and will be approaching people to write on various topics. If you have ideas on what you would like included, or feel able to contribute an article please let us know. It is your newsletter for your Association and all suggestions are welcome.

Congratulations to all who have successfully taken modules recently and to those who passed their Basic Assessment this year. BDBKA is achieving well in the BBKA examinations and is near the front of the field! This is a great credit to all those who teach both on the courses and informally in apiaries. Thank you to everyone.

Honey crops have been reasonable this year and I hope that you have

extracted it all and have it safely in jars or buckets. Autumn varroa counts and treatments should be well under way and even finished by now. There is not much forage out there at present, so many hives require feeding right now. Please keep a close check. Losing a hive to starvation is entirely preventable.

We had some good meetings over the summer. A very good talk on pheromones from Sean Stephenson and a well-attended session on breeding better bees. Both these led to an interest in queen rearing and requests for a course locally. We now have a queen rearing group and they have had their first successful round of queen production. We hope to expand this next year to involve more of you and to improve the quality of our local bees. We had to cancel the varroa meeting at short notice due to lack of speakers but hope to re-arrange this later in the year.

The summer barbecue was a very enjoyable event and a good chance to catch up with fellow beekeepers. Thanks to all who contributed and helped to set up on the day.

At a recent meeting, the Committee made the difficult decision to close Hyver Hall as an Association apiary. The decision was made due to safety and security concerns. Some beekeepers may choose to continue to use the site, but this would be a personal arrangement with the site owners and will be independent of BDBKA and not covered by the Association insurance.

We plan to have a good series of monthly meetings through the rest of the year and look forward to seeing you at them. They are worthwhile and we value your support in attending them. Your ideas and requests for topics for the future would be very welcome.

Don't forget our honey show at the end of November with the AGM, and the

National Honey Show in October. A big Barnet entry in both would be really good to see and you do need to plan in plenty of time. Please ask for help on how to prepare exhibits if you are new to it and do watch out for some tips on how to exhibit for the BDBKA honey show in the next newsletter.

I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

***Pat Morgan***

---

## **Contributors**

A big thank you to Geoff B-C and Yasmin for their contributions to this issue.

If there are any areas of beekeeping you would like to know more about, let us know and we will try to provide information on the subject. Also if members would like to contribute any articles please get in touch [here](#). We have members who have been keeping bees for many years and some who have just started and it would be great for members to share ideas and write about their experiences so far.

---

## **Forage**



Some forage is available, Orange pollen is from Michlemass Daisy, White Pollen from Hymalanen Balsam and Ivy has started to flower so you may see a yellow or mucky yellow pollen being brought back to the hive. Myrtle is also in flower and another late contributor.

---

## In The Apiary - September

By Adam Armstrong



### Population

The colony population has started to decline as the foragers die and the emerging bees will now be winter bees.

## **Varroa**

Any treatments for varroa should be finished or coming to an end, and hopefully this will ensure our colonies are healthy and hopefully see them through to the spring. Some may need to use Api Bioxal if varroa counts are greater than expected late on in the year.

## **Stores**

Some colonies are short of stores, it may be necessary to feed. We need to be sure our colonies have enough stores to last the winter. The average colony requires 20 kgs (45lbs) to get through the winter.

---

# **The Ongoing Battle Against Varroa**

By Geoff Beresford-Cooke



Since the early 90s the varroa mite has become endemic in this country. This means that all our colonies have some varroa, most of the time. Successful beekeeping therefore depends on effective varroa management. The recommended way of doing that is to carry out what is known as Integrated

Pest Management (IPM), whereby the numbers are kept under control throughout the year using a variety of methods depending on the amount of varroa and the time of year. Perhaps not a very exciting activity, but a necessary one, and something we should not forget.

In Barnet we recommend the application of Apiguard after taking off the main honey crop at the end of July/early August; and treatment with oxalic acid in the form of Api-Bioxal when there is little or no brood in December. As a result of these main treatments we hope our colonies will come through winter and start the new season relatively varroa free. But you should make regular checks throughout the year, and take any remedial action accordingly.

Normally we would expect to make a check when the season starts, early in March or at the latest in April. So if you have not already done so, place a clean varroa tray in your hives for a few days, count the number of varroa that have dropped on the board, and then work out a daily drop rate.

**For most of the year you should work on the following basis:**

- A drop rate below 2/3 per day requires no action
- Below about 8 per day requires light control
- At 10-15 (or above) per day you need to take action immediately

The NBU website provides more specific advice for the whole year, together with all the various activities and treatments you can carry out. These fall broadly into physical management actions (biotechnical methods) and medicinal controls, in the form of varroacides.



**Depending on the level of infestation, and the time of year, you should consider one or more of the following:**

- **Open Mesh Floor (OMF)** - This allows mites falling from the colony to drop out of the hive. Most of us use them but if you do not, it is well worth changing over.
- **Drone brood removal** - Place a shallow frame in the brood chamber when the queen starts laying drone brood, and then cull once the brood is sealed. Not as effective as other methods but it will slow mite population build up, is easy to do, and has the advantage of not using chemicals.
- **Artificial Swarm control** - Leads to a break in the brood cycle which deprives the varroa of somewhere to breed and drastically reduces the population. This is another good reason not to delay doing an AS when you see queen cells! If you have forgotten how, Steve Leveridge's article in the last Newsletter will remind you.
- **Comb change** - By carrying out a **Shook Swarm** or **Bailey Comb Change** similarly leads to a brood-less period and greatly reduced varroa numbers. With Nosema present in some of our apiaries this is also a good reason to carry out one of these procedures, preferably early in the season. It very often kick starts colonies into increasing rapidly, so might not delay honey production as much as you might think.
- **Varroacides** - Can be used when there is a honey flow. These include MAQS strips, Bayvarol, Apistan and Apivar.

All the above can be used during the main season when you have supers on. But please note that the following **MUST NOT** be used during a honey flow, with supers on, because they will contaminate your honey:

- Thymol based treatments including Apiguard, Apilife-Var and Thymovar

- Oxalic acid in the form of Api-Bioxal (all other forms/makes are now illegal)
- Lactic acid
- Formic acid

You should already have done your varroa counts and be treating accordingly, most will have finished apiguard treatments by now. Be prepared to use Api Bioxal when colonies become broodless in the winter if further treatment is required.

Good luck. May all your varroa counts be low, and may all your treatments be successful.

---

## The Summer BBQ - 17 July 2017

By Yasmin Dean



Our first Barnet Bee Keepers Summer BBQ as newbees (sorry I couldn't resist)! It was a glorious warm sunny morning. Some of my fellow beginners arrived early on Saturday and helped Wilf to set up the gazebo, tables and a

huge arc of chairs.

After a hot, but very interesting morning inspecting the Whalebone hives under the watchful eyes of Geoff, Wilf and Steve, it was lovely not to rush back home to chores. Pat, Linda and Mary arrived with the BBQs and then food and drink seemed to magically appear from everywhere. There was a wonderful spread with salads, marinated chicken, kofte, sausages, burgers, veggie kebabs, deserts and more! Cold drinks of all varieties were most welcome (but I must remember to read labels and not serve undiluted raspberry cordial – though the bees might have enjoyed it)!

Steve expertly lit the BBQs with a blow torch (I still struggle with my smoker but don't think I will ever have trouble lighting a BBQ again!). Richard and others diligently oversaw the BBQ-ing. Then followed a lovely relaxing afternoon, quiet except for the gentle chatter/buzz of beekeepers and beginners, exchanging ideas and becoming better acquainted. In the shade of the stable block, brilliant blue sky above was ringed by tree tops, their emerald green, early summer leaves, reflecting the sunlight, I felt at peace and as if we were a million miles from London!

A very big 'thank you' to all the committee members for arranging such a lovely social event!

---

## **BDBKA News**



Beginners produce 180 jars from five hives

Well done to the beginners, all honey extracted and in jars ready to sell!

---

### Barnet Beekeepers On Social Media

Like us, Follow us and get keep up to date with association news and events.





## On The Lookout For New Sites

We are always looking for more suitable sites for Association apiaries. If you do know of sites that are available please get in contact with one of the Association committee members.

---

## Get Your Exam Applications In ASAP

Those who wish to undertake exams at the end of this year need to get their applications in as soon as possible to guarantee their place.



Please email our [Membership Secretary](#) for Middx Examination Secretary details.

[Click here for the exam/assessment Application Form](#)

---



## Apiarist Suit Discounts For Our Members

Discounts are available from two of the most popular brands in protective suits for Beekeepers to members of Barnet Beekeepers Association.

Both BB Wear and BJ Sherriff offer discounts.

Please email our [Membership Secretary](#) who will confirm your membership with Barnet Beekeepers to the supplier you wish to purchase from.

---

## Committee Members

---

**Chair/Bee Disease Officer:** Pat Morgan

**Vice Chair/Whalebones Apiary Manager:** Wilf Wood

**Secretary:** Ann Songhurst

**Treasurer/Mill Hill Apiary Manager:** Lester Doman

**Education Officer:** Geoff Hood

**Social Secretary:** Linda Perry

**Membership Officer:** Mary Block

**Publicity Officer/Newsletter:** Adam Armstrong

**Beginners Representative:** Lorraine Patel

**Cat Hill Apiary Manager:** Geoff Beresford Cook

**Shenley Apiary Manager:** Steve Leveridge

**Queen Rearing Programme:** Ripal Parekh