

NHBKA March 2014 Newsletter

If you cast your mind back to last year, there was the possibility of snow at Easter. That seems a little unlikely this year, but March many-weathers certainly lived up to its name. It came as a relief that the heavy rain of the previous three months had finally come to an end, and the first part of the month brought some delightful weather that allowed the possibility of early inspections. We seemed to be suddenly in Spring, and the old fashioned measure that Spring has arrived when you can put your 'foot on nine daises' seemed to hold true. Since the first spell of balmy weather we have had hail storms, sand from the Sahara, and the recent smog that might confuse the bees. As we said farewell to March the sudden availability of blossom has encouraged some of us to take advantage of the stronger colonies and add honey supers. Some members have already seen numbers of drones in their colonies so swarms won't be too far behind especially if we have a reasonable period of good weather.

We held our AGM in March with a good attendance of almost forty members and had an excellent set of entries for the Annual Honey Tasting Competition with twenty jars of honey entered in total.

Helen Amey, chaired the AGM steering us through a very full agenda. The new training site in South Stevenage is working well with a total of fifteen new or possible members attending the sessions run by Helen. We managed to hold five apiary meetings last year, so many thanks to Pat Veasey, Dave Matthews, Pete McKenna, Vince Wright and Robin Dartington. We have three apiary visits planned for this year, but any member who would like to show off their apiary and be open to a wide spectrum of advice for the price of a cup of tea and a piece of cake is always welcome. We also participated at a number of events last year, the Herts Show at Redbourn, and Stevenage Day in particular. Check out the web site for our current schedule for this year. Helen also mentioned the need for members to commit to BBKA Swarm Registration and be available for mentoring new beekeepers. Chris Mercer, our Treasurer, mentioned the introduction of electronic receipts by BDI; this has streamlined the subscription process and obviously saves on stationery where paper receipts have been issued in previous years.

We had a variant of musical chairs for the election of members of the committee at the AGM. Several members stood down, including the Chairman and Treasurer, Gary Hammond taking the role of Chairman, and Vince Wright relinquishing his role as Vice-Chairman to take up the post of Treasurer. Other posts went to John Murphy (Swarm-Co-ordinator), Chris Mercer (Disease Officer), and Derrick Richardson replaced Graham Beesley as one of the Trustees who attend the Herts committee meeting as Exec Members.

Our incoming chairman is keen that the Association embrace aspects of social media and updates the North Herts Facebook page (www.facebook.com/NHBKA), and has also created a Twitter account for North Herts, @NHBEES.

A couple of initiatives were mentioned at the AGM which will hopefully bear fruit. One was the adoption of a logo for the Association, the other was a social gathering at a local hostelry seen as an extension of the popular refreshment break we have at indoor meetings. You never know, a popular logo might lend itself to tee-shirts, and NH mugs, so watch this space.

Members were invited to submit one or more jars of honey for the Annual Honey Tasting Competition as part of the AGM meeting. The first three prizewinners are presented with a trophy and the winner of the first prize is published on the website

The results of the competition were as follows

First Prize – John Murphy
Second Prize – Peter McKenna
Third Prize – Gary Hammond

Congratulations to the prize winners and thanks to all the members who supplied honey for the competition

Don't forget, the Herts Show is on Saturday, 24th May, and Sunday, 25th May. If you are available for a few hours on either of these days please let us know.

If you are keen to get involved in some of the opportunities mentioned, or help at some of the events contact me at secretary@nhbka.org.uk, or our new chairman, Gary, at chairman@nhbka.org.uk.

The next meeting is on Tuesday, April 15th 2014 at 19:30. Our new Treasurer, Vincent Wright, is demonstrating honey extraction and hygiene for part of the evening. We will continue the hygiene theme for the remainder of the evening with a discussion of the Healthy Bee Plan. Hope to see you all then.

Details of the Healthy Bee initiative are available on our web site at

<http://www.bbka.org.uk/local/northherts/healthybees/index.shtml>.

The web site has also been updated with details of locally produced honey at

<http://www.bbka.org.uk/local/northherts/localhoneyforsale/index.shtml>