

## Diary Dates

**Saturday 16th April 2005** - The British Beekeepers Association Spring Convention at Stoneleigh-Park Exhibition and Conference Centre, Warwickshire CV8 2LS. Opens 09:00–1700.

More details from the URL: <http://www.bbka.org.uk/convention.php>

**Sunday 17th April 2005** - Afternoon Branch Apiary Meeting. The opening of hives depends on the weather. Starts 3pm. Includes refreshments.

**Tuesday 19th April 2005** - Evening lecture and demonstration at the branch club house by Mary Hill on Encaustic Painting. Starts at 7:30pm. Includes refreshments.

**Sunday 1st May 2005** - Branch Apiary Meeting. The opening of hives depends on the weather. Starts 11:45am. Includes refreshments.

**Sunday 8th May 2005** - The East Midlands Bee Breeders Group\*, by invitation of Albert Knight. Leaving from Bromley around 9:30am and stopping for a pub lunch on the way. Meeting at their Apiary at 2pm and probably home about 7pm. (\* near Junc. 24 off the M1 approx 2.5 hours driving each way)

**Sunday 15th May 2005** - Afternoon Branch Apiary Meeting. The opening of hives depends on the weather. Starts 3pm. Includes refreshments.

**Saturday 18th June 2005** - North Kent Bee Breeders (Medway) Courtesy of Terry Clare – 3pm start. Probably leaving Bromley around 11:30am and having lunch on the way.

### For more information

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## Bromley Bee News Monthly Update Published by the Bromley Beekeepers Association

Welcome to the **April 2005** issue of Bromley News.

### B-BIG Meeting, Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2005

The Bee Improvement Group met at 1045 at the Club Apiary and discussed the programme for the year and firmed up some ideas about the Group's regular activities.

It was decided to hold one meeting each month an hour before the normal Branch meeting and two further meetings (working meetings) on the Second Wednesday and the Fourth Thursday of each month until the second week of September. The working meetings will normally be held in the open air at the Club Apiary starting at 6.30pm and continuing until it gets dark (weather permitting.) If you can't make 6.30pm just turn up when you can. It would also be nice to be able to visit members' own Apiaries from time to time.

The acquisition of mini-nucs was discussed. Robin Spon-Smith made the Judicial observation that each mini-nuc counted as a hive for the purposes of the BBKA Insurance scheme and we ought to be aware therefore that keeping them at our own Apiaries could give rise to a problem in the event of a claim, unless we had declared them. It was suggested therefore that members might want to keep their mini-nucs at the Club Apiary where they would be covered under the Club's insurance.

After some discussion the Group authorized Tom Winks and Mike Oliver to investigate the possibility of obtaining some Warnholz mini-nucs at the BBKA Convention at Stoneleigh on the 16<sup>th</sup> April. If any member would like me to purchase a mini-nuc on his/her behalf (individually as opposed to Group ownership), please give him a ring on 07773 201 439 before Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April – the cost of each should be less than £15 (Apidea) or £10-£12 (Warnholz) and this amount could be further reduced for a larger purchase.

Looking forward, trips are being organized for the following:-

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May** – The East Midlands Bee Breeders Group\*, by invitation of Albert Knight. Leaving from Bromley around 9.30 and stopping for a pub lunch on the way. Meeting at their Apiary at 2pm and probably home about 7pm. (\* near Junc. 24 off the M1 approx 2.5 hours driving each way)

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June** – North Kent Bee Breeders (Medway) Courtesy of Terry Clare – 3pm start. Probably leaving Bromley around 11.30 and having lunch on the way.

**Mike Oliver**

### **Apiary News**

I looked inside the remaining mini nuke last week, not a bee to be seen. Obviously they had abandoned their home and what was left of them had joined another hive which is not an unusual thing for bees to do when numbers get so low that there is little else for them to do.

It was nice to see Robin Spon-Smith at the Apiary last month and looking very fit too after his short term in hospital. We all wish you the very best. On the subject of Robin, I see he has left another nucleus hive in the apiary waiting for a new queen to emerge and get mated hopefully with the good tempered blood we seem to have acquired. Best of luck Robin and Jenny.

The talk about swarms by John Hendrie was well received last month, let's hope we can put some of it into practice, but I am certain the best way to overcome this problem is to get rid of the queens that arrive with the swarms and re-queen with something a bit less inclined to swarm.

Bob is doing a Trojan job tidying up the bee garden but now that the weeds are coming into spring growth I am sure he would appreciate some help and the best time would be half an hour or so before the meetings. Over to you. There are tools available in the shed.

The last talk of the winter series will be at the Clubhouse on **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> of April at 7:30pm** when Mary Hill will be coming up from Canterbury to give us the low down on Encaustic Painting and for those who can't find their dictionary it is painting with hot coloured wax. I have watched this lady work at various shows and I can assure you that some of her results are astounding and it is a subject you will rarely see demonstrated except at perhaps large shows.

Let us hope this good spell lasts for a few weeks which will give the bees a chance to build up and at least do some beekeeping in the Apiary. **Don't forget the afternoon meetings start this month through until August at 3:00pm. The third Sunday which this month will be on the 17<sup>th</sup> the day after Stoneleigh.**

A special note for the Bee Breeding Group. **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May.** Visit to the East Midlands Bee Breeding Group Leaving at about 10:00am and arriving at their Apiary at about 3:00pm. Further details from Mike Oliver.

**Peter Springall**

### **How We Started Up**

We moved in about 1980. Shortly thereafter I started seeing parakeets. Well, the move had been stressful but it wasn't until a few of them formed an orderly line on the fence shrieking "pretty polly" that anyone took me seriously.

Not long after that I found myself gazing at a neighbour's display of golden rod. Nothing remarkable about that save for the fact it was covered with bees all going about their business. It was the bees that had caught my eye. Whilst entranced I heard my neighbour say to his small daughter: "Don't go near, you'll get stung". A day or so later not a bee in sight not even the odd bumble.

I then noticed Jo two doors down in his garden in one of those strange white suits. Goodness, we had a neighbour who kept bees. In the years that followed we had the odd swarm in the garden but nothing to bother us and we had the occasional jar of honey to keep us sweet. However, every so often Robin would mutter something about wanting to keep bees. On one such occasion I said: "Well why don't you" and the rest, as they say, is history.

Having acquired the basic bee keeping equipment and assembled our hive (why is it instructions bear no resemblance whatsoever to the bits and pieces in the kit) we waited. A warm sunny May bank holiday (now that doesn't happen very often) we were sitting on the patio enjoying the sunshine. "Looks like a good day for swarming" we said almost in unison. Two doors down must have heard because within minutes a swarm landed in our garden.

We went to bed that night feeling very smug having run our first swarm into a very desirable residence at the end of our garden (albeit with a bit of help from our neighbour). However, the bees being bees had other ideas and by morning had absconded. Oh well, that's beekeeping.

Over the years we have acquired a second hive and had the usual ups and downs which come with the territory. Robin has also been perfecting his nuke making skills. With a bit of help from Peter's bees, both our colonies are very good tempered and took very little notice of us when we inspected them a couple of weeks ago. It also makes queen spotting a lot easier!

Mike Oliver is working very hard to get the Bee Improvement Group off the ground. Do give him your support, you will find it well worthwhile.

**Jenny Spon-Smith**