

December NEWSLETTER 2007

Ormskirk & Croston Beekeepers Branch

Chairman	Ray Dowson	01704-892118	Email: (chairman@ormskirkbeekeepers.co.uk)
Secretary	Penny Oakley	08445-867841	Email: (secretary@ormskirkbeekeepers.co.uk)
Treasurer	Keith Hemming	01204-694897	Email: (treasurer@ormskirkbeekeepers.co.uk)

Website: <http://www.ormskirkbeekeepers.co.uk>

Introduction

First of all some comments from the Chairman:

“Here we are at the start of another exciting beekeeping year. Firstly I would like to express our thanks to Mike Beazer for his sterling work in taking on the Secretary position and doing such an excellent job over the past year, in organising our program and keeping people informed of all activities. Paul & Catherine Mangnall stood down from the committee and I would like to thank them for their contribution to the running of the Branch, particularly the work put in with the equipment and the out apiary.

I would like to welcome Derrick Harris and John Wilkinson onto your committee; they will be of great help, in particular at the out apiary. We have been very fortunate that Dr Penny Oakley has agreed to become our secretary, welcome Penny. Please give her your full cooperation to make her job as easy as possible.

Now is the time when our thoughts drift to our hopes of what we can achieve in the coming year, produce a hundred pounds of honey per hive, not loose any swarms, win prizes at the honey show, pass the basic assessment, rear lots of native queens etc. etc. One thing we can be sure of, is that there will always be something occurs which we had not planned for. As the saying goes ‘The bees don’t read the books’.

Your committee is hard at work putting together the activities for the coming year. I hope there is enough variety to keep your interest and to help you learn more about honeybees and become a better beekeeper. Best Wishes to you and your families for Xmas and a healthy and good beekeeping New Year.”

Oxalic acid is a treatment for Varroa which is recommended by our Regional Bee Inspector. The best time to carry this out is in the middle of winter when there is no larva or sealed brood in the colony. Unfortunately, due to our milder winters there is seldom a time when our bees are broodless. This means the efficacy will be reduced due to mites being in sealed cells; also any unsealed larva is destroyed by the acid.

In early January I did a tour of members’ apiaries doing oxalic acid treatment for Varroa. I am available to do a similar tour during week commencing Sunday 16th December. As last year the cost will be £1 per visit plus 50p per hive.

If you would like me to treat your bees please let me know when you are available, giving as much flexibility as possible so that I can treat *all colonies in an area at the same time.”

Ray Dowson.
Chairman

Beekeeping for Beginners

The Beginners’ course, “Introduction to Beekeeping”, has now been confirmed with Rufford Old Hall for 29th / 30th March - if you have any potential 'recruits' perhaps you could mention it to them? As in previous years the course tutor is Martin Smith. Members will be invited to attend at various times during the event.

Details of the course can be found here on our website:-

<http://www.ormskirkbeekeepers.co.uk/course.html>

Future Meetings

21st January 7.45pm at the Eagle & Child:
David Rayner is giving a talk about his

OXALIC ACID treatment for Varroa

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experiences of commercial beekeeping in New Zealand.

20th February 7.45pm at the Eagle & Child: Ian Molyneux, our regional bee inspector, is giving a talk on disease management.

19th March 7.45pm at the Eagle & Child: John Charlton is giving a talk about making mead and honey beer.

and don't forget

Thorne's winter sale starts on Monday 7th January at 9am. Their contact details are:

tel: 01673 858555

fax: 01673 857004

email: sales@thorne.co.uk

<http://www.thorne.co.uk>

National Insect Week

National Insect Week runs from 23rd-29th June 2008. Beekeepers are being encouraged to get involved in running events.

<http://www.nationalinsectweek.co.uk>

The first thing to decide is: As an Association, do we want to get involved?

If we do, then June will soon be upon us. Planning needs to begin soon.

If you have any ideas or better yet would like to be involved please contact Derrick Harris as soon as possible. His e-mail address is derrick.harris@ormskirkbeekeepers.co.uk

To get the ball rolling, would we want to run a separate event as an Association (eg. an Open Day?) Or be involved as part of a project with others? In either case, what could we do to make the event or contribution as fascinating as we all know honey bees to be?

And finally

Here are some instructions from John Wilkinson on how to make a Frame Wax recoverer at Low Cost.

Make use of the family wallpaper stripper, to power a simple means of recovering wax from used frames.

All you need is an adaptor from any hardware store (to fix to a redundant hive roof).

An appropriate sized gravel tray from a garden centre, (60 cm x 60 cm is suggested).

The remaining items you should have around your apiary.

1 hive roof / 1 hive body / 1 open mesh floor (acts. as a crude filter) / 2 off, 2ft plus lengths of timber.

Assemble in the following order:-

Gravel tray;

The 2 lengths of timber across the tray;

Open mesh floor;

Hive body fitted with frames;

Lastly, hive roof fitted with adaptor;

Next: remove steam spreader from wallpaper stripper;

Attach the flexible hose to adapted roof.

Fill tank with water and plug into a convenient power supply.

Approximately 20 minutes of steaming (depends on the ambient temperature) should see the frames clear of wax.

Further details if needed from john.wilkinson@ormskirkbeekeepers.co.uk

If anybody has any ideas that they would like to share please send them in.

Mark Oakley

Newsletter Co-ordinator