

ROSELAND BEEKEEPING GROUP

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2015 SAFARI REPORT - AGM 25.02.2016

Once again these were very popular (about 45 members being involved) and a great success, with two full days of safari undertaken. They took place on Monday 11.05.2015 and Saturday 13.06.2015. Over the two days, 80+ hives were inspected on 20 sites. Sadly resources are stretched at the NBU and they are no longer able to provide the support of a Regional Bee Inspector or Seasonal Bee Inspectors for our safaris. Fortunately, we were able to secure a grant from BDI to part-fund the safaris and this enabled us to pay our inspectors a small fee. Adam Vevers, Clare Densley, Lea Bayly and Jo Widdicombe led the groups and there was a strong focus on husbandry education as well as checking for disease. Paying our inspectors does have the plus side of freeing us from the form-filling/box-ticking constraints of the NBU and inspectors are able to focus the safari visits in the most effective way for participants. The safaris are an excellent way for the general health of bees in our area to be monitored and with apiaries from Bissoe to Carlyon Bay and Ladock to Portscatho a huge geographical area was covered. I am pleased to report that no serious disease issues were found although, as always, varroa was making its presence felt in many colonies. Many thanks for the hard work of all those who help to make the safari days run smoothly. And especially to our breakfast and lunch hosts for the very welcome cups of tea and coffee, croissants, pasties and puddings! At this point I must make mention of Barbara White who has offered safari breakfasts on numerous occasions and insisted on doing so again on 13.06.2015. She was unwell (not that you would have known it from her entirely sunny disposition) and at that time no one knew just how seriously poorly Barbara was. Barbara passed away shortly before Christmas and her participation in group events will be sadly missed.

Looking forward to this season, our safaris are scheduled for Monday 09.05.2016 and Saturday 11.06.2016. I believe there will be some changes to the NBU Inspection Team but I have to wait until the seasonal year starts in April to find out what they are. I shall be sending out safari request emails to all members in late March and it is of great assistance to me if you can send in your responses quickly (and answer ALL the questions when you do so). A NO answer from those who do not wish to participate is extremely helpful in eliminating unnecessary phone calls and emails. Organising the safaris is a significant challenge but is made infinitely easier if everyone does their bit. I will be looking for members who are willing to host the group for breakfast and lunch on the days themselves. If you require more information about what this involves before you volunteer then don't hesitate to get in touch. It is hoped that any members keeping bees who have not had a formal inspection will get one done this year. It is vital not just for the health of your own bees but also of the whole community of bees in this area. If the safaris do not fall on convenient dates, or the idea of having hoards of other beekeepers in your apiary is not for you, then individual inspections can usually be arranged and I can help you liaise with the bee inspectors about this.

I shall be discussing with the Group Officers how ferociously I should be lobbying the NBU to provide inspectors. As I said above there are advantages to having complete control but this does have a financial implication. My understanding is that the grant we accessed last year from BDI will not be available. However, I will of course be pursuing any avenue I can in terms of financial support for the safaris. At present individual participants are charged £5.00 and this ensures that the safaris are self-funding in terms of catering. However, this charge is not sufficient to cover paying the inspectors a fee (currently this is £50 per inspector - which hardly covers their travelling costs really). I am optimistic that I will be able to get qualified beekeepers to run our safaris as the inspectors always enjoy a day out with the Roseland Group. However, if you have any thoughts or suggestions about how we could make the safaris better or more cost effective please do let me have your ideas.

Rose Hardisty, Safari Organiser