

BOURNEMOUTH & DORSET SOUTH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter

April 2020

From the Chairman

Dear All,

I hope this message finds everyone well, physically and mentally. I hadn't imagined 6 months ago that a lot of our energy and resources would be focused on fighting the Corona virus. I guess life will often throw up unexpected twists and turns like this. We have all watched enough disaster movies at one time or another predicting these possibilities that we shouldn't be too surprised. Historically, pandemics have occurred frequently and I think we must count ourselves lucky to live in an age with the health care we have. My thoughts go out to our older members though for which this must be a very worrying time. Looking back at what my father and mother went through during the war though puts this into perspective. I think we should all try to stay positive. We aren't being asked to die for our country or be evacuated but to stay home and watch TV. I think I can do that!

One piece of advice I would dare to give is to get a good USB connected headphone set with built in microphone so that you can do some quality conferencing with groups of people on your laptop or PC. I don't think the video element matters as much personally to me as being able to hear and speak clearly. This "social distancing" could last a while and being able to talk in groups of people could help cheer the spirits. None of us are really sure how long this will go on for so we will look at how services like online conferencing and streaming can help the members socially and those who want to learn beekeeping this year, still get some benefit.

I must admit that I am beginning to find it harder and harder to move around the house as the crisis lengthens. It could be due to advancing age, it catches up with everyone eventually. I find I struggle to do some things I took for granted before. Like find the couch, open doors, view the TV clearly, get upstairs etc. Possibly the increasing mountains and mountains of toilet rolls stacked in every room in the house could have an effect, I'm not sure 😊

As I said in a recent email, we will monitor the situation and

evaluate what we can run this year, contacting those affected but of course all events are cancelled at the moment. If this whole situation gives you any sort of problem, please don't hesitate or feel embarrassed to contact me. The club exists not only for Beekeeping.

But... to a bit of beekeeping....

I can only speak for our own bees, but all our hives and nucs look strong and very busy when some direct sunlight suddenly hits them and the temps rise a little. We need to inspect asap I think!

This year, perhaps think of setting a Beekeeping goal? One suggestion for this could be an organised effort to improve your bees. Run it like a mini-project. Many attended last year's talk by Roger Patterson which encouraged us all to stop buying imports (matching BBKA official advice) and suggested simple methods we can all follow to breed good local bees.

Take care and if you have any concerns or suggestions, get in touch.

Best wishes,
Dave Neal

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Swarm Collecting 2020

Hi,

My name is Mohammed Saeed and this year, 2020, I am taking over the swarm coordinator's role from Peter Darley.

For the past two years with my father, Ahmed, and I have helped Peter with swarm collecting. Those of you who were there for Peter's talk on swarm collecting will have seen pictures of Dad and me collecting an under eaves swarm in Oakdale last summer.

I came to the UK from Syria some 12 years ago and, with my father who works full time with me I have built up a

local building company. I am now married with a one year old little boy named Ahmed, after Dad. In Syria Dad was a semi commercial beekeeper and is the definitely the bee expert.

Peter had some 186 bee calls in 2019, so I know that I will be busy; however, being self-employed and with my own transport, I can attend calls as necessary. Thirty percent of last year's calls were for bumble bees and Peter is happy for me to pass on those calls for him to deal with, so that will lighten the load somewhat.

I live in Bournemouth and have an out apiary near St Leonards, and Dad and I have some twenty hives there with plenty of space, so the temporary housing of collected swarms before passing them onto members will not be a problem.

I also know that I will have the support of eight other BADS beekeepers who have joined the 'swarm collectors' band and am looking forward to an interesting and fruitful summer.

If you wish to contact me my mobile number is 07977 900300

Best Wishes and a happy beekeeping summer.

Mohammed

Swarming on the left hand hive but not on the right ...



Swarming – Some personal views by Paul

1. The first most important point, **“NEVER”** destroy all queen cells until you are **“VERY”** certain they are not required. You can end up with a queen less colony. Which cannot produce a new queen.
2. Swarming is the natural way of replacing colonies which have died out or increasing the colonies in any area
3. Read **“SWARMING”** by Mr L. E, Snelgrove. This book was written in the 1940's and is still very readable today. It was published by Miss I Snelgrove and the family continued this practice. . There are a lot of copies about, including our library. He also wrote **“Queen Rearing”** and **“The Introduction of Queen Bees”**.
4. If your colony came to you as a swarm it is more likely to swarm in the future. Not all colonies are the same
5. Understand the biology of a honey bee colony and the swarm at this time. A lot can be **“read”** from looking into the colony at you see what is going on at this time.
6. The artificial swarm is a good start. Most books include this method. Most times you will end up with a second colony
7. Early in the season give the queen plenty of space to lay. Put supers on early so the bees have room to store in coming honey. You can remove the queen excluder until the middle of June. Make sure the Queen is below the queen excluder when putting it back.
8. Many beekeepers buy a Buckfast Queen the year before. They are expensive but very worthwhile. Their colonies are very gentle and productive. They need a large brood box, Langstroth Jumbo or 14 X 12. They produce large honey crops. They can be purchased from Denmark or there are some British producers.
9. talking to other members of our association should be worthwhile. Most beekeepers like to talk!! And that includes me.
10. If all the above else fails, there is always next year, or even give up until next year!! The bees will usually put it right.
11. About half of your colonies will swarm each year if you do nothing.

Enjoy your beekeeping

Paul Mann

Education

Valuable sources of information coming from the speakers at the National Honey Show ...

Lecture videos from 2019 and plenty of relevant lectures from previous years

<https://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lecture-videos.php>

Membership and Social Events

Anne wrote this article before the dramatic ramping up of the Covid Crisis. All future events will be notified by email to all members if they are going ahead.

“Our membership numbers are steadily increasing, with several new members attending our Wannabee Day on the 18th April and signing up for the 6 week beginner’s course. A big welcome to all our new members and we wish you success and enjoyment in your new hobby. The total number of members currently stands at 120.

We are planning a summer social event for our members, which will be a **Summer Solstice evening on Saturday, the 20th June**. David & Helga have very kindly offered their lovely garden for the venue, so put the date in your diary and look out for further information closer to the time.

We will also have a visit from Kevin Pope, the Seasonal Bee Inspector for the area, at the High Mead Apiary where he will give a demonstration on carrying out a detailed health inspection, valuable knowledge for all bee-keepers. This will be followed by tea and cakes .Further details to follow but pencil in a provisional date of 11th July...”

Anne Moran

Association Diary Dates

West Parley Memorial Hall

7.30 pm- *future events all cancelled until further notice*

Tuesday 18th February

Will Steynor gave a fascinating talk entitled '**Time Saving Inventions**' with much original and practical advice on gadgets and equipment from his 50 years of beekeeping experience.

Will started keeping bees in 1964 having built a WBC hive in woodwork classes at school. He later expanded his hobby into a business running 70 hives as a side- line alongside his career as an airline pilot. He joined the Bee Farmers Association in 1978, selling his business in 1993 returning to the ranks of a hobby beekeeper. For those that could not come this are some of the topics Will covered...

- Adjustable entry to the hive
- Simple locking mechanism to aid lifting boxes as one
- Two way feeders for clearing supers and feeding the brood box below
- Removing capping’s
- Solar wax extractor
- Making wax sheets
- Wiring of brood frames
- Universal starter strip for supers
- Building hives using plywood with deep roofs
- Construction of hive stand
- Warming cabinet construction



Tuesday 21st April – *cancelled but may happen later in the year This is a foretaste of “Varroa control without chemicals”*

Bob Smith, NDB

Bob has been keeping bees since the late 70’s, currently managing 9 colonies in 14x12 WBC’s, in 4 quite different apiaries in North Kent. He was a Seasonal Bee Inspector for 6 years, is a holder of the NDB and the person with responsibility for leading the busy and committed Education Team within the Medway Beekeepers Association. He is also current Chairman of the Central Association of Beekeepers (CABK) whose aim is to “*bring science to the beekeeper*”

BBKA 2020 Spring Convention - *cancelled*

**Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire TF10 8NB
Friday 3, Saturday 4, Sunday 5 April 2020**

The Asian hornet

There have been two ‘Asian hornet days’ recently to review what is happening about this insect and how we might tackle it

The Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina nigrithorax*, is an Asian insect that was accidentally imported into France in 2004. A mated queen arrived in a consignment of earthenware pottery from China, escaped, built a nest and from that small beginning the insect is now found throughout France, the Channel Islands and is encroaching into Germany, Belgium and the rest of western Europe. It is a voracious

predator of other insects, including honey bees and as there is no competition and the native insects have no defence, it has wrought havoc wherever it has established itself. Away from the nest it is docile, but near the nest it is a ferocious beast. The sting is similar to our wasp, but if threatened it attacks in hordes and has been responsible for at least eight deaths in France. It wants protein to feed the larvae in the nest and honey bees in hives are nothing but an easy protein 'Take Away'. The hornets 'hawk' outside the hive picking off returning bees which are loaded with pollen and nectar and so are not so manoeuvrable in flight. The hornet then flies to a branch, cuts off the bee's head, abdomen and wings and takes the muscle laden, protein rich thorax, the meat, back to its nest. Bees cannot defend themselves against the larger hornet, are picked off and eventually will not leave the nest. Weakened by lack of forage and fear, the colony fails and is then invaded by the hornets which kill and carry off everything edible.

The Asian hornet is slightly smaller than our native hornet, has an all-black thorax and the legs are yellow and black. Look on the web for help with identification and look at ahat.org.uk for further information.

Last sections of the legs are yellow, black thorax, orange 'tail'.....



Asian hornet



European hornet

To help combat the incursion of these insects, beekeeping associations are setting up 'AHAT's, Asian Hornet Action Teams, to put out traps and bait stations to see where, and if, the insect turns up. The two AHAT days were a reprise of news, progress and techniques, a coming together of associations to share best practice, be updated by the NBU and made aware of the latest scientific news. The first was excellently run by Somerset BKA and included workshops. The second was run by the BBKA and was more reporting by the NBU. Both were immensely useful.

It is difficult to know when the hornet will appear in the UK in numbers. The insect is now pretty well ensconced in the Channel Islands, where the islanders are fighting tough rear guard action. If the hornet reaches a population level on the French mainland where competition for space becomes fierce, more insects will be pushed to find new habitats, and even without that driver, the hornet has expanded across France at an average 78 Km per year.

So, what can we do?....

At the moment the NBU and APHA are working to prevent incursion. Every report is checked, and in 2019, there were eight thousand reports (!), four thousand of which were identified as not being Asian hornet. It is the other four thousand that are the worry. It is here that the AHATs will be a front line body. The NBU will be using the AHAT members to check out these sightings. That means that the AHATs must be aware and ready to act. This will be by putting out bait stations, seeing if Asian hornets do turn up and if so, notifying the authorities. The first notification should be by using the Asian Hornet Watch app.

Asian Hornet Watch app. is available on Google, Android and Apple. If you don't have his app. on your phone, download it now. It is free, safe and immensely useful. The app. contacts the NNSS, Non Native Species Secretariat, which notifies the NBU which will check the report, and either ask the local AHAT to check it out or if the sighting is an Asian hornet, will swing into action sending seasonal and regional bee inspectors to the site.

Another app, which is gaining popularity is 'what3words'. This app. divides the country, indeed the whole world, into 3 metre x 3metre squares, and gives each one a unique three word designation. For example, my home is at 'smelt, snack, hood'. If this was given to the Police, Fire or Ambulance, they would know exactly where to go to. The same can be used for any Asian hornet sighting. The app. is free and safe, so if you have a sighting, take a picture, put in the what3 words designation, and send it to Asian Hornet Watch. The NBU will then be informed, will contact the local AHAT and, if it is a confirmed sighting, take action and send seasonal and regional bee inspectors to site to deal with the hornet and destroy the nest.

At BADS the AHAT comprises eight association members, all but one of whom attended one of the Asian hornet days.

On Wednesday 26th February the AHAT coordinators from BADS, Blandford, Dorchester and Weymouth, Dorset county, East Dorset, New Forest, Sherbourne and West Dorset met in Dorchester to pool resources and combine efforts in working to meet the Asia Hornet threat.

The outcome was to set up a 'WhatsApp' group for communication and use 'Dropbox' for the exchange of information, talks, etc. It was also decided to have combined days on April 6th, May 4th, September 7th and October 5th when all the coordinators would ask as many members as possible to put out and then check hornet traps. This will give us good coverage across a wide geographical area. We also decided on a protocol when taking calls from the public and how best to advise them and to look into a combined purchase of Sutterra/Trappit, the liquid lure that has proven to be the most effective. The BADS team will be asking all members to put out traps on the defined days and the team will be able to supply Trappit for members for those days. The location of the traps will need to be recorded, and the team will do this using Google MyMaps. Each AHAT will have its own coloured map pin so we will be able to see just where we have trapped. If you have hornet trap, please check that it's in working order ready for the days; if you don't we hope to be able supply some.

This is containment. If an Asian hornet is seen. The NBU gets involved, traces it back to the nest and the nest is destroyed. At the moment the NBU believes that we can hold the insect at bay. There is a lot of work going on to find a selective and effective way of killing the hornet. The two main hopes are a hornet specific insecticide, fungicide or some way of disrupting its breeding potential or its lifecycle. All are long term, so for the moment we will continue to monitor, trace and destroy the nest.

Shortly the AHA Team will put out to all members what we hope will be helpful guidance on how to deal with possible sightings and queries from members of the public and advice on trapping; and please, get your traps ready.

Peter Darley

BADS AHAT Coordinator

Honeyland

Macedonian directors Tamara Kotevska and Ljubo Stefanov were researching in a remote mountainous area of Macedonia for a short nature documentary. They noticed beehives behind a rock on the mountain where they were filming. This led them to Hatidze Muratova, one of Europe's last wild beekeepers, who uses ancient methods passed down through the generations for harvesting wild honey. What followed was a documentary filmed over 3 years

about her life and relationship to a newcomer family who decided to keep bees the modern way. Honeyland was the first film to compete for both the best documentary award and best international feature film at the Oscars but unfortunately didn't win either despite having gained widespread acclaim at other film festivals.

Available from Amazon



Commentary

Beekeeping in India



Roadside Bee Hives in March, North West India ...

Beekeeping in India has been mentioned in ancient scriptures and depicted in Mesolithic Rock paintings. Scientific methods of beekeeping only started in the late 19th century, although records of taming honeybees and using in warfare are seen in the early 19th century. After Indian Independence, beekeeping was promoted through various rural developmental programs. Five species of bees that are commercially important for natural honey and beeswax production are found in India.

Adrian Rozkovec

Talk by BADSBKA and NF&DBKA to Dorset Koi Keepers

Those of you who attended the AGM already know the answer to the question "What is the connection between bees and Koi Carp?". I have to admit that I did not know and was slightly puzzled when we were asked by Dorset Koi Keepers to give a talk about beekeeping and a history of beekeeping in New Forest. The answer is - Propolis. Propolis is widely used as fish food supplement and as a remedy for fish external injuries.



I should have guessed really as in Eastern European countries Propolis is used more than in the UK. I myself have used a propolis tincture for a sore throat since I was 12 y.o. Also, our Russian customers who live in the UK have asked if we sell honey with propolis as they buy this from a Latvian beekeeper in London for about £20 per 12oz jar. As propolis is not easily mixable I have still to work out the method to try to make honey with propolis. Google suggested ether freeze, grate it and mix propolis powder with honey or vaporise alcohol from the tincture by heating and mix with honey. If you are making honey with propolis maybe you can share your method?

Dave Neal was the main speaker and gave a long talk about bees and beekeeping in general. I had only 15 minutes to talk about propolis, it's qualities, how bees collect and use it. I have to confess – it was my first public talk and I was

very, very nervous, but I was told that I did ok. Finally, Martin Riseam (NF&DBKA) told us briefly about history of beekeeping in New Forest. It was no surprise to find that there were fall outs between the clubs and BBKA but the tendency was – any serious problem and they all came together.

Alla Neal

The National Honey Monitoring Scheme

<https://honey-monitoring.ac.uk/>

Adrian Dwyer joined the scheme, outlined below followed by a brief summary of Adrian's results and comments.

Our overall aim

Both honeybees and wild bees have suffered declines in recent years. These are thought to be linked to agricultural intensification, including pesticide use and loss of habitats/floral resources, as well as the emergence of new diseases and climate change. Their sensitivity to the way we manage land in the UK has long been a cause for concern. However, this same sensitivity makes honeybees ideal for monitoring changes in the countryside over time and at a national scale - due to the large distances over which honeybees forage, often traveling many kilometres from their hives. The honey collected by honeybees contains incredibly valuable information on the state of the landscape the bees live in and environmental pressures they are exposed to.

Working in partnership with UK beekeepers, the National Honey Monitoring Scheme aims to use honeybees to monitor long-term changes in the condition and health of the UK countryside. However, we need the help of beekeepers if this scheme is to work.

What are we going to do?

With the help of beekeepers we would like to collect honey samples from across the UK and continue to do this for many years. These samples will be analysed using advanced DNA barcoding techniques to identify the species of plant pollen present. This will tell us what bees are feeding on in different parts of the country and at different times of year. This information will help us identify possible threats to the floral resources of pollinating insects.

All of the honey samples you send us will be carefully archived to enable future investigations of other threats to bees, including pesticide residues and the presence of certain bee diseases.

As part of the monitoring scheme we will also ask you to provide a few basic facts about your bee hives to help us put our results into context. This will include:

How much honey is the hive or apiary producing?

Have you had any hive deaths?
Have you had any diseases, have you treated them for these diseases and did this have any effect?

Supporting beekeepers

Fully anonymised data showing regional differences in flowers visited by bees will be made available to the beekeeper's website account. This will include information on what you bees have been feeding on based on a DNA analysis of pollen, as well as what habitats – including those important for foraging bees – surround your hive location.

Identification of plant species present will be determined by matching of sequence data to a database of all publically available plant DNA sequences. Identification, will be to the closest match and cannot be used for certification purposes.

Also provided is a breakdown of crops and other habitats surrounding your apiary, based on the analysis of satellite images.

All the data we collect will be totally confidential, but this information will help us understand how environmental factors affect floral resources. Further, in creating a long-term archive of honey (and potentially in the future other hive products such as pollen stores) we hope to support future research into beekeeping.

Where next?

The archived honey collected through the Honey Monitoring Schemes will provide a uniquely valuable resource for researchers. Based on consultations with beekeepers, the key areas we hope to explore in future include:

Pathogens

We have already undertaken pilot studies to explore new DNA based approaches, for the early detection of known bee diseases - bacterial (e.g. Foulbrood), fungal (e.g. Nosema) and viruses (e.g. Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus and Deformed Wing Virus). We hope to develop these methods further in future.

Molecular and Chemical Certification of Honey

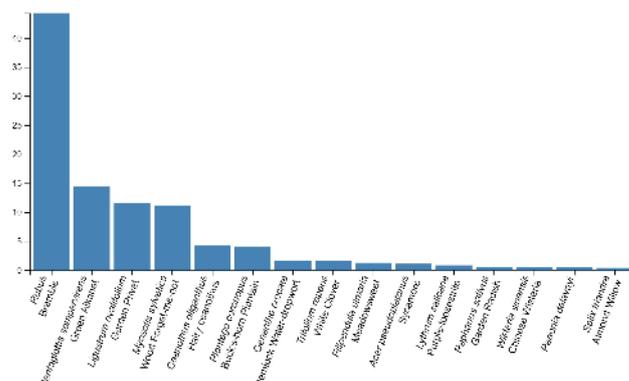
Within the current scheme we identify the pollen within honey by sequencing a small part of a single plant-specific gene which has the most comprehensive database for plants. Although one gene is perfect for our purpose, environmental monitoring of change (we follow the sequence rather than the identification given), it is less ideal for the certification of honey. We have to give the closest match to the region we have sequenced; sometimes this is to the plant species level, other times it is only the plant family. It is known that different genes are better at identifying different plant species than others. We would like to develop an advanced multiple gene approach alongside chemical analysis to provide a more accurate picture of both the pollen content and carbohydrate composition of UK honey for certification purposes.

Pesticides

We have recently analysed samples from the scheme to investigate the presence of neonicotinoid pesticides residues in honey across the UK ([see the article here](#)). We hope to extend this work in future to look for a wider range of pesticides in honey samples from different regions.

Attached is part of the report I received recently, from a sample I took in July.

Top 15 most abundant taxa in the sample



I was really surprised in the result. My hives are next to a very small bramble bush but despite being an urban environment, the girls are clearly finding brambles elsewhere.

It might encourage other people to join the scheme.

Adrian Dwyer

Report from Dudsbury

I have been trickle feeding fondant at both apiaries and we appear to have survived the winter relatively unscathed apart from a colony at High Mead that Kevin Pope pointed out as struggling on his last visit, only containing very few bees. It was not united in autumn as I didn't really know why it was weak and preferred to err on the side of caution. The colonies at Dudsbury are still alive and flying though it is very wet underfoot. A large tree fell adjacent to the parking space there but didn't affect the hives. There is quite a range of development in the colonies and a big variation in the amount of stores. The brood of one colony at High Mead had the appearance associated with a drone laying queen. I removed her and put the small colony that I mentioned previously, on top.

Kelly Smith

Greek Orange Honey Cake with Pistachios

Ingredients for the cake.....

5 large eggs
2 cups caster sugar
Zest of 1 lemon
1¼ cup plain flour
¾ cup olive oil

1 cup low fat greek yogurt
5 tablespoons grd. almonds
Zest of 1 orange
1 cup semolina
2 teaspoons baking powder

Ingredients for the syrup

1 ¼ cup salted pistachios Juice of 2 oranges
1 ¼ cup best runny honey Juice of 1 lemon
Almond shavings to decorate

Instructions

- Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees C
- Grease a 9 x 13 inch tin with butter
- Place all ingredients into a large mixing bowl and whisk to combine
- Pour the batter into the prepared tin and spread evenly
- Bake for 25 to 30 minutes until golden and well cooked through
- Remove from the oven and leave to cool completely in the tin
- To prepare the syrup, toast the pistachios in a non-stick frying pan on a medium heat. Once they start to smell, stir in the honey. Add the orange and lemon juices and bring to a boil for 1 to 2 minutes until nice and syrupy. (Do NOT taste the hot syrup – it will burn).
- Stab the cake all over with a knife or skewer, then pour the honey pistachio syrup all over the cake. Spread the pistachios around with a spoon and sprinkle over shaved almonds.
- When cool, remove from tin and cut into around 16 to 20 squares.

This recipe won first prize in the cake section...

Anne Moran

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR ALL BEEKEEPERS

HOT OFF THE PRESS....

From the National Bee Unit 25TH March

[COVID-19 and Beekeeping Update](#)

This is YOUR Association Newsletter.

Please feel free to share your beekeeping experiences – good or bad – along with photos, honey recipes, hints and tips, anecdotes and links to any interesting articles.

The Newsletter is only as good as those that contribute!

Please email Adrian Rozkovec: newsletter@bads-bka.org

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