

BEEMASTER

**Nottinghamshire
Beekeepers' Association**
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<http://www.nottsbees.org.uk>

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The Editor would like to thank the following members for their contributions:

Andrew Barber Pete Bull Stuart Ching Griff Dixon Maurice Jordan Alison Knox Anne & Rob Mason

Other BKAs through the Bee Editors Exchange scheme

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DIARY DATES

Monday 4 March **Nottingham Region**, Arnold Hill Community Centre, **Arnold NG65 6NZ**
7.30 pm **Disease and Pests presentation: Dhonn Atkinson APHA**

Saturday 9 March **Bee Tradex, Hall 3, Stoneleigh, Warks. CV8 2LG** www.beetradex.co.uk

Monday 18 March **Newark Region**, Ferry Inn, **North Muskham NG23 6HB** 8pm

Thursday 21 March **Council meeting**, Brackenhurst Agricultural College 7.30pm

Monday 25 March Copy date for **April** newsletter

Saturday 30 March **Lincoln Bee Auction**, Lincolnshire Showground, **Scampton LN2 2NA** 11am

Monday 1 April **Nottingham Region**, Arnold Hill Community Centre, **Arnold NG5 6NZ**
7.30pm **Bailey Comb Exchange & Creaming Honey: Alec Thomson**

Saturday 6 April **NBKA auction**, County Showground, Winthorpe, **Newark NG24 2NY** 2pm

Friday 12, Saturday 13 & Sunday 14 April **BBKA Spring Convention Harper Adams University**,
Newport, Shropshire TF10 NB Tickets & info www.bbka.org.uk
www.nbkaeducation.weebly.com

From the editor

March is here, the first month of meteorological spring and a notoriously fickle month weather-wise. March is also the month when more bees starve than at any other time of year, especially after an early mild spell, so, beekeepers, beware complacency- last week's nailed-down hive might be as light as a feather on your next apiary visit: after the ridiculously balmy temperatures of late February our hive populations are growing faster than the available forage.

It is with great sadness that I report the loss of one of NBKA's most dedicated, long-serving and respected members, Barrie Ellis, who died in King's Mill hospital on 19 February of pancreatic cancer, aged 91. During his long years with our Association Barrie took many roles: regional Secretary, President, Council member, creator and first editor of Beemaster. In 1954 he founded the Junior Section, introducing many young people to the delights and mysteries of beekeeping, among them our Chairman, Andrew Barber, who writes a tribute to his friend below. Barrie was always happy to assist at our Field Days, inspiring confidence in new and aspiring beekeepers with his calm authority and legendary bee handling skills. He will be greatly missed: we send our sincere condolences to his family. A memorial service for Barrie will be held on Friday, 15 March at the parish church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Upton, near Southwell, at 1.30pm.

The NBKA 2019 AGM was held at Lowdham village hall on Saturday, 2 February. At 2pm all of the presiding officers were there; copies of the Agenda, 2018 Minutes and Accounts were laid out for those who had forgotten the ones sent to them in advance; the trophies were lined up, freshly polished and newly engraved, ready to be presented to the fortunate winners; the raffle table positively overflowed with enticing prizes; the tea bar was laden with plates of delicious home made cakes and dainties; our specially invited speaker, artist Laney Birkhead, creator of the Swarm Project, had set up a most splendid display of art glass, silk scarves, jewellery and cards: everything was in place- but where were you, the members?

At 2.15pm, the official start to proceedings, there were 32 people in the hall, 18 of them members of Council, the Regional committees and their other halves, meaning that only 14 additional members turned out to support their Association- disappointing for those of us who work hard on your behalf and for our specially invited speaker, who had travelled some distance from snowy North Yorkshire. Despite the poor turnout business was conducted, post-holders re-elected, a new council member welcomed, 4 trophies and the Editor's prize awarded, Maurice Jordan bestowed Honorary Life Membership of NBKA for long and dedicated service, Alec Thomson elected Honorary Vice-President, an update on our Asian Hornet Action Team given, raffle and tea break enjoyed. We were then treated to a fascinating account of how an artist's passion for beekeeping led to the creation of an acclaimed community eco project that raises awareness of bee decline and the importance of pollinators in our environment- most innovative and inspiring and deserving of a much larger audience.

In this issue lots about the AGM; trophy, prize and award winners with pictures; notes on the new Alan Lewis Trophy; The Swarm project; Regions and Bees Abroad reports; a biography and tributes to Barrie Ellis; tiny bees and giant ones; phenology; new findings on varroa; a recipe for some rather scrumptious pancakes and one for honey cough sweets; Asian hornet updates and an extract from the first official newsletter from the BBKA office.

The beekeeping press this month has much to interest and inform us, particularly on the subject of the Asian Hornet: Beecraft has an update and summary of actions taken to date; BBKA News has a very useful article on trapping Asian Hornets in the apiary. Also in BBKA News: bees piping, how, when and why; feisty bees; shook swarm for comb change; instrumental insemination. In Beecraft, a visit to the Queen's bees; learning from a frame of eggs and young larvae; improving our bees; the remarkable Stewarton hive; the tradition of telling the bees of a death. Kettle on?

Hon. Sec. Report & Notes from Norwell March 2019

Griff Dixon

I have now completed my first year as Hon Sec and I am still learning what the role really covers, which is more than just shuffling papers and arranging Council meetings.

There has been a lot to take in understanding the relationship between the BBKA and the Association and then there is the Association relationship through the Council and its members leading up to the very important Annual General Meeting.

At the end of the day, as described by our Hon. Treasurer, the association is a bottom up organisation ie it is led by the members with the Council acting as a mouthpiece to the BBKA on behalf of the members and organising “the encouragement and advancement of beekeeping in the county”.

So what happened to all the members that did not attend the AGM – at least 170 missing and only a handful of apologies for absence. This really is not good enough and appears to demonstrate a huge vacuum between the members and Council. Somehow we need to start to glue this together rather than keep accepting the apparent apathy that appears to exist. It is bizarre that the AGM is seen as something to be avoided rather than embraced for what it is meant for. A small handful of dedicated members appear to be driving things which I don't think is a good way forward – many thanks to Sue Ford for wanting to become a Council member and providing a new voice and set of ideas on Association matters. Also thanks to Geoff Curtis who was keen to continue on the Council but for Constitution reasons it could not be immediately arranged but has since found a solution for him to continue.

If anyone would like to email me with some ideas on how we bridge this vacuum – please contact me griff@norwellapiary.co.uk 01636 636565 or 07500 876836

Moving on from the AGM onto BBKA matters:

4th February 2019 We should have been contacted by the BBKA requesting swarm collectors' details – Nothing has come through me so far. I will need to find out if this has happened.

1st March 2019 – Association Membership numbers should have been passed over to the BBKA for the Spring Capitation assessment and invoice generation.

9th March 2019 – Bee Tradex at Stoneleigh – Not to be missed!

29th March 2019 – Spring Capitation Invoice raised to be paid by the Association by 1st April 2019.

Finally, onto my bees at Norwell Apiary. No losses to report with all bees enjoying the warmer weather and all have been seen collecting pollen – even the farm-based ones.

My expansion plans this year are still moving forward and I have applied to join The Bee Farmers Association. Whether they will accept me is another matter – we will see how it pans out. My apiary has over 50 acres of spring OSR this year to go at and they will all be right on the button to minimise flying distances.

Over 20 beginners at the first Newark session – very refreshing to see so many excited “newbees” – just like how I was when I attended my first session with Andrew Barber back in 2015. I think it's the same presentation with the Asian Hornet slipped in to bring it up to date. Next Council Meeting 21st March 2019 – 7:30pm Phippen Cottage Brackenhurst

griff@norwellapiary.co.uk or griffd@dixonltd.co.uk

This month in your apiary: March**Penny Forsyth**

Traditionally March is the month in which the apiary comes to life and the active season begins. On warmer days we would see bees flying and taking in pollen from early spring plants such as snowdrop, aconite, mahonia, grape hyacinth, hellebore and from hazel, alder and willow catkins. The recent unseasonably warm spell has brought the flowering of some plants forward and our bees have been able to take advantage of them - mine have certainly been working well. Our queens will have been laying for some time and that laying rate will further increase if the weather continues to be spring-like: however, increased activity inside and outside the hive means a higher consumption of stores and if there is very little forage around, there is danger of starvation. More colonies starve in March than at any other time of year. Continue to check stores by hefting or weighing - a colony should have at least 12lbs (6kg) of stores at any time of year - and feed if necessary. If the weather is cold and bees aren't flying freely, feed candy or fondant placed directly on top of the frames above the bees - use an eke or empty super to create space under the crownboard. If the weather is warm and the bees are active and flying freely, feed 1:1 syrup in a contact feeder: you can also feed an invert sugar syrup like Ambrosia. Don't be too quick to feed syrup: the weather must be warm enough for bees to make cleansing flights and there is also the risk of syrup being stored in the brood frames, reducing space for the queen to lay. Take care not to spill syrup in your apiary - take a bucket to invert the feeder over to catch the drips until the vacuum has been formed above the syrup. Once you start feeding you must keep it up until there is sufficient forage to sustain the colony - bees can starve in a surprisingly short period of time. If the bees are confined to the hive in a sustained spell of bad weather you may also want to feed some pollen substitute eg Nektapol. The point of feeding is not only to keep your bees alive but also to help the colony build up ahead of the nectar flow: eggs laid mid-March will become May's foragers.

Jobs for March

~ check stores and feed if necessary

~ change floors if you haven't already done so: move the hive to one side, replace the old floor with a clean one and lift the hive back in position. With your nice clean floor insert you can now begin varroa monitoring again.

~ remove mouse guards and woodpecker protection

~ carry out your first inspection if the weather is warm enough, min 14c - the appearance of blossom on flowering currant is the traditional sign that the weather is warm enough but use a cover cloth to avoid chilling the bees. No need to go through every frame - as soon as you've seen a regular brood pattern, some stores and that the bees seem happy, close up.

~ prepare clean brood frames/make up new brood frames - you will need these to hand to replace dirty and damaged comb when you make your full inspections in the warmer weather

~ prepare supers & queen excluders

~ complete all your equipment repairs & cleaning

~ check spare hives, frames & foundation - the active season's about to start! Take advantage of events and auctions to stock up at affordable prices

~ think about providing a water source close to your hives - pond, gravel tray

~ put out Asian Hornet monitoring traps and check them regularly: register on Beebase

~ if you haven't already done so, start your 2019 record sheets

AGM report 2019

Chairman's report

This year there will be slightly less of my ramblings and just a little from the people who do a lot of the work on the council, namely the show secretary and the editor of Beemaster.

Firstly, the ramblings. This year has been a problematic one for many beekeepers. The long-extended spring, which started off mild, encouraging queens to lay, followed by the 'Beast from the East' which put the mockers on any thought of colony increase. This came at a time when the older winter bees were dying off and the hatching of new bees were put on hold, meaning that many colonies reached population crisis point, resulting in quite severe losses throughout the country.

On the horizon there looms the threat of Asian Hornets. Steps are being taken to prepare for an influx of these pests, as you will hear later during the meeting. I saw Asian Hornets late last year whilst on a trip to France. European Hornets were feeding alongside Asian Hornets on ivy bushes. When you see the two side by side there is no mistaking the Asian as the colour of its legs makes it stand out.

As always, I have to mention our Association Auction which will again take place at the Notts. County Showground, Winthorpe, Newark. As I have said in the past it's a great place to get rid of duplicates, or to pick up a bargain, and there are bargains to be had as long as you keep your head. It also provides funds for the Association. This year the auction takes place on Saturday 6th April and starts at two o'clock.

Andrew Barber Chairman

SHOW SECRETARY REPORT 2018

Another challenging and encouraging year as NBKA Members continue to show active interest in participating in our Annual and Autumn Honey shows. It is always good to see a few new entries among the regular contributors.

- **Annual Honey Show** on 8th September was held at Stonebridge City Farm, attracting **22** registrations and **68** individual entries. Overall registrations were **UP** on 2017 Annual Honey show at Floralsands recorded as **16**. It was heartening to find we had 8 exhibits in the Novice Class (16) having had no Novice entries the previous year. There were no entries for Honey Beer cat 10A. Our Honey Judge **Dave Shannon** was "hard" on our wax entries, choosing only to offer a 3rd place in Cat 9A. Sadly, one Novice entry had to be disqualified before it even got as far as registration as it failed to meet the criteria on 3 immediate counts. Dave's verdicts caused some consternation but he was able and willing to explain his decision. For the first time, as well as "Best in Show" Dave awarded 3 special certificates of merit to exhibits which he felt were particularly excellent and worthy of entering into the National Honey Show. The proud beekeepers who received those were **Mary Carey Allwood** (Best in Show) for her absolutely exquisite jars of dark honey. **Jan Lees** for her very quaffable mead (hic!) and **Maurice Jordan** for his perfect heather honey.

- **Autumn honey Show** on 6th October held at Lowdham Village Hall attracted **27** registrations and **69** individual exhibits. This was **UP** on 2017 registrations which were recorded as **18**. Our Honey Judge was Mr Peter Lewis, who kindly stepped in when our original booking Michael Badger was unable to keep the appointment. Peter had just recently returned from a specialist honey tasting workshop in Italy, and so he was very “highly tuned”. Peter did not award any certificates for cat 5 (Soft set) or 9A (wax block) and only awarded at 2nd prize level for cat 7 (cut comb) and cat 10 (mead) although there was only 1 entry each in these categories. Peter did make himself available to explain his decisions. **Best in Show** was awarded retrospectively to **Mary Carey Allwood**. This was due to an error on my behalf (duh!) but Peter was able to recall Mary’s cat 3 (dark honey) entry immediately as “*outstanding*” and was delighted to later learn that his choice was consistent with that of Dave Shannon. Our Speaker, Dr Ryad al Sous presented a fascinating, moving and eye-opening account of his beekeeping experience and ultimate exodus from Damascus in Syria. Ryad now runs a charity **The Buzzproject** in Huddersfield, and members of NBKA were invited to donate old or surplus equipment. (The items donated were taken to Huddersfield by me in November).
- We have a NEW award for 2018 “**The Alan G Lewis Trophy**” awarded for cat 6 Heather Honey.
- The results for 2018 awards have been ratified by Andrew Barber.
- Thank you to all those who have showed up, participated in and generally supported this years events.
- Apologies to all those who have suffered at the hands of my administrative incompetence. I am working consistently towards ways of making the registration and certification process smoother and idiot proof.

Alison Knox ~ Show Secretary

Editor of Beemaster’s report for 2019 AGM

I am pleased to report another year of good and regular contributions from officers and members, making our newsletter a reliable – and I hope, interesting- source of local and national information with an element of entertainment and humour. This last year I have been very fortunate to have some brilliant monthly features – particularly from Show Sec. Alison Knox and Anne and Rob Mason of Bees Abroad- and I know that I can rely on a core of members to provide regular articles and updates: to all of these my thanks.

It has taken me a while to get to grips with the technology and I still have a few more tweaks to learn but I am no longer tearing my hair out over every issue. Contributions from members are always welcome, as would any suggestions as to content: this is your newsletter, I’m just the editor.

On that theme, it is very likely that I will be moving out of the area in the course of this year: if anyone is interested in taking on the role of newsletter editor please come and talk to me or to a member of Council.

Penny Forsyth, newsletter editor

Education Report

The module group has continued although the numbers have dropped for a mixture of reasons. We have however had some good results:

March 2018

Module 3

Rod Chapman-Pass

Sue Ford- Pass

Kevin Anderson- Credit

Karen Burrow- Distinction

November 2018

Karen Burrow- Module 1- Credit

Karen Burrow- Module 5-Distinction

Sue Ford- Module 5- Credit

We also had a number of passes in the Basic Certificate.

We are hoping to set up an apiary in Hucknall to use to teach the Basic and the General Husbandry if we have interest. We have received a grant of £2,000 from Tesco for this project.

Janet Bates, Education Secretary

Janet was unable to attend due to a fractured foot: these awards will be made once she is off her crutches!

Honey Show Awards

~ Alison Knox ~ Show Secretary

CONGRATULATIONS to all our cup winners for 2018. Special mention must go to **Mary Carey Allwood** who scooped “best in show” with her truly beautiful dark honey which was identified by two very different judges as “outstanding”!

I look forward to this year’s Honey Shows where the floor is open to welcome anyone who would like to have ago at entering any of the categories on our very extensive schedule!

AWARD	FOR	WINNER 2018
MOORGREEN CUP	BEST IN SHOW for Annual Honey Show (HJ Dave Shannon)	Mary Carey Allwood
FRED RICHARDSON TANKARD	BEST IN SHOW for Autumn Honey Show Lowdham (HJ Peter Lewis)	Mary Carey Allwood
ALAN LEWIS MEMORIAL TROPHY (NEW)	Heather honey (cat 6 jars)	Maurice Jordan
HERROD HEMPSALL CUP	most points at nominated shows for honey, beeswax and mead	Martin Bowker
WILLIAM MARSHALL CUP	for most points in wax classes 9 & 9a at nominated shows	Bob Logan
ALBERT SCOFFINS CUP	for most points gained in classes 11, 12, and 13 cakes preserves and dainties	Jane Simpson
THE NOVICE TROPHY also known as the Junior Cup	awarded for most points gained overall at nominated shows by a member with less than 2 years beekeeping experience, in honey, beeswax and mead.	Ben Wilson
BARTLE MEMORIAL TROPHY	for granulated honey at the Autumn Honey Show only . This is the only award specifically aimed at the Autumn show and you don't have to have entered any other show	Martin Bowker
NBKA DISPLAY TROPHY	for best display at nominated shows	Linda Jordan
PHOTOGRAPHY CUP	for best photography to do with bees and beekeeping at nominated shows	Alec Thomson



ALAN G LEWIS MEMORIAL TROPHY
FOR
HEATHER HONEY
AWARDED BY
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION



This traditional solid pewter tankard has been chosen as a commemorative award in memory of one of NBKA's most respected and valued members. The award has been given for heather honey, as this was one of Alan's personal passions.

Alan Lewis began his beekeeping career in **1958** under the tutelage of Beowulf Cooper and John Walker. Alan became a mentor of many budding beekeepers, and as a school teacher, Alan kept bees at his school, and taught many children beekeeping.

When Alan took taken early retirement from his post as Head of Craft, Design and Technology Department at Bramcote Park Comprehensive School, he had more time to devote to his hobby and passion.

At one stage Alan owned 32 hives, National and Commercial, which he kept in the garden, on his allotment or in out-apiaries, migrating annually to the heather moors. His bees were good "*Lewis mongrels*" with a dash of Brother Adam.

Alan had passed the Preliminary examination in 1965; eventually becoming a Council member for several years representing Nottingham Region as Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer (all three together at one time!).

The **Moorgreen Honey Show** (now known as the Annual Honey Show) had been in his charge for 21 years as well as taking on the role of Membership Secretary for the Association, a job which went well with addressing and distributing BEEMASTER , which Alan did for many years.

Alan was quite a keen competitor, winning various trophies over the years. It is very apt, that today we have and new award in his name "The Alan Lewis" Trophy, in recognition not only of his contribution, but his enjoyment of a bit of competition, and his appreciation of a good heather honey.

AGM speaker presentation ~ Laney Birkhead: The Swarm Project

Laney Birkhead is an acclaimed artist and printmaker whose work has featured in many successful exhibitions and events around the country. Based in Harrogate in beautiful north Yorkshire, Laney is inspired by the natural world and the splendours of her local landscape: from her detailed observations of the increasing shifts and changes within nature and the seasons came a growing unease about a future ecological Armageddon and a serious concern about the plight of our native bees. Laney became a beekeeper in 2007 and this new passion inspired her to use her art as a means to raise awareness of the importance of bees in our ecology: the concept of The Swarm Project was born. Laney began by making bee blocks to print onto 18 metres of organic calico, which was cut into panels then stitched back together once each section was printed. The panels were taken out into the community at workshop events where everyone was encouraged to cut their own blocks and print their own bees and the resulting panels were assembled onto giant frames arranged as if inside a hive and spaced apart to allow two people to pass back-to-back, as in 'bee space'. Visitors to the installation walk between the frames as if inside a hive, surrounded by hundreds of individually created bees to the recorded sound of an actual swarm. Laney showed us a short film made by documentary maker Paul Harris in which we saw the quite awe-inspiring scale and scope of a project that has involved local communities and created its own community of artists, some of whose work Laney had brought to show us. As part of her mission to raise awareness of the plight of our bees, Laney has created a 'Pledge Quilt' to which anyone can contribute- read about it below.

Join the Swarm Project

Make a written pledge on a small calico hexagon, sign it and donate to the Swarm project so it can be sewn into the ever increasing 'Pledge Quilt'

Hundreds of people before you have promised to help our bees - please join them and make a small but significant difference to the future of our pollinators.

Follow the Swarm Project

by completing a mailing slip

or join Laney's mailing list

www.laneybirkhead.com



to receive seasonal newsletters about the project's development and other events and exhibitions.

Help spread the word, feed our bees and pollinators and get friends and family involved too

Nottingham Region meeting report Monday 4 February 2019

Penny Forsyth

Our speaker for the evening was Adrian Baggaley whose topic was The Orchard Year. Adrian is a member of the RHS Fruit Group and a prolific winner of prizes in the apple and pear classes. He has orchards at Woodborough, where Bob Logan keeps some hives, and at Church Laneham, not far from me. He began by telling us that 5 trees constitute an orchard, although he also showed us an orchard consisting of a single Bramley apple tree with 250 varieties of apple grafted onto the root stock. Beginning with an overview of orchard types, Adrian reminded us that orchards are not just for fruit but also for nuts such as cobnuts, filberts and walnuts and made a distinction between traditional, old-established orchards and the commercially managed, driven by the upsurge in the popularity of cider, perry and fresh-pressed juices. Adrian showed us some beautiful examples of orchards and fruits, naming every variety for the benefit of those interested in fruit growing and also whether they were early, late or mid-season flowering and how they were pollinated- important information for beekeepers and orchard growers alike. He spoke of the importance of hedges for wind and frost protection, showed us the many wild flower varieties that he encouraged to grow in his orchards and spoke of the importance of maximum diversity and minimum mowing. We learned about the "boss apple"- the central apple in each cluster- and how to identify it and encourage its development should we wish to compete at show level, and spoke lovingly of his favourite varieties. Adrian ended his presentation with an overview of the orchard year from pruning in January, blossom (and the curse of wood pigeons) in April and May, wild flowers and early fruit in July and August, harvest and showing in September and October through to the quiet months of winter. Many members made notes and asked questions and Adrian received warm applause and a vote of thanks.



Alison presented Mary Carey-Allwood with her two Best in Show awards and Alec Thomson with the Photography Cup and spoke briefly about AGM speaker, Laney Birkhead's, pledge quilt (see above)

Newark Region

Penny Forsyth

A smaller than usual group of Newark Region members met at their regular watering hole to talk bees and beekeeping- and the usual eclectic range of often tenuously related topics. The Asian Hornet is a regular theme, we know it's coming: we discussed monitoring, traps and baits and our chairman, Andrew, showed us photographs he had taken in France last summer- the yellow legs of the Asian Hornet are a very obvious identifying feature. Most of us are going to Bee Tradex, preferring Stoneleigh over Harper Adams University as a venue and lament the relocation of the Spring Convention to Shropshire.

Bees Abroad News

Anne and Rob Mason

Rob and I had a smashing day at the Derbyshire BKA's Pre-Season Conference held on 23 February in the Derbyshire village of Crich. **What a treat!**

First to speak was Pam Hunter, a biologist, who gave an informative talk about how plants and insects have evolved together and where the odd mammal, bird and even a slug fits into the scheme of things too. David Hoyland from Minerva Scientific based in Spondon gave the audience a full picture of the rules and regulations associated with honey as a food product, why his company tests honey and what they are looking for. Honey is definitely not just sugar and water!

After a delicious buffet lunch Dhonn Atkinson, Regional Bee Inspector for the north-east of England gave a rousing talk about the 'Arrival of the Asian Hornet and its effect on beekeeping' encouraging us all as beekeepers to be vigilant and pro-active to help keep our bees safe from these devastating predators. Lastly Wally Shaw, I now have a face to the name of numerous articles in beekeeping publications!

He talked very timely about 'Making Increase', a simple method the Wally Shaw/Anglesey BKA way!



Bees Abroad Project, Zambia

The Women's Beekeeping Project, Monze in southern Zambia was begun in May 2018 by the late Roy Dyche and is now being run by the BA Voluntary Project Manager, Stuart Andrews. The project now needs £5000 to work with around 120 vulnerable women, many of them widows or single mothers, all of them subsistence farmers solely responsible for the wellbeing of their households.

Six new apiaries with 8 top-bar hives in each will be created, plus one for training purposes over the next 3 years.

Training will include apiary management and modern beekeeping as well as small business skills and it is hoped that through the support of Bees Abroad and a local non-government organisation, the Sustainable Rural Development Agency (SRDA), that employment opportunities will be created among this rural population linked to beekeeping and hive products.

Rob and I started fundraising for this very special project in January 2019 with the aim of helping Stuart reach the target of £5000 as soon as possible. Thank you for your support.

Top Bar hive building course

On Sunday, 24th March Bees Abroad are running a course in Top Bar Hive building at Fell Edge Farm, Skipton, West Yorks. The one day course will cover how to get started in top bar hive beekeeping in the UK plus hints and tips and how to get information, guidance and support. There will be a discussion about the practice of beekeeping in both East and West Africa based on various styles of hive plus the opportunity to build your own fully functional top bar hive. The course fee is £50 plus £70 for the materials if you choose to build your own hive. For further information see the poster on p22.



Bees Abroad at the 2019 BBKA Spring Convention

The annual BBKA Spring Convention will be held once again at Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire TF10 8NB on 12th, 13th and 14th April, providing a range of workshops, courses and lectures spread over the three days with a large trade show on the Saturday. This year **Bees Abroad** is running a seminar **African Beekeeping- How it works** on the Saturday 13.30-15.30 led by Richard and Jane Ridler, who have been involved in beekeeping in Uganda since 2012. The seminar will compare beekeeping practices in the UK and Africa and highlight the cultural and sustainability issues which explain why beekeeping is so successful in helping people help themselves out of poverty. Inspiring and heartwarming.

Admittance for non BBKA members for the full Convention is £26 (booked in advance) or £30 on the day. Entry to the trade show on the Saturday is £5. The full programme can be downloaded from: www.bbka.org.uk/news_and_events/spring_convention.php

Barrie Ellis: biography and tributes

From the NBKA archive, our thanks to Stuart Ching, Archivist:

Ellis, Barrie Headteacher Council Member 1989

“There are many sides to Barrie Ellis, this month's profile subject. He was born in Nottingham and educated at West Bridgford Grammar School. Serving in the Sherwood Foresters, he became a Sergeant/Instructor before being transferred to the Royal Army Educational Corps. He spent some time in Egypt. Following his army days, he attended Shoreditch College, London and began a teaching career in 1950 at the Robert Thoroton School, Flintham. He soon became a relief headmaster and in 4 ½ years taught in 23 Nottinghamshire schools before a five year stint in Worksop as Head of the Central Secondary School. For the last 20 years of his career, he was Headmaster at the Meden Comprehensive School.

Barrie married Kate in 1959. Soon after, they designed a house and garden from scratch. They renovated their present home, too, so he is expert in the building and DIY trades as well as fruit and vegetable gardening. He is a JP, a past President of his Rotary Club and has been addicted to caravanning for more than 20 years. Kate was born in Carlisle and came to Nottingham via Wolverhampton and College to teach Domestic Science. They have three boys, Andrew, Mark and James, none of whom keeps bees. Kate herself avoids them, but helps with the honey. James assists with migrating work.

I'll let Barrie describe some facets of his beekeeping career. "John Beard, head of my first school at Flintham in 1950, kept two hives in the vicarage garden there. Invited to assist him one day, I went in fear and trepidation - found it fascinating - made two National hives and started with a nucleus later the same year. The following year, having read Manley's books, I bought six MD hives, took swarms, obtained a couple of WBC hives and, by 1953 I was the proud owner of 10 colonies. At first I kept the bees at the bottom of my parents' garden in West Bridgford, but later moved them to an out-apiary in the grounds of Bunny Hall, where I produced 'runny Bunny honey!' "During the fifties I became secretary of the Ruddington and West Bridgford Region of NBKA and a member of the Council. As Chairman of Council, I instigated **BEEMASTER** in 1958 and chaired the editorial sub-committee. I showed honey, wax and mead at local shows and demonstrated beekeeping at the Royal Show at Wollaton Hall. In 1954 I formed the Junior (School Children's) Section of NBKA, introducing many young people to the joys of beekeeping. Regular meetings were held each year throughout the county and between 100 and 150 children attended the annual Beekeeping Field Day for Schools at Brackenhurst Farm Institute. Amongst those children were Andrew Barber (NBKA Secretary) and Graham Hardingham (Council member). I had many helpers Geoff Hopkinson, Len Taylor, Frank Kemsley, Bill Leslie, Ken Percival, Bill Wood, Miss MIG Jeans and many others." Teaching, organizing the bee world, building work, family life, left little time for his own colonies and he became largely a 'let-alone' beekeeper. Geoff Hopkinson kept the Junior section going until he moved away. Barrie always had bee clubs at school and supported the Lane Cup competition until it faded away. After retirement in 1985, Barrie reorganized his apiary - still consisting of a mixture of hive types - into Modified Commercials (16" x 10") with colonies headed by queens of the Buckfast strain. He has 25 colonies in an out-apiary at Oxton, eight miles from home, which keep him occupied all summer. Kate is kept busy too with bed and breakfast guests, so they have both merely retired from one way of life into another." *Jennifer Cousins BM January 1991*

From Andrew Barber, Chairman

I was very sad to hear of the recent death of Barrie Ellis. He had been a stalwart of the Nottinghamshire Beekeepers Association for all the years that I have been a member and for a long time before that. He had been a member of Council for many many years and was always a fount of beekeeping knowledge.

Before retirement Barrie had been a headmaster and that is how I first came to meet him. Many of the schools in the Newark area took part in a competition for the Lane Cup. This was an inter schools beekeeping competition with points gained for bee handling and beekeeping knowledge. The exact details of the event have been lost in the mists of my memory, as it was nearly 57 years ago. What I can remember was that it was absolutely terrifying. I suppose it was something similar to the Basic Exam that we do today, albeit taken by children of eleven or twelve years of age. The venue for the event was Brackenhurst Agricultural College and Barrie was one of the judges. He, I remember, was one of the least daunting assessors, with helpful words of comfort and advice.

Beekeepers' protective clothing was not as sophisticated as it is today, comprising of a basic ring veil tucked into the collar, trousers tucked into socks and absolutely no gloves. Needless to say, we got stung quite a lot. That memory of a kind and helpful man will stay with me for a very long time. He was a lovely man.

My thoughts and condolences go to his friends and family.

From Maurice Jordan

Very saddened to hear of the passing of Barrie Ellis. Barrie was an honorary member of the Association and past President. He was a teacher by profession and liked nothing better than passing on his skills as a beekeeper to others. He was always there with offers of help, be it at the out-apiary or field days. Barrie very seldom missed council meetings and if he did, he always tendered his apologies beforehand. He could always be relied upon to offer sensible advice on any subject that was being discussed at meetings, he was an honourable gentleman in every sense of the word and will be greatly missed.



Little Angels: bees in Costa Rica

Pete Bull

“They don't look much like bees”, “They're not like the bees in my garden”, or “They're wasps” are just some of the comments I get when someone looks at an observation hive for the first time. I usually reply along the lines of “if you like honey then these are the bees that make it for you” and the next question is often “do any other bees make honey?” The best I've been able to come up with so far is “I think there are a few but they only make a tiny amount”.

A recent holiday has changed that. At the beginning of January, Arlene and I went with Janice and Andrew Barber to Costa Rica on a wild life tour.

Andrew and I asked about beekeeping on Costa Rica and were told that there are very few hobby beekeepers as the local bees have become Africanised and are generally only kept by resilient farmers.

A few days later when we visited a pineapple plantation, our guide, who never ceased to amaze us with his knowledge, pointed out a small box on a wall, about 8” square and 4” deep, which appeared to be surrounded by mosquitoes or small flies. “They are honey bees” he said. As everyone else seemed to move back on hearing the word 'bee', I went in to a closer look, after all – they're only small, they can't hurt you much. Lucky for me I was right – they are stingless bees!

I was immediately amazed by these tiny insects, only about 4-5mm long but you could tell that they were bees, tiny long bee shaped bodies with wings stretched high and long back legs often carrying pollen.

Later at the hotel, I was able to find out about these bees with the help of free wi-fi. They are called Mariola bees, or to be precise, TETRAGONISCA ANGUSTULA, and they are common in Central America.

Mariola bees, often called little angels, produce a tiny amount of honey, about 4-6 oz every six months, but it has been highly prized from the time of the Mayans and Incas, to the present day. The little angel honey claims to cure just about any ailment but it is particularly good for eye problems.

Mariola bees have four castes: queen, worker, drone and soldier bees that are slightly larger females who guard the entrance. Cells are prepared with food before the queen lays an egg and the cell is then sealed over. Queens are reared in larger cells on the edge of the comb. It seems that the preparation of the cell determines the caste. Drones can also be produced by laying workers when the hive is thriving.

Reproduction is carried out by swarming, which takes place just once a year. Workers will search for a new site for up to two weeks before the swarm leaves, consisting of around 10,000 bees. The swarm with a new queen will take honey, pollen and wax from the mother hive, which will be only a few hundred metres away. The mother hive continues to help the new colony get established for up to six months, then most of the bees will return, leaving only a thousand or so.

Once seen these bees are easy to spot and we saw a number of nests around our hotel chalets. Their small nests and good return, and of course being stingless, they are tolerated by the locals and are not seen as a threat.

We saw lots of amazing wildlife on our tour, but I think the creatures that I found most fascinating were the little angels. My only regret is that I never got to try the honey.

If you would like to see these bees, go on to YouTube and enter Mariola Bees. Also if you would like to know more about the properties of Little Angel Rainforest Honey, google 'Little Angel Honey', but unfortunately, being very expensive and very rare, I think it is unlikely you would be able to get the real thing.

I am now looking at the other 80 or so other stingless bees in Central America, - I may be some time!



World's Biggest Bee Believed To Be Extinct Found Alive In Indonesia

22 February 2019, 7:30 am EST By [Athena Chan](#) Tech Times



This magnificent bee specimen makes the Asian Hornet look a bit pathetic! ~ AK

After nearly 40 years of thinking that the world's biggest bee has gone extinct, scientists found them on an island in Indonesia. The last time it was spotted was in 1981 and was rediscovered just last month.

Rediscovered Species

It has been decades since the Wallace's giant bee was seen alive, and for 38 years, the species was believed to be already extinct. In October 2018, a group of researchers set out to Indonesia in hopes of searching for the giant bee as well as the other species described by Alfred Russel Wallace.

After much planning, the team went to Indonesia and there searched for tree-dwelling termite mounds, as those are known to be where the giant bees nest. The team trekked for days to no avail, but on the last day they spotted a termite mound that appeared to have a hole in it, and sure enough, they caught sight of the giant bee for the first time after nearly four decades.

Wallace's Giant Bee

The world's largest bee is a black, wasp-like insect that was discovered by Alfred Russel Wallace in 1859 along with about a thousand other species. He described it to be as long as a human thumb that had jaws like those of a stag beetle. As the world's largest bee, it grows to about 4 centimeters in body length and has a wingspan of over 7.5 centimeters.

It is listed as one of the 25 Most Wanted lost species by the nonprofit organization Global Wildlife Conservation, and with the [rediscovery of the species](#), the researchers are hoping to spark more efforts to protect their habitat from deforestation.

“But no matter what, just knowing that this bee’s giant wings go thrumming through this ancient Indonesian forest helps me feel that, in a world of so much loss, hope and wonder still do exist,” said Clay Bolt, natural history and conservation photographer.

PHENOLOGY ~

Alison Knox

Phenological shift. ~ *A change in the timing of growth and breeding events in the life of an individual organism.*

This marvellous word came up in the recent presentation by Laney Birkhead at our AGM. Laney referred to it in terms of how the flowering of certain plants has shifted within the phenological cycle, leaving our bees confused and hungry.

We witness the evidence of phenology at work, with the changing of the seasons, the budding of new growth and the reddening of the leaves in autumn. It also effects migratory birds, nesting birds, insects and animals who may hibernate and those who pupate to emerge transformed from one thing into another. Ocean temperatures vary less from year to year and season to season than air temperatures do, but nevertheless they suffer from phenological shifts too, impacting on the migratory patterns of the cetaceans such as whales, dolphins, or porpoises. This change may well be down to Global Warming and is something that we beekeepers need to be increasingly aware of.

Varroa does not feed on haemolymph!

Based on an article by Claudia Blauert of Germany

Until very recently it was assumed that when varroa mites attacked bees, they fed on the bees’ haemolymph (an insect’s equivalent of blood). In a ground-breaking research study, Dr Samuel Ramsey from the University of Maryland and the van Engelsdorp BEELAB, have proved this to be wrong.

Dr Ramsey specialises in host-parasite research, in particular honey bee parasites such as varroa and tropilaelaps and their influence on the bees’ survival both individually and as a colony. He compared the digestive tracts and excrements of varroa with other mites and their dietary habits, and from the results concluded that varroa does not feed on liquids.

To find out exactly how, where and when varroa feeds on bees, a range of incredible microscopic images of bees frozen in liquid nitrogen and infested with varroa, were taken, which showed the entrance wound of the varroa’s feeding apparatus and the varroas’ feeding behaviour. These were compared to the behaviour of other mites known to feed on haemolymph and shown to have significant differences suggesting that varroa actually feed on the bees’ fatty body tissue.

This makes sense as a female varroa mite produces an egg around every 30 hours which corresponds to about 40% of its own body volume. The mite can only achieve this if it ingests sufficient protein-rich food. The varroa absorbs the tissue of the body fat of the bee and in the process injects digestive enzymes into the tissue of the body fat, which decomposes the tissue so that it can be absorbed by the mite. Remains of the digestive enzymes remain in the bees’ bodies and continue to cause severe damage and eventual death.

The original webinar videos are in English and freely available on YouTube via the following link: www.youtube.com/channel/UCv02Ur9G2_0q4czIONHHZsw/videos

Recipe of the month

Linda Jordan

Date and apple pancakes

Serves 4

You will need for the pancake batter

110g (4 oz) flour (you can use wholemeal if liked)

1 egg

275 ml (10 fl.oz) skimmed milk

1 tablespoon oil

You will need for the filling:

25g (1 oz) margarine

450g (1lb) eating apples, peeled,
cored and chopped

2 tablespoons honey

½ teaspoon mixed spice

75g (3 oz) chopped dates

For the glaze you will need:

25g (1 oz) flaked almonds

2 tablespoons honey

Method

Put the flour in a large bowl and make a well in the middle. Add the beaten egg and gradually stir in half the milk and the oil. Beat until smooth and add the rest of the milk.

Heat a medium sized frying pan and add a few drops of oil. Pour in a tablespoon of the batter and tilt the pan to coat the bottom thinly but evenly. Cook until brown and then turn and cook for another 10 seconds. Place a warmed plate while you make the rest of the pancakes.

Melt the margarine and cook the apples with the spice and dates for about 10 minutes, until the apples are soft. Add the honey for the filling to the pan and stir well. Put some filling in each pancake and roll them and arrange in an ovenproof dish. Warm the remaining honey and pour over the pancakes, then sprinkle the almonds over the top.

Bake in a preheated oven for 15 minutes at 180 degrees c,(350 degrees F, gas mark 4) and serve with crème fraiche or yoghurt.

From Jane Simpson- a seasonal recipe: Honey lemon and ginger cough sweets.

Made to soothe my new team's post-Christmas coughs and sore throats.

1-5 tablespoons of honey depending on your taste. If using 1 tablespoon then ½ a cup of sugar.
Reduce your sugar depending on how much honey used.

1 tablespoon of freshly squeezed lemon juice
¼ teaspoon ground ginger & 1/8 teaspoon of ground cloves
½ cup of water
Icing sugar for coating

Ice cube or candy mould or you can simply drop onto parchment paper as drops if you haven't either

Combine ingredients except icing sugar, or corn starch for coating in a saucepan and cook to hard crack stage 300F. Let cool slightly and drop into drops on sugared parchment paper or into mould. Allow to set for 10 minutes and then box, bag and decorate to give, sell at Craft fairs or enjoy yourself!

I am going to experiment with cherry flavours and propolis as well as honey, just call me Willy Wonka!

BeeLines: notices, news and views

Q. Am I helping or hindering the bee population by eating honey?

A. It depends on the brand of honey you buy. Most supermarket honey is imported, and farming methods overseas, particularly in China, may be weakening the honey bees' immune system. Buying local non-blended honey is much better since small-scale producers have a vested interest in preserving the health of their hives. But the real threat to bees comes from habitat loss, not honey harvesting. Planting wild flowers in your garden and buying organic vegetables (to reduce the use of pesticides which can poison bees) makes a much bigger difference.

From BBC Focus magazine, sent in by Stuart Ching

From Jennifer Abercrombie

While transferring files from my old to my new laptop I found this picture. I remember it being on the first floor and I think it was in a building at the top of a small hill in Litchfield. Does anyone recognise it or know anything about it?



NBKA Asian Hornet Action Team

The NBKA Asian Hornet Action Team is now registered on the AHAT website and with the BBKA. I am currently registered as Coordinator with Pete Bull as North Notts contact and Alec Thomson the City and South Notts contact. We have a further 6 team members, providing a county-wide contact network ready to react to reports of possible Asian Hornet incursions into our region and to coordinate with the National Bee Unit, the Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNS) and other BKA's. There is no limit to the number of members an AHAT may have so if you would like to be involved please contact me at pennyforsyth16@mail.com for information or if you wish to join the contacts register. There is excellent information and a set of guidelines on the AHAT website <https://ahat.org.uk>

Asian Hornet queens may be coming out of hibernation soon- time to take action!

Download the identification pdfs, laminate them and put them up in your apiary
<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm>

Get the Asian Hornet Watch app for smart phone and tablet

Read up about traps and baits and be ready to deploy them- visit <https://ahat.org.uk>



Extract from Asian Hornet Newsletter no. 1 From: Anne Rowberry, Trustee and Vice-Chair

Now is the time to take an extra stroll around woodlands before they come into leaf to check no uninvited guests have been building nests. There won't be any Asian Hornets in the nests but it may indicate that there could be overwintering queens about to emerge in the area.

Hopefully your area Association has established an Asian Hornet team with each branch or club in the Association having their own team. It is really important that each member of the team is aware of the main identification points of the Hornet and has an information card to refer to if needed (these can be obtained from the NBU or downloaded from their website). Every beekeeper team member needs to be sure about the identifying features of the Asian Hornet (the Yellow Legged Hornet). We need beekeepers confident about what it looks like, able to refer sightings to NNS and, where possible, video, photograph or preserve the specimen.

It is time to get all those hornet traps ready: they are sold by Beekeeping Equipment Suppliers but can easily be made with plastic drink bottles and all the instructions are on the National Bee Unit site, take a look on Beebase.

It is the Spring and the only hornets around are likely to be overwintered queens or those joining us from France. When we put traps out remember to monitor them- there are several ways to eliminate killing some of the bycatch: these include a piece of sponge or tissue in the base of the traps that have no dry areas, small holes to aid escape etc. The method depends on the type of trap used. There seem to be two main baits sold, possibly with similar ingredients. Some Counties are already ordering the wasp attractant known as 'Suterra' (see footnote). If you use it please ensure you use disposable gloves, wash your hands when you finish and take care. It does contain traces of Sulphite and a very few people may have an allergic reaction, especially if it gets on the face. There has only been one suspected incident in the UK so far, possibly caused through dispensing the liquid into a lot of small containers. Although it may not have been caused by Suterra it is probably better to take precautions. It is very effective in attracting hornets. Some beekeepers used it on the edge of the apiary to keep hornets away from their bees, it was definitely the preferred food.

Controlling the Asian Hornet is not just a beekeeping problem. We need to be raising awareness: public gardens, schools, parks, allotments- in fact, all the public need to be aware. Overwintered queens will build low nests in sheltered places such as garages, shed roofs, sides of buildings etc. They will look similar to small wasp nests when they start but bigger and they will grow. Please don't remove these nests (the workers may have started to build a Secondary nest and they need to lead the trackers to that nest) just contact the NNSS and the inspectors will follow it up.

What can the beekeeper do to help to protect their bees except to be vigilant and look for hornets? The hornets often attack by flying under the hive from the back – a skirt from the base of the hive to the floor on three sides may help; let the grass grow especially in front as trackers in Jersey observed that the hornets were often patrolling a few inches above the ground in front of the hive. There is also a wire grid that can fit onto the front of the hive, it allows the bees to fly through but the hornets are apparently reticent to follow.

Research to isolate pheromones is making strides especially in France and there is some hope that the Asian Hornet numbers in the future may be controlled. We are continually learning more.

I will keep you all informed as we move into the active bee season.

Suterra is described as "wasp and fly bait" and can be bought online from www.pestcontroldirect.co.uk however, the AHAT website suggests that this is not the ideal bait for early in the season and recommends cloudy apple juice.

And finally.....

And when I die, be sure to tell the bees
and drape dark cloths of mourning on their hives
and tell them one who loved them and their ways is gone,
will no more search the summer skies for signs of their returning,
pollen-dusted, nectar-laden,
to the warm and whispering darkness of their cloistered, secret lives.





COURSES for BEEKEEPERS



Our course tutors are experts in beekeeping in both UK and Africa. They are volunteers; they do not receive a payment for running courses. Course fees go to support the work of Bees Abroad in the relief of poverty through beekeeping. Dawn Williamson and Paul Bloch will lead this course. They keep top bar hives in UK and have experience of projects in both East and West Africa.

An Introduction to Top Bar Hives - includes make your own hive or make your own moisturising lotion bars - Sunday 24th March

This course was a sell out in 2018 so by popular demand we are repeating it but with the option of making a moisturising lotion bar.....

This thought provoking and practical course aims to introduce participants to top bar hive beekeeping and its application in Africa and the UK. The course will include:

- A discussion about the practice of beekeeping in both East and West Africa based on various styles of hive.
- How to get started with top bar hive beekeeping in UK.
- Where to obtain bees.
- Hints and tips on top bar beekeeping in UK.
- Where to get further information, guidance and support.
- Tasting a selection of African honeys.
- Help and guidance in making a fully functional top bar hive suitable for use in UK. You may help someone else make theirs. Wood must be paid for in addition to the course fee.
- For those not making a top bar hive there will be an option to make a moisturising lotion bar using hive products.
- A discussion about beekeeping in the context of sustainable social enterprises for the relief of poverty.

Suitable for those with and without beekeeping experience.

This course is run in conjunction with the Fell Edge Farm Centre who are generously providing the venue and possible B&B info@beesabroad.org.uk

Date Saturday 14th March

Start/Finish 10.00 - 17.00

Venue Fell Edge Farm, Skipton, West Yorks. LS299JX

Course Fee (includes lunch and refreshments): £50

Cost of materials to make one hive: £70

Please book via Bees Abroad on-line shop at www.beesabroad.org.uk

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The Editor retains the right to amend submitted articles or to reject articles which appear, in her opinion, to be unsuitable. Items which do appear may not reflect the opinions of the Council of the NBKA.

EXTRACTORS

Members may borrow the NBKA extractors - 4-frame, hand driven kept at Brackenhurst and hired from Maurice Jordan. An electric one (with settling tank) is held by Glenis Swift 0115 9538617. The EasyBee extractor which is useful for extracting frames that hold honey that has granulated is held by Frank Chambers in Calverton (0115 965 2128).

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