

Beemaster

The Newsletter of the
Nottinghamshire Beekeepers' Association
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Please note:

Beemaster is published monthly. Contributions by 25th of prior month, please, to the Editor. Copy received after this date may have to be held over to the next Beemaster. The Editor retains the right to amend submitted articles or to reject articles which appear, in his opinion, to be unsuitable. Views expressed in Beemaster articles are not necessarily those of the Editor and may not reflect the opinions of the Council of the Nottinghamshire Beekeepers' Association.

Diary dates

Please refer to the NBKA website for latest updates

Nottingham region meetings remain cancelled until further notice, Newark region have started holding meetings by Zoom.

Members should keep an eye on the excellent **NBKA website** which is regularly updated.

www.nottsbees.org.uk

The website contains back issues of *Beemaster* from January 2019 onward.

The BBKA Exam Board has announced that, in light of COVID-19, **the autumn round of exams has been cancelled**. Also, the BBKA website has useful reminders about matters such as 'Your apiary is a place of work for your volunteers.'

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/tending-hives-during-covid-19>

The 89th **National Honey Show** will be held virtually – please see Griff Dixon's article on pages 14-15.

From the Editor

Stuart Humphreys introduces this month's newsletter

Welcome to this month's *Beemaster*!

At the time of writing there are no significant updates on COVID-19 and beekeeping.

Following last month's identification of European foulbrood (EFB) at Screveton, **Phil Khorassandjian**, from the Animal and Plant Health Agency, has kindly written an excellent, comprehensive piece on EFB especially for this newsletter.

For the first time since I took on the editorship, I have been inundated with more articles that we have space for this month. So, thanks for that and apologies to those of you whose contributions I have held over until next time. But please keep them coming!

Firstly, and sadly, **Andrew Barber** writes a fitting obituary for our long-standing member, David Guthrie.

Griff Dixon finds that his bees are distinctly less welcoming than they were earlier in the summer, and he describes taking colonies to the heather moors.

Penny Forsyth reminds us that, even though the amount of forage is decreasing, there is plenty for us to do in August to conclude the summer's activities and start preparing our bees for winter. Penny also keeps us up-to-date on the Asian Hornet Team; still no confirmed sightings on the GB mainland (touch wood).

In the second of our 'Meet the Council' series, Chairman **Andrew Barber** explains that his beekeeping journey started with skiving off school lessons!

One of the rays of sunshine during the privations of lockdown has been receiving a monthly email from Janet Bates asking me to add new members to the *Beemaster* mailing list. So I thought it would be a good idea to reach out and ask them to write a few words as to why they had joined, what they are hoping to get out of beekeeping in general and NBKA membership in particular. I was delighted to be inundated with positive responses, so this month sees the start of 'New members' corner' with initial contributions from **Miriam Lynch** and **Abdias Ceada**; I have more lined up for future newsletters.

Another of our 2020 intake, **David Turner-Brown**, sends us a photo of a wasps nest in a most unusual location – his old lawnmower!

Picking up on Griff's trip to the heather, **Maurice Jordan** explains what – in his 30 years' experience – the annual heather honey harvest entails (basically, lots of hard work by the sounds of it).

Anne Mason asks for your support in helping Bees Abroad, the NBKA's chosen charity, through these difficult times.

A trip to the farm shop brings back bittersweet childhood memories for **Alan Moulton**, whilst **Linda Jordan** quenches our thirsts with a tropical juice recipe.

I hope you enjoy the read. And stay safe and alert.

European foulbrood

APHA's **Phil Khorassandjian** tells us what to look out for and some do's & don'ts

European foulbrood

Beekeepers are probably horrified and fascinated in equal measure with the concept of European foulbrood (EFB). Horrified, because it is a notifiable disease which is readily transmitted and which can devastate a colony once it takes hold. Fascinated, possibly because many will not have seen it with their own eyes and are wary in case their bees fall victim to the disease without them noticing it.

But we should not be put off by “fear of the unknown”. Caught early enough and in a strong colony, the disease can be treated by a straightforward procedure and the colony will recover very quickly. As for recognising the signs of EFB, the advice given to beginners is useful for beekeepers of all persuasions – learn to recognise healthy brood comb and then investigate further if you see anything different! One of my first cases of EFB was when I was called out by a young, first-year beekeeper in the week before her BBKA Basic Assessment – you don't have to be experienced but you do have to be observant and you do of course need to look into your brood box.

EFB is caused by a bacterium *Melissococcus plutonius* which affects larvae of all ages. It grows in the mid-gut of the larva, competing with it for the nutrients present there. Larvae that die of the disease will have starved to death. This is why EFB is more often evident in small colonies during periods of dearth of forage.

There are two primary vectors for EFB transmission – bees and beekeepers. A strong healthy colony might rob a weak, infected colony and carry the disease back to its hive. EFB bacteria will survive in honey for many years. (American foulbrood bacterial spores will survive even longer – 30-40 years!)

Beekeepers can be very efficient in transmitting the disease, sometimes through lack of good hygiene control, sometimes through trying to help fellow beekeepers by loaning equipment or donating combs of brood. EFB bacteria can be spread via contaminated hive tools, gloves, bee suits, hive parts, brood combs, super combs... I would guess that most of us have been guilty at some time to have asked for or provided a frame of eggs and larvae to a friend with a queenless colony. We could so easily have given, or received, more than was bargained for. One of my colleagues who found EFB recently tracked the source to second-hand floors bought on eBay – they looked clean enough but they hadn't been sterilised and they caused an outbreak of foulbrood hundreds of miles away.

Treatment for EFB depends on the given context:

- A strong colony with minimal infection and diagnosed before mid-July can be shook swarmed and will have time to draw out comb and store sufficient honey to see it through the winter.
- A small colony or a heavily infected one will not be able to recover whatever treatment is carried out. The only recourse in such cases is destruction to prevent the spread of disease to healthy colonies.

Good success rates against re-infection are achieved with whole-apiary shook swarms following EFB diagnosis.

If you have concerns after a hive inspection take a few good photos – both general views of suspect combs and close up shots of suspect cells – and send them to your bee inspector. Try not to poke at larvae with a twig or matchstick or cocktail stick but lift it out with pointed tweezers. (It's not easy to distinguish between a larva mashed up by poking with a blunt instrument and one melted down through disease!)

BeeBase

In order to keep notifiable pests and diseases under control in the UK we rely on beekeepers to tell us who they are and where they keep their bees. As long as their details are kept up-to-date, we will know where they keep their bees and how to contact them if there is a possibility that their bees might be affected by a foulbrood outbreak close to their apiary. What we don't know with any certainty is how many beekeepers there are nor the number of colonies of bees which are not registered or their locations. So please register on BeeBase if you are not registered and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

BeeBase is kept up-to-date by bee inspectors following their visits to beekeepers' apiaries, by inspectors when contacted by beekeepers with queries, and by beekeepers themselves logging in to their accounts. The clever thing about BeeBase are the algorithms or computer programmes that filter the data following a foulbrood diagnosis to flag up apiaries at risk. As bee inspectors we each have a designated geographical area of responsibility and every morning we are presented with a list of "our" beekeepers in priority order for inspections.

Other than some clever maths that calculates the likely risk for bees at your apiary, the main factor that determines our "red list" is the precise location of each apiary. Since we concentrate initially on apiaries within a 3km radius of a foulbrood outbreak we need each apiary location to be as accurate as is possible. Most people these days have smartphones with GPS capability or have access to the internet and it's easy enough to get an OS grid reference for your apiary with an app on your phone or by locating your apiary on a satellite photo...

So, it all sounds quite straightforward. Except that to inspect your bees, we need to get in touch with you and that means having a phone number on which we are able to reach you and an email address so that you are notified of disease outbreaks in your area. We try to arrange inspections to avoid darting back and forth across the region thereby inspecting several apiaries in a given area on the same day. We are therefore at our most efficient when we can phone you to arrange an inspection – and at our least efficient when we have to resort to writing letters and the postal service.

Swarms and disease

We're right in the middle of the swarming season and swarms are a mixed blessing for those on the swarm collectors' list. Setting aside bumble bees in bird boxes, masonry bees in garden walls, and bees in chimneys, swarm collectors will have their work cut out from the middle of April all the way through to August.

Swarm collectors perform a valuable service for both the community and for their local association of course. Members of the public are reassured (and impressed!) when an experienced beekeeper quickly retrieves a swarm from their garden and it's a Brownie point in the PR stakes for their local association and beekeepers generally. Many swarm collectors will give away their catch to new beekeepers to help get them started.

But (you know what's coming next...) you can collect more than you bargained for and a new beekeeper might learn about bee diseases rather sooner than they may have expected! There are ways to mitigate the potential problems that would result from bagging a diseased colony and following a few simple rules could save you a great deal of trouble.



Figure 1: Sac brood.



Figure 2: Sac brood.

So, what might you get with a swarm other than a free colony? All of the usual suspects of course – bees with phoretic varroa (and all the allied viruses, principally Deformed Wing Virus), queens with a genetic propensity for chalk brood or sac brood, *Nosema*, Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus – but you may also get a swarm carrying foulbrood bacteria. The workers in a swarm will have filled their honey sacs with honey and that honey will be infected with foulbrood bacteria if the colony was infected.



Figure 3: Foul brood. A great photo showing EFB at various stages. Contorted, discoloured, melted down. And what's under those perforated cappings? What's under those sunken cappings? AFB was also found in this colony.

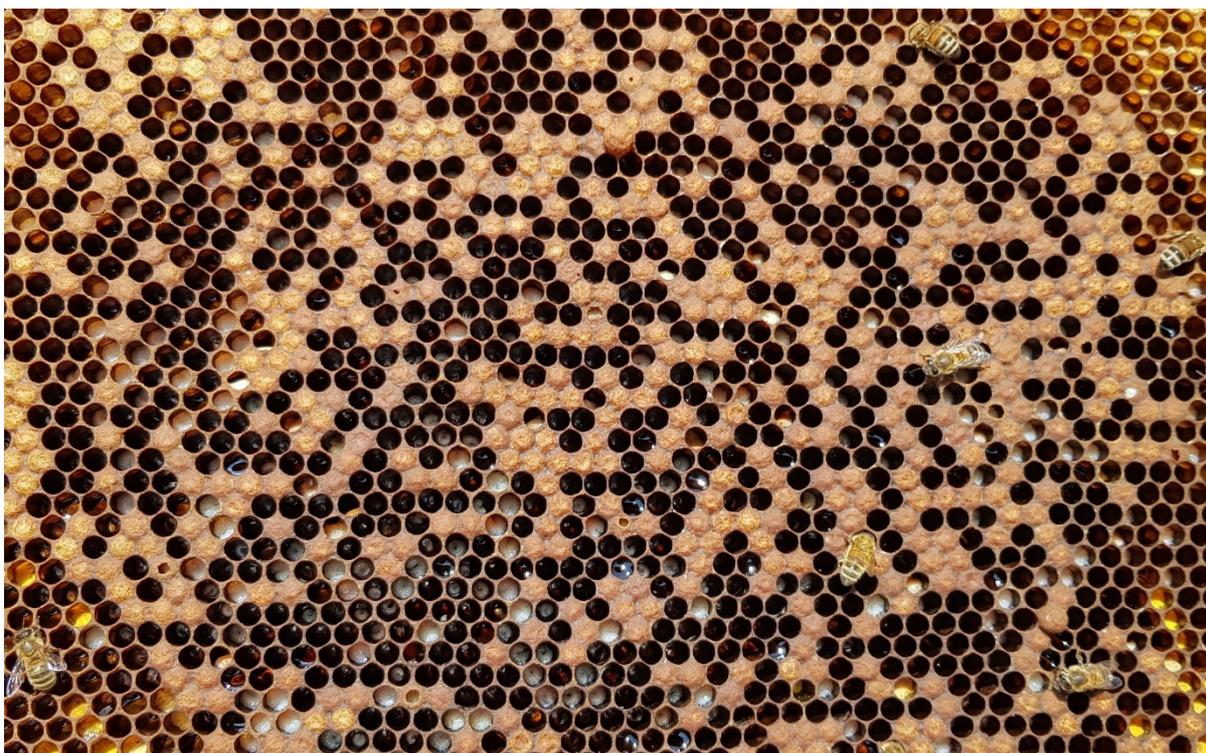


Figure 4: A good general view of a comb with EFB. Let your eyes get drawn to the cells that only seem half full....

Under “normal circumstances” – with no beekeeper involved – the swarm will move into a natural cavity and build comb using the only source of energy they have – honey in their sacs. Not only can the queen not start to lay eggs but the workers cannot store nectar/honey until they have built comb. By the time cells have been drawn out sufficiently to take stores the potentially infected honey has been consumed.

But beekeepers can upset the natural course of events. We use old brood comb to attract the swarm, or give them drawn comb when we hive them up or we start to feed them straightaway. This gives the bees in a swarm an opportunity to deposit their stores on the open comb and with it the bacteria contained in the honey that will be fed to the brood.

And let’s remember why we have old comb – because we decided at some stage that we didn’t want it in our hive! Even if it’s “our” old comb and we know its history it will contain a build-up of pathogens acquired over 2-3 years or more and it could potentially infect a healthy swarm.

As I write this I had a phone call from a beginner in our local association. He had some bees in his shed showing an interest in a hive he was working on, so he put the hive outside and put some lemon grass oil on the combs to see if he could attract a swarm to move in. I was reasonably impressed until he mentioned old combs and that the incoming bees would clean them out. I advised him not to let inquisitive bees clean out honey from old combs at which he informed me that there was no honey – just dead bees! He didn’t know how the bees had died – “possibly starvation” – since the hive and combs of dead bees had been given to him by a friend. I trust that he followed my advice to burn the combs of dead bees, melt down the wax and scorch all the hive parts.

How should we deal with swarms we catch?

- Start by collecting them in a clean container – be it a skep, nuc box, cardboard box.
- Take them to an “isolation apiary”. If you don’t have access to an isolation apiary then place them well away from other colonies in your apiary so that bees do not drift between hives.
- Hive them up in a clean, sterilised hive with new frames and foundation and let them draw out comb for 24-48 hours but don’t feed them during this period.
- Feed them after 48 hours to build them up.
- Carry out a full colony health inspection after 6 weeks – two brood cycles.

Nothing onerous there, I hope – just some simple rules to observe.

Phil Khorassandjian

Seasonal Bee Inspector

More information

If anyone has difficulty logging in to BeeBase they can write to Tim or Phil at the following email addresses:

timothy.roper@apha.gov.uk

phil.khorassandjian@apha.gov.uk

We will include an article on EFB in next month’s *Beemaster*; in the meantime, Phil has provided the following links which may be of interest to members.

Register on BeeBase: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/>

Foulbrood Disease of Honey

Bees <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=7>

Control of European

Foulbrood <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=1065>

Hive Cleaning and

Sterilisation <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=1069>

Apiary and hive

hygiene <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=434>

Shook Swarming <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=1075>

Care of Colonies After Shook

Swarms <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=1064>

Apps for your phone:

“GPS OS”, “Hornet Watch”

Locate your apiary: <https://gridreferencefinder.com/>

Obituary: David Guthrie

Andrew Barber remembers a long-standing member and gentleman

It is my sad duty to report the death of one of our most senior members, namely David Guthrie.

Those of you who have been in the Association for a long time will remember David. He was a member for many years and was the Honorary Secretary when I joined.

As Secretary he was meticulous with his personal administration. When I took over his job, he presented me with a spreadsheet of when secretarial tasks had to be done, month by month. When on the Council he was always regarded as like the Father of the House, dispensing much sage wisdom.

He was a lovely man. The archetypal English gentleman who never had a bad word to say about anybody, always polite and courteous, but with a wicked sense of humour. He was always good company and I, for one, will miss his stories.

He had a distinguished career in the Royal Air Force where he rose to the rank of Squadron Leader, ending his time in the service at RAF Cranwell as an instructor.

After that he became a captain with BA, commuting from Newark to London. He always knew when the heather was ready because he kept an eye open for it from the cockpit!

Recently he became unwell and moved from Newark to a care home near Stamford where his daughter lives.

He died on 12 July. Our Newark meetings have not been the same without David, his late wife Di and father-in-law Ken.

It is hoped that when COVID is finally over, some sort of commemoration can be made.



Notes from Norwell

By **Griff Dixon**, including his Honorary Secretary's report

In the apiary

During July I noted a distinct change in my apiary's attitude from reasonably pleasant bees, mainly happy when being inspected, to a number that were giving me some grief and trying to tell me I was being too inquisitive. I saw wasps, robbing and even drones being shown the door in July, but thankfully no hornets, unlike a few years ago when I saw European ones for the first time. This year I have done more beekeeping than I think I have done in the previous five seasons!

I was mainly looking at the summer honey supers with the bees fervently saying that they were theirs rather than mine! Certainly, the summer crop did not look as heavy as the spring crop which was very abundant this year. I started to set up Porter escape clearer boards on some with my veil being attacked but they did not deter me – unlike previous seasons where I have had to step away and pack up quick. Perhaps I am getting more tolerant to nasty bees – my new Sherriff bee suit does seem more robust than the Amazon-purchased ones I have.

Beware having wet supers in your van or car. It only takes a few minutes for the word to spread and you are invaded by bees who do not listen at your request to go away!

A note on Porter bee escapes: I have had 100% success rate with these... Yes, a few bees may remain and need a swipe off with a bee brush, but overall all my supers removed so far this year have been with Porter escapes. Even taking off three supers at a time forcing the bees down into three empty wet ones have all worked well. Some may say Porter escapes are no good – but beware they may be wanting to sell you something!



Wasp being evicted! Drones being shown the door Cromwell Lock move Don't rob my van, rob this

On my last inspections a small number of colonies were doing late supersedure, and a few others were looking queenless. On secondary inspections, looking at uniting, nearly all the queenless ones appeared to actually have queens, as eggs started to appear rather than workers starting to manipulate colonies as much as I thought.

I have been planning to take hives to the heather, and had been organising this all year as I mucked it up last year so was not going to fail again. Floors have been bolted to the brood boxes on opposite corners and the heavy-duty orange straps used to keep everything together. I made sure that each colony was big enough to handle the anticipated heather flow and added a wet super for heather honey filling. I have taken an initial seven and have a further 12 to take if I want to really go mad.

I do wonder how I will get them all back when they are filled up. I noted that David Kemp in his heather days actually extracted on-site, so I am wondering how I could do that with clearer boards and scraping the combs into buckets. I could take some empty supers so the clearer boards will allow the heather super to be removed leaving the colony as heavy as it was when it arrived – thinking about it at the moment.

It was a real Newark Region event meeting: Maurice and Linda Jordan (thanks for the help locating my colonies – same again in 4 weeks when bringing them back!), Andrew Barber and David Chase all “on the heather” at the same time.

My colony at Cromwell Lock has now been relocated to my main apiary. The decision was based on the Trent floods. Also, access has always been tricky crossing the lock with a barrow and as I cannot swim; any trip into the canal would not be a good idea! It was a bit of a faff moving it as I had to break it into a separate brood box and supers and unite them back at the apiary. It's actually up on the heather moors now for a holiday!

The proposed new out apiary at the Horological Institute in Upton is back on for next spring 2021. They have contacted me to make arrangements – probably only four proposed colonies rather than the ten I suggested in a moment of madness.

I don't know if I will get to the tonne of honey extracted this year but I am giving it a good go assuming I can get all the colonies I have prepared on the heather and a good flow occurs.

NBKA matters

With regard to Association matters and BBKA affairs there is not much to report.

I note the 89th National Honey Show is going virtual with pre-recorded demonstrations and lectures, with on-line social events on the evenings 22-24 October 2020.

www.honeyshow.co.uk

Should the NBKA think of putting together a Virtual Beginners Course if COVID-19 is going to be lingering around in 2021?

View from the Vale (of Belvoir)

How bees are faring in the south-eastern corner of Notts by **Stuart Humphreys**

July certainly went out with a bang – 32 degrees Celsius (or 90 degrees Fahrenheit in old currency), pretty much double the temperature at the start of the month! Unfortunately, this prompted an early evening thunderstorm and torrential downpour that, I expect, will have caught out those bees that didn't manage to return to our apiary in time. In fact, weather-wise July wasn't at all plain sailing for our bees. They have had to contend with periodic high winds and regular heavy rain showers. It's a sight to behold when, mid-afternoon, clouds of bees hurry back from the surrounding gardens and fields, desperate to return to the safety of their hives ahead of the next downpour.

We always like to compare notes with how Griff is faring 30 miles up the River Trent from us. Like his bees, ours have been a bit more angsty lately as we inspect for any signs of late swarm preparations, EFB, etc. It's probably the sight of the clearing boards that upsets them: we guess they are simply very protective toward their hard-earned honey stores.

Unlike Griff, we don't have the patience or manual dexterity to get Porter bee escapes to work reliably, so we resort instead to our collection (thanks, Thornes) of clearing boards. We prefer the Forrest and Canadian types, especially the latter with its series of upside-down traffic cones. We tend to use our Rhombus clearer as a last resort as we are sure at least one of our colonies has sussed out how to beat this...

As we are only six miles (10km) from Screveton, we have been diligently looking out for any signs of disease. Fortunately, all seems well, with uncapped larvae looking pristine white and in the correct position.



We started the year with six over-wintered colonies. We now enter late summer with five queenright hives plus a sixth hive in which we are uniting a queenless colony with a small queenright colony produced from a Demaree split. Although we intend keeping perhaps only 2-3 colonies next year, we will be pleased if we manage to bring all six through the coming autumn and winter.

This month in your apiary: August

Penny Forsyth finds plenty to do in the month ahead

August is a quieter month for the bees as in many areas the summer flowers are coming to an end and the nectar flow is finishing – unless you have Himalayan balsam nearby or are taking your bees to the heather. There's still forage about: sunshine will encourage willowherb, blackberry, red clover, borage, golden rod and garden flowers and the bees will work them enthusiastically while they last.

Here in the north of the county the lime was a disappointment, as the peak of flowering coincided with a cold, wet and windy spell of weather that prevented a good nectar flow and kept the bees close to home. There is ivy still to come to provide a late season boost to stores but we should be mindful of our bees' needs as we take our final honey harvest: that golden bounty has not been gathered for our benefit alone.

As the forage decreases, so will the laying rate of the queen and the brood area will decrease and fill up with winter stores. Drones are no longer needed and the workers throw them unceremoniously out of the entrance to starve: the focus now is on the winter bees.

These bees are different for they stay within the hive all winter and do not pass beyond the nurse bee stage, meaning that their hypopharyngeal glands remain full of brood food ready for the spring rush of brood. The survival of the hive during that critical time in early spring is entirely dependent on these winter bees: for them to survive they must be well fed, healthy and free from varroa mites and the viruses they bring.

This means that, for the beekeeper, there's plenty to do in August. This is the month to take off your last honey crop, treat for varroa and start autumn feeding. It's a time to take steps to prevent robbing by other colonies and wasps – reducing entrances, setting up wasp traps. It's also a time for preparing equipment and comb for storage, for cleaning and repairing everything that needs it and for making a list of what you need to buy in the late season sales.

Jobs for August

-  Reduce hive entrances to help the bees defend against wasps and robbing by other colonies; if you haven't already done so, set up wasp traps: a mix of beer and jam works well, plum for preference.
-  Check hives carefully for gaps and small holes that could allow wasps or robbing bees to enter and plunder their stores: seal them up tightly. I use beeswax and propolis scrapings or small pieces of foam as a temporary fix but gaffer tape and Blu Tack are also useful. Don't forget to check floors and roofs, too.
-  Finish taking off the honey harvest, clean extractor & equipment and put away.
-  Check the bees have sufficient stores, clean & prepare feeders, buy in fondant/sugar/syrup.
-  Carry out a thorough disease inspection, ask for help if worried.
-  Decide on your varroa treatment plan, buy in what you need – and use it properly!
-  Keep a treatment record.
-  Unite small colonies.
-  Start reducing the number of supers on each hive: consolidate or put over the crownboard for the bees to move stores down.
-  Maintain vigilance for Asian hornet activity: although the queens are confined to the nest at this time of the season, workers will be out looking for food and hawking around your hives. Baits should be protein (cat food/tuna) and changed regularly.
-  Put empty supers and drawn comb into storage protected from wax moth.
-  Clean and repair equipment before storing and make a list of needs & wants.
-  Look back and take stock: what could you have done differently? better?

NBKA Asian Hornet Team news

Penny Forsyth reports on the current UK situation

I am happy to report that there have been no confirmed reports of Asian hornet activity in the UK, almost certainly due to the vast reduction in freight and tourist traffic from the Continent due to coronavirus restrictions. However, the recent reopening of the tourism industry does bring with it a heightened risk of accidental incursions and so vigilance must be maintained.

In the Channel Islands the first secondary nest of 2020 was found on 10 July: this was also the sixteenth nest spotted so far this year and the total stands at 23 to date. Another secondary nest was found on 15 July and there will inevitably be more. We tend to expect to find nests high up in trees but one was found at head height in a grassy bank, another at ground level in brambles and the twenty-first nest found this year was in a wine barrel in a pub cellar – it seems that Asian hornets don't read the books either! The numbers were significantly lower earlier in the season but the optimism was short-lived. Asian hornet monitoring activity was greatly curtailed during lockdown but did not have a noticeable effect on monitoring or control as members of the public are well-informed and have been extremely vigilant. With the local easing of restrictions the Jersey Asian Hornet Group was able to hold a socially-distanced review and strategy meeting and will now hold them weekly as before. Their Facebook page is a useful source of pictures and information, well worth a look.

Despite the lack of reported Asian hornet incursions, we should continue to be alert for their presence in and around our apiaries and gardens and in the wider environment: we cannot yet be certain that we have had no overwintering queens on the UK mainland. Since any such queens will now be busy in their nests, any visible activity will be of workers hawking around our colonies in search of a meal. Traps should consist of protein-based baits such as small scraps of meat, fish or prawns on an open dish placed where it can be easily monitored. As the lockdown is further relaxed and we venture further afield we should maintain our vigilance for hornets and nests, remembering to look up – secondary nests are frequently built in tall trees. It goes without saying that we should check regularly our own sheds, porches, garages, carports, house eaves, and stacks of old hive boxes, etc. Don't forget..... See it, Snap it, Send it!

Non-Native Species Secretariat <http://www.nonnativespecies.org>

If you think you see an Asian hornet or nest be sure to report it immediately, preferably with a photo, via the Asian Hornet Watch app, downloadable for smartphones, or email details to: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk and please let me know.

As I mentioned last month, the BBKA has launched an interactive map on its website giving the locations, names and contact details of AHAT members across the country. This works in the same way as the Swarm Map and is drawing data in real time from the information in the eR2 database. Anyone requiring help or advice about a suspected sighting simply enters their postcode and the relevant section of the map comes up showing coloured pins: blue for the co-ordinator, red for verifiers.



Asian Hornet Team map

You will find our [advice here](#).

Please action this asap to ensure we can all help the Government in the coordinated response to this invasive species.

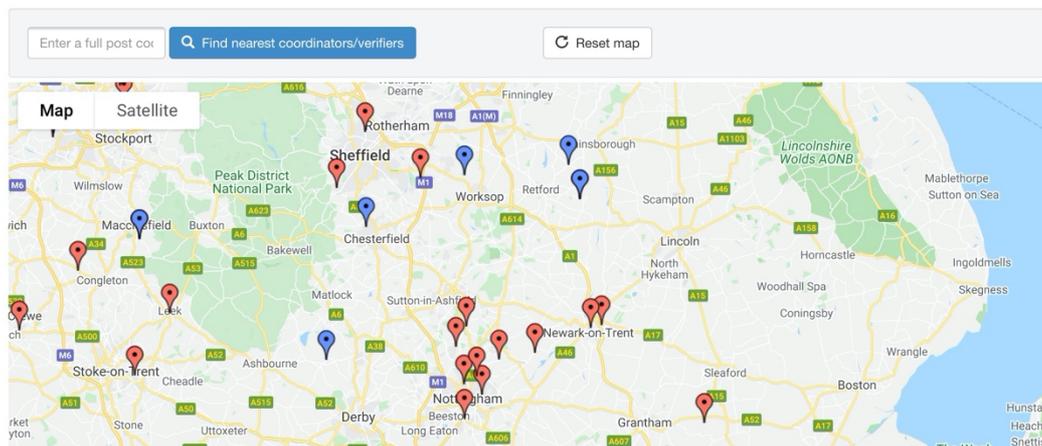
The Asian Hornet Team can arrange assistance with the identification of suspect Asian hornet sightings or leads.

[The AHT training exercise is ready for members please click here](#)

The exercise needs to be completed for you to have cover for taking part in AHT activities. More information can be found about insurance on this additional [Asian hornet page](#)

Legend: blue pin = AHT coordinator (Team Leader), red pin = AHT verifier (member of team)

NB: Changes are made via the ER2 system not the office, please contact your membership secretary



Clicking on the pin gives the name and contact details. NBKA makes a good showing with 10 members visible: you will find the map via the Asian Hornet tab on the BBKA website.

If you would like to be involved in the NBKA Asian Hornet Team please contact me at pennyforsyth16@gmail.com.

Meet the Council: Andrew Barber

For Association Chairman **Andrew Barber**, it started with a skive off school

My adventures in beekeeping all started with a skive. It was in my first year at secondary school in the early 1960s when my great friend, the late Graham Hardingham, suggested that we joined the bee club.

‘Why would I want to do that?’ I said. ‘I’m not interested in bees.’

‘Neither am I’, he replied, ‘but it gets you out of lessons.’

So, it proved to be. Our headmaster, Bill Wood, was Mr Bee in the area and ran hundreds of colonies throughout the county. We were often taken out of the classroom at a moment’s notice to go for a swarm or complete some other beekeeping task. It wouldn’t happen today. Schools were quite progressive in some ways as we were taught gardening and beekeeping.

Mr Wood had a bee house built at great expense from the education budget. It was divided into two sections. One was the extracting area with lots of top class extracting equipment, and the other half was the bee house itself which had about eight beehives inside, four either side. This meant that beekeeping could be carried out at any time of day or night and under any weather conditions.

Equipment for the boy beekeepers (I can’t remember any girls taking part) was minimal. Trousers were tucked into socks and primitive veils were tucked into shirts; gloves were not allowed. Mr Wood wore a veil, but the veil was usually piled up on top of his head. He got stung in the face quite a lot, but he was as hard as nails. Personally, I was terrified for most of the time.

Later when I became a teacher myself, I met one of the staff who had served under Mr Wood.

‘Ah,’ he said. ‘I remember you. You were one of Bill Wood’s ‘slave workers’ weren’t you?’

‘What do you mean?’ I replied.

‘Well you used to work all hours extracting his honey, coming in at the weekend and in the evenings.’

‘Yes’, I said.

‘Did he pay you?’

‘Well, no.’

‘Well, you were a slave worker then’. It had never occurred to me before. But somewhere what started as a skive became a lifetime interest.

I don't know how long I have been a member of the Association but I'm probably the third longest serving member I think, after only David Kemp and David Chambers.

Things have changed in many ways from when I started. Then there was no varroa, no oilseed rape and a teetering membership. What at one time was an eccentric pastime for a few has become an extremely popular pastime for many.

In my time I have been Honorary Secretary, President, Steward, Show Secretary, County Show Judge and, at present, Chair of the Council. I also run classes in the Newark area for beginner beekeepers and run the annual auction of bees and beekeeping equipment. I also give talks to interested organisations all over the county.



I currently run 40-plus colonies, which has been a godsend over the recent few months and has given me plenty to do. My other hobbies include: military history, clay pigeon shooting, and painting. I also have a collection of military vehicles.

With nearly 60 years' experience of beekeeping, I still make stupid mistakes and would agree with Alec Thomson about the value of exams. However, the important thing is to get in your bees, observe and learn from your mistakes.

New members' corner

New members **Miriam Lynch** and **Abdias Ceada** explain why they've joined the NBKA

Miriam writes:

So why do I want to keep bees and why join NBKA now? I grew up with the sounds, appearance and even some of the smells of nature on a small farm. Urban life has, for me, become the norm but nature has always been a balm to me in my day-to-day life.

Like many I have noticed over the last few years the severe decline of our insect populations... When was the last time you needed to clean your car window due to fly remains after a journey? The quiet of the first few weeks of lockdown highlighted the solace nature provides.

Now I am not naïve – owning some bees will not solve this, but the behaviours it encourages should help other species as well. I spent quite a bit of early lockdown in my garden noticing the different species of bumblebees, hoverflies, and ants. Also, I noted the decline of the ladybird and the lower numbers of honeybees this year.

I have spoken to my neighbours, some of whom are terribly excited about the prospect of having a hive next door. I am also fascinated by their social structure, their interactions and how they find their way around.

I feel if I am going to get into beekeeping I must take the time and trouble to get it right.

To me, buying some bees without adequate knowledge and learning how to handle them correctly could add to their problems, so I joined NBKA. I know the internet can be a great source of information but that a little bit of knowledge is a dangerous thing. Therefore, I have scanned some of the website to glean information on what sources of information to use and have asked about coming to the practical days if and when they restart.

I am excited but daunted at the prospect of a handling the queen (in case I injure her). The knowledge that an outbreak of EFB occurred in Nottinghamshire highlighted my need to know enough about caring for them before I take them on.

I am hoping to meet up with some of you when we can and glean some pearls of your collective wisdom. It is quite refreshing to know that you have room for active debate and that if I ask three different beekeepers the same question I am likely to get at least four different responses!

Abdias writes:

Hi everyone! During this lockdown I've been thinking a lot about the bees and the great work they do. I started seeing some bumblebees and then I started thinking about honeybees and how hard they work to make honey and how good it is. So I started my research, reading a lot about them and realising I want to help the planet and help the bees. I've just bought my National beehive...



I'm so excited about it, finding something that makes me so happy. So this is my new hobby and maybe, in the future, a profession.

Abdias is hoping that another NBKA member will mentor him. He is based in Carrington. If you are willing and able to help, please contact him at hermes_abdias@hotmail.com.

The wasps nest

David Turner-Brown's old lawn mower provided an unusual home for wasps

David explains that he knew there was a wasps nest but hadn't realised how big it was until he pulled out his lawn mower...



Going to the heather

Maurice Jordan describes what the heather honey harvest entails

Going to the heather: easy to type but not easy to do...

I first went to the heather 30 years ago. Alan Lewis introduced me to a farmer where he took his bees every year, the agreement was a jar of honey for every hive. The site is very small but I only took five or six colonies so no problem. As my beekeeping business expanded I looked for a site with more room and found one not far away that could accommodate many more colonies. The arrangement the same: a jar per colony.

Alan was my mentor on heather. He always said 8th August was the date to move the bees but over the years I have found the last week in July is now a better date.

After Alan retired from taking his bees to the heather, I carried on and was the only one using the site for many years. Heather honey commands a high price on the shop shelf as it is known as the champagne of honeys; but it is not easy to get, hence the price.

First you cannot simply take a beehive and dump it on the moor and expect to get heather honey. The colony needs to be bursting with bees headed by a young queen who will keep laying throughout her time on the moor as the bee mortality rate is high and they need replacing.

The second problem is the weather. I always moved my bees first thing in the morning. I would get there and the first thing to do was to 'phone the wife to let her know I had arrived safely. The conversation was usually: 'What's the weather like?'. My reply: 'I have just put my top coat on and the rain is coming down horizontally.' 'Oh, the weather is lovely here in Sutton-on-Trent,' would be her reply.

From then on it's down to the bees. Don't forget to supply them with a super of drawn comb as the flow (if there is one) comes and goes very quickly and they may not have time to draw foundation. After about two weeks I like to return to check all is well. I have a quick check inside to see if there is any honey; just cracking the crown board will provide the answer as there will be the beautiful smell of heather honey – once smelt, never forgotten!

I usually fetch the hives back the second week in September. This time hopefully you will need a second pair of hands as a brood box and super full of honey can be extremely heavy.

So back home, and the next problem is extracting the honey. Heather honey is thixotropic, so does not spin like normal honey – it needs to be pressed out which means more expense. A second-hand heather press at Lincoln auction usually makes about two hundred pounds.

Finally, you get it into a jar, and after all that trouble and expense is it worth it? I think so. If you have never tasted heather honey from the Derbyshire moors, you don't know what you're missing!

Fundraising for Bees Abroad

Anne Mason asks for your support in helping our chosen charity at this difficult time

As I am sure you are aware, small charities such as Bees Abroad are having an especially tough time during the coronavirus pandemic with the usual sources of fundraising, such as appearances at agricultural shows, BKA meetings, etc., no longer possible.

At Easter, as a way of saying thank you to the NHS workers on my street, I knitted Rainbow Bees and popped a chocolate truffle inside as a little yummy gesture of gratitude.

To try and 'do my bit' for Bees Abroad I am knitting Rainbow Bees, costing £3.00 (including truffle) or Rainbow Bee bags, costing £10.00 and will deliver them or put them in the post if that is more practical. (If by post, the cost of postage and package will need to be added.)



If you would like either of the above or both I would be very happy to receive your order. Please contact me by email anne.mason3@btinternet.com or ring me on 01159 223703.

Your support would be greatly appreciated.

Une souvenir d'enfance

Alan Moulton makes a culinary discovery which brings back childhood memories...

As a child I hated rhubarb. We used to steal some from a neighbour's garden – still green but as kids we were keen to eat it. Then mother thought it would be beneficial for a growing child!

And to make things worse, when I went to lodgings at university my landlady asked if there was anything I disliked. I said rhubarb quite honestly but there seemed to be a misunderstanding and guess what... Once a week (as a treat) I got it – I said nothing but was relieved when later I got a flat!

Well, all was well until lockdown and I went with my wife to the local farm shop. My wife saw rhubarb in abundance. I could not stop her buying it – I didn't have the heart!

So what to do? I went on the internet – Good Housekeeping – and found a simple recipe. Baked rhubarb in honey, fantastic! It is great once cooked and served with ice cream.

My modified recipe is given below. This serves 4 people.

Bon appetit!

Ingredients:

2 large sticks of rhubarb
2 table spoons of honey
Ice cream

Method:

1. Top and tail the rhubarb sticks and slice them diagonally into pieces 1 cm in size.
2. Baste them well in the honey.
3. Lay them on a baking tray in a preheated oven set at mark 6 and roast them on the middle shelf for 20 minutes.
4. Let them cool a while, then serve with a scoop of ice cream (for each serving).

Recipe of the month: Tropical juice quencher

Linda Jordan anticipates a warm August...

Makes 4-6 servings

Ingredients:

200ml (7 fluid oz) pineapple juice
200ml (7 fluid oz) orange juice
60ml (2 fluid oz) lime juice
60ml (2 fluid oz) clear honey
570ml (1 pint) sparkling mineral water

Method:

1. Mix the honey and a small amount of juice together in a jug until the honey has dissolved.
2. Add the rest and chill until ready to serve.
3. Just before serving stir in sparkling water and ice (optional).
4. You could make ice cubes with extra lime juice to add a bit of extra sparkle.
5. Slices of fresh orange and/or limes also look good.

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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).

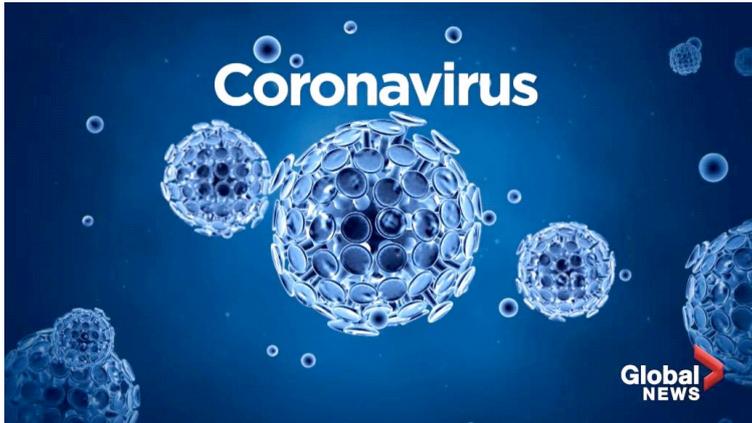
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ADVERTISEMENT RATES

Advertisements free to paid-up members but 10p per word – minimum charge £1 to non-members. Circulation approx 300 throughout the UK and abroad.

Short adverts may be paid for in First and Second Class postage stamps which should be sent directly to the Editor. Cheques should be made out to NBKA and sent to the Treasurer.



Beekeeping has many different challenges and this year is no different, except it us and not the bees in danger this time.

Bees are unaffected but we Beekeepers have to take great care when going to and handling our bees, collecting equipment, as well as the recommended distance between other people.

During the COVID 19 Virus crisis, The Honey Pot at Canal Street is open by appointment only to customers wanting Beekeeping Equipment and Honey etc. See our web site www.thehoneypot.store for up to date information.

BEEKEEPING MUST GO ON Whilst we are closed to the casual caller, you can arrange a weekday and a time to suit and meet you there individually maintaining our social distance.

CONTACT By email or send a message from the new web site.

CASH and CARRY BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT 2020 - 2021 Price list available, major cards accepted,

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2020 Sale Days Cancelled

Online sale

Monday 31st August - Monday 14th September.
Sale orders over £100 carriage paid within the UK.

All our usual second quality hive parts,
second quality frames and
usual bargains will be available.

Example frame prices are below

- 50 SN1/DN1 - £20
- 50 SN4/DN4 - £24
- 50 14"x12" - £30