

# Beemaster



The Newsletter of the  
Nottinghamshire Beekeepers' Association  
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Issue No. 371

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Cover photo: Bee on a hellebore in February, Erika Humphreys

Other photo credits: Stuart Humphreys (page 9), Erika Humphreys (p10), Alison Knox (pp17), Diane Kridger (p18), Penny Forsyth (pp18,20), Anne & Rob Mason (pp25,28)

*Please note:*

Beemaster is published monthly. Contributions by 25<sup>th</sup> 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

Including your opportunity to pick up a bargain at the local auctions later this month

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| Monday, 2 March<br>7.30pm              | <b>Nottingham Region meeting</b><br>Eagle's Nest Community Centre, Gedling Road, Arnold NG5 6NZ<br>Presentation by <b>Gerry Collins</b> on <b>Swarm Control</b><br><i>Gerry is a very knowledgeable speaker, great to listen to and learn from. This is a night to remind you that we will soon be back working with the bees.</i><br>Kitchen support: Diane Kidger, Adrian Kennedy, Martyn Nisbet |
| Saturday, 14 March<br>9.00am to 4.30pm | <b>BeeTradex</b><br>Hall H2, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire CV8 2LG   |
| Monday, 16 March<br>8.00pm             | <b>Newark Region meeting</b><br>Ferry Inn, North Muskham NG23 6HB  |
| Saturday, 21 March<br>10.30am          | <b>Lincoln BKA Auction</b><br>Lincolnshire Showground, Grange-de-Lings, Lincoln LN2 2NA  |
| Saturday, 28 March<br>2.00pm           | <b>NBKA Auction</b><br>Newark Showground, Lincoln Road, Newark NG24 2NY  |
| Friday, 3 April to<br>Sunday, 5 April  | <b>BBKA Spring Convention</b><br>Harper Adams University College, Newport, Shropshire<br>TF10 8NB  |
| Monday, 6 April<br>7.30pm              | <b>Nottingham Region meeting</b><br>Eagle's Nest Community Centre, Gedling Road, Arnold NG5 6NZ<br>Presentation by <b>Alec Thomson</b> on <b>Queen Rearing</b>   |
| Saturday, 18 April<br>2.00pm           | <b>Peterborough &amp; District BKA auction</b><br>Sacrewell Training Centre, Thornhaugh, Peterborough PE8 6HJ  |
| Monday, 20 April<br>8.00pm             | <b>Newark Region meeting</b><br>Ferry Inn, North Muskham NG23 6HB  |

More details available on the Association's website: <http://nottsbees.org.uk>

## From the Editor

Some introductory comments from new Editor, **Stuart Humphreys**

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The first thing to say is a big *Thank You!* to **Penny Forsyth**, together with her regular contributors, for having produced such an excellent, informative newsletter for the last few years. Personally, I find it invaluable to find out about the ups and downs of other beekeepers in our great county and to be prompted on what I should (and shouldn't) be doing.

My wife, Erika, and I started keeping bees nine years ago. Alerted by the widespread media reports of the plight of the honey bee, we intended to help out by keeping a couple of colonies. Inevitably, we now have six...

We were fortunate to attend the beginners' evening class run by **Maurice Jordan** and **Andrew Barber**. Since then they have generously and unswervingly offered us wise counsel (my favourite: 'Bees don't read books') and – usually at short, panicky notice – helped us deal with unruly colonies that we have been unable to bend to our will.

Inspired by the selfless examples set by Penny, Maurice, Andrew and others – and with retirement ruling out my habitual 'too busy at work' excuse – I thought I should try and 'do my bit' and take on the editorship of the newsletter. With your support I hope to maintain the high standard that has been set by Penny and, before her of course, **Stuart Ching**.

As you can see, I've taken the opportunity to 'freshen up' the format of the newsletter but, don't worry, all your regular features are still here – including diary dates, the ever-useful list of contacts, and Penny's *This month in the apiary*. Also, the Beemaster title on the front cover continues to reflect the colour for marking new queens this year – blue.

My thanks go to all of this month's contributors. **Janet Bates** has an urgent reminder for those who haven't renewed their memberships. **Griff Dixon** experiences some grim weather conditions and also explains what an excellent resource the Association's website is. We've got reports on the AGM and regional meetings. **Alison Knox**'s article on the NBKA Honey Shows reminds me of my New Year's resolution to (finally) make the effort to enter our bees' honey in the shows for the first time! Penny provides an in-depth report on the recent BBKA Asian Hornet Conference – some of the statistics are really quite chilling; it's definitely worthwhile getting up to speed on this 'clear and present danger' before the beekeeping season starts in earnest. **Anne & Rob Mason** proudly bang the drum for Bees Abroad and report on Derbyshire BKA's pre-season annual conference. **Alan Moulton** takes us half-way round the world to New Zealand. And, **Linda Jordan** tempts us with her recipe of the month.

And before I forget, thanks to Griff for his article last month explaining the difference between exchange and conversion when it comes to trading in spare wax at Thornes. Despite being an economist and accountant, working out the higher maths involved in the process has always been beyond me. So, now I know – conversion is best!

Finally, as I mentioned to those of you who were at the AGM earlier this month, I welcome any and all contributions (photographs as well as articles) and feedback!

I hope you enjoy the read.

# Membership renewals – urgent

A note from Membership Secretary, **Janet Bates**

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Dear Members,

If you have not renewed your membership then you need to do so immediately. Your membership will be marked as lapsed on the eR2 database this month (March).

Current members should have received an online renewal form by email. There may be some members who did not get added to the new database, so contact me if you think this may have happened to you.

The basic membership fee of £25.00 includes membership of NBKA plus BBKA plus BDI insurance for up to 3 colonies.

BBKA membership includes:

- Information and advice on beekeeping
- Education, support and mentoring in your local association
- Online forum for beekeeping support
- £10m third party public liability insurance
- £10m product liability insurance
- Monthly membership magazine – BBKA News
- On-line BBKA News archive which is fully searchable
- Beekeeping examinations to the highest level
- Representation at national and international levels
- Annual Spring Convention and Exhibition with a full range of lectures and seminars.

If you are reading this and do not want to renew your membership, it would be helpful if you could let me know. If you have any other queries about your membership please contact me. Details on the inside cover of Beemaster.

Thank you!

## Winter update from the National Bee Unit

A timely reminder of things to look out for during the ongoing bad weather

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*Many of you will have received this directly by email from the NBU, but with bad weather conditions affecting much of the UK, please take some time to read the update below and check on your colonies.*

**Stores.** Please keep a check on the winter stores. Hefting is the preferred method, gently tilt the hive from the rear to give an indication of the amount remaining. If you've already placed fondant inside then perhaps lift the lid to have a quick peek to ascertain if the bees are taking it, and if so gauge if or when it may need replenishing.

**Pest damage.** Prior to checking stores a perimeter check of the hive would be a good idea after stormy/windy weather to see that your hives are still upright. If you have used straps check your straps are secure. Check also for pest damage, woodpeckers can be a particular nuisance at this time of year as can mice looking for a warm place to nest. Mouse guards should have ideally been fitted as part of your winter preparations. If you live in an area where woodpeckers might be a problem a cage around your hives made from chicken wire is a good deterrent.

**Varroa.** Many of you will have checked your Varroa mite count and treated as necessary but if not please do check your Varroa mite count and treat if needed (but only use an authorised treatments). In the winter months when no brood is present oxalic acid products can be administered, but ensure you follow the manufacturer's instructions. Though with the mild weather to date a brood less period may not have taken place in some parts of the country.

**Damp.** This is one of the biggest risks to your bees in winter; bees can usually withstand the cold but damp will takes its toll. If your hive is in an area where damp may accumulate it may be prudent to move your hives elsewhere.

**Regional Bee Inspector (RBI) reports.** Your RBI has compiled a report giving feedback on the 2019 season along with the National Bee Unit contact information. You can view it at <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?pageid=168>.

**Hive count.** Finally, thank you to all who completed the hive count, this information is vital for our planning and preparation for outbreaks of disease or exotic pest incursions. Recent outbreaks of the Asian hornet demonstrate the need for accurate and up to date figures for the number and location of beekeepers, hives and apiaries in the UK. This data helps to inform where we need to deploy Bee Inspectors and Asian hornet traps, improving our chances of early detection of this damaging invasive species.

# Notes from Norwell

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

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It has continued to be a very busy February into March as things start to spring up and bees start to do their business preparing for the new season – well, that's what they are supposed to be doing!

The high winds associated with Storms Ciara and Dennis – and now Storm Jorge – have kept us on our toes. I thought my hives had survived well through the first storm as my quick circuit round found all the poly hives standing... Until the next day when the local tree feller I met said he had put the hive tops back on for me! Oh dear, I thought, that must have seen some of the bees off... But no, they had all survived – even the one at Cromwell Lock which had a wooden national roof blown off managed to huddle together and keep going as they must have been exposed for over 24 hours. We will see if the chill factor has caused any harm over the next few months.

I lashed all the roofs down with straps preparing for the next storm – which had no roofs missing at the end of that one. At the start of Storm Dennis I managed to get up to Cromwell Lock with gale force winds to see if the hive was still standing; with an inch of water already flooding the site the hive was still upright. The water level rose beyond the expected five inches on the River Trent with the water level up to the hive entrance and the entire island they were on was completely submerged. But the bees survived and were happily munching away at fondant and a pollen patty. I had a few empties at the lock, one of which got blown over and must have been submerged as the frames inside were full of silt. It was on the edge of the receded Trent and thankfully did not get swept away.

So far we have survived the first two storms with a few mishaps and I fully expect the next one to be survivable. We will see over the weekend...

I have been updating the website with back editions of Beemaster and have now added the Linda and Maurice Jordan movie 'Our Year in Beekeeping'. It was filmed over 2012/13 but the techniques and storyline is the same no matter how you keep bees. There is more to update as we have now gone onto the Weebly pro edition which gives more memory and storage space. It's surprising how often the contacts page is used making enquiries about courses and various beekeeping queries. I am endeavouring to make the website somewhere that members will actually want to visit as I hear that it is often ignored as a source point of information by members.

The Beginners Course at Newark has started with 25 newbies and with the new price structure the NBKA will get a nice financial boost. I understand the Nottingham Course at 50 newbies will provide even more to the annual coffers. We need to plan out how we are going to use any excess over income perhaps in new projects.

Finally, the auctions listed on page 4 are always good for that item you have always wanted but was too expensive from Thornes. Always invest in equipment as you will always have it – whereas bees are transitory!

## View from the Vale (of Belvoir)

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

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*Touch wood* all the colonies in our garden apiary appear – so far – to have survived what passes for winter. We've provided them with fondant just in case it's needed, and based on the relatively few mites knocked off by the oxalic acid treatment at the turn of the year, varroa seems to be under control (assuming we have actually had a broodless period).

What hasn't been normal – although perhaps it is becoming the new norm – is the mild, wet, wet, wet weather. Even though we try to ensure the hives are adequately ventilated through a combination of open mesh floors and matchsticks under the corners of the crown boards, I do worry about damp and mouldy conditions in such weather. Another slight concern: on those rare days with winter sunshine we've noticed more bees than usual getting stranded in the cold and unable to make it back to their hives; 'only' a few dozen perhaps, but it's not nice to see. Something else that strikes me as 'not normal' is how far advanced some of the colonies are so early in the year... The photo below was taken on at the start of February when we were preparing to apply some fondant.



Of course, we're delighted they're doing so well but we're slightly concerned this presages the start of a second consecutive swarmy year! Therefore, we were grateful to see some snow finally arrive a week later; hopefully, that will have slowed them down a little...



## This month in the apiary: March

**Penny Forsyth** tells us what to watch out for as winter turns to spring

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Traditionally March is the month in which the apiary comes to life and the active season begins. On warmer days we will 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. Our queens will have been laying for some time and that laying rate will increase further if the weather is typically spring-like.



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. Therefore, continue to check stores by hefting – 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: cut away the plastic on the bottom of the packet and place the pack over the feed holes in the crown board – you may need to use an eke or empty super to make space under the roof but you can use some insulating material to fill the extra space. If you think your bees are starving you can place the block directly on top of the frames above the bees – use an eke or empty super to create space under the crown board.

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 the 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, e.g. 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, minimum 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 in 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, e.g. pond, gravel tray



If you haven't already done so, start your 2020 record sheets



Put out Asian Hornet monitoring traps and check them regularly: register on BeeBase

## AGM and regional reports

### Stuart Humphreys reports on the AGM and Nottingham region meeting

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The AGM was held at the Eagles Nest Community Centre in Arnold on Monday evening, 2 February. I must admit I had been a bit sceptical about the switch from the previous arrangement of a Saturday afternoon in Lowdham, but Council's decision certainly seems to have been justified – I don't have the official tally but estimate that between 55-60 members attended, so getting on for double last year's number.

The formal business was covered efficiently. Alec Thomson, who had been elected Honorary Vice-President last year, duly took over from our outgoing President, David Chambers. Other new Council members were elected – Paula Duckworth as Treasurer and Karen Burrow as Show Secretary, and thanks were offered to Chris Hutter and Alison Knox respectively. The financial accounts were in a good order and were approved; no increase in annual subscriptions was proposed. The AGM concluded with the presentation of cups to worthy winners (page 17) and awards to diligent students (see last month's issue).

The AGM was followed by the usual smorgasbord of tea, coffee and cakes provided by our fantastic volunteers. Dhonn Atkinson, Regional Bee Inspector, then gave two talks – on Asian hornet activities in Jersey, and adult bee diseases. He pulled off the nice trick of imparting his knowledge and passion in a way that was both educational and (allowing for the gravity of the subject matter) entertaining. Plenty of Q&As ensued.

Dhonn explained that on Jersey the authorities are treating the incursion of Asian hornets like a war. Techniques used to combat the invader include baited traps, triangulation monitoring techniques, public awareness campaigns, and night-time removal of nests (unlike its European cousin, the Asian hornet doesn't fly at night). In 2019 84 Asian hornet nests were discovered in Jersey – remember the island is just one-and-a-half times the size of the City of Nottingham. We were reminded that, to date, the nearest discovery of an Asian hornet's nest to Nottingham had been in Tamworth, 65 feet up a spruce tree.

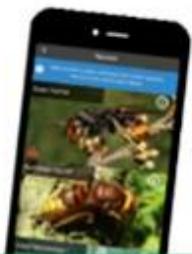
Dhonn had five 'asks' of us: (1) Become familiar with our own native species of wasps and hornets (to avoid mis-reporting); (2) Learn how to use a camera phone (to send pictures to the NBU); (3) Get the Asian hornet app installed on smart phones; (4) Make or buy Asian hornet traps, and monitor them regularly, releasing any by-catch; and, (5) Get involved in the AHAT programme (see Penny's article later in this issue). He has since written to say: 'We are trying to raise awareness of the AH Watch app and our people in non-native have produced this email banner. if you can circulate it for members to add to their emails in the form of a signature it would help.'

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/index.cfm?id=4>

Help us to look out for Asian hornet! Download the **Asian Hornet Watch** app for detailed guidance on identification and to quickly report potential sightings.

Download free from **Google Play** or the **App Store**.

Find out more about Asian hornet here.



## **Penny Forsyth** reports from the Newark region

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Nine stalwarts braved the weather – and floodwater – to convene at the Ferry Inn, North Muskham, for our monthly gathering. Talk was, naturally, of floods and sodden fields, water lapping at hive stands and the alarming volatility of the weather, with huge sympathy to the poor souls who have fallen victim to Storm Dennis. It's time for some joined-up thinking about flood defence, land use and unchecked development.

Pete Bull passed round his latest innovation, the Chase-Bull board, based on a suggestion by David Chase. This is a clearer board featuring two rhombus escapes for the rapid clearing of honey supers, incorporating a shallow eke to give more room for the bees to pass down into the box below. The prototype was eagerly bartered for by one of our number but Pete will be making more to sell at our auction. Another item of interest was an uncapping tool that Pete had bought on eBay from China for around £4 including postage: whipping out my recently delivered copy of Thorne's catalogue, I found an identical-seeming item on p38, described as an 'uncapping slice' and selling for £7.25 (wide) and £6.25 (narrow). We passed it around and thought it quite clever but likely to be tricky to use on uneven combs and likely to clog: use will tell.

Arlene brought some interesting by-gones which provoked interest, reminiscences, laughter and groans: one a special publication celebrating the Centenary of NBKA in 1984, and the other a delightful booklet entitled 'Fun Book Two' from 2003. Does anyone have a copy of Fun Book One, I wonder? Something for the library.

NBKA's new treasurer, Paula Duckworth, who is a Newark Region member, added a little gravitas to the proceedings with some official paperwork for counter-signature and is now fully in post.

Other topics of conversation were: BeeTradex (worth a visit); the Spring Convention (pity about the move from Stoneleigh); the upcoming auctions (and a certain colourful character); winter feeding (fondant, not syrup); Maurice's beekeeping home movie (which has now been put on the website); Andrew's magnificent clay pigeon shooting score; and the fashion for wearing shorts in winter.

# Chairman's Report for 2019

Slightly edited version of the report presented to the AGM by **Andrew Barber**

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As with last year's report I will try to keep my comments to a minimum and let those who do the real work present their reports.

It would be remiss of me not to mention that, as from this AGM, two of our officers will be retiring... **Chris Hutter** will be giving up his post of Treasurer, a position he has held for over 30 years. As one of the counter-signatories to cheques that he has issued, I will be sad no longer to see the much re-used envelopes dropping on my mat, sealed with various pieces of sticky paper. As well as being an efficient Treasurer, he was before his time in the now common use of recycling.

Another officer who will no longer be in her previous role is **Alison Knox**. She took over from me as Show Secretary after helping me out as Steward for some time, a role which she will continue to pursue, helping out the new Show Secretary. I wish our new Treasurer, **Paula Duckworth**, and new Show Secretary, **Karen Burrow**, all the best for the future.

**Penny Forsyth** has been the Editor since Stuart Ching retired. She will shortly be relinquishing her post and passing her pen and keyboard over to another Stuart. Later this year Penny will be moving to the south west of the country. She has worked tirelessly over the last few years and has produced a magazine that is a pleasure to read.

Finally, just one quick advertisement... Don't forget our Annual Auction on 28 March at Newark Showground, Lincoln Road, Winthorpe. As I have said in the past, it is an opportunity to get hold of some fantastic bargains, as well as a chance to get rid of items that are surplus to requirements. Do try and support us, as all profits go to the Association.

Best wishes for the forthcoming season.

## **Penny Forsyth has written as outgoing editor of *Beemaster***

It is now almost four years since I took over the role of newsletter editor from Stuart Ching, who had been in that role for over 20 years. Stuart had intended to serve 25 years but ill-health brought a sudden end to his tenure. I was asked if I would take over the reins, which I did with much trepidation as my computer skills were painfully limited and I had very little idea where to begin. Stuart's meticulous forward planning gave me a base to start from and I have pretty much muddled my way forward, acquiring skills and confidence along the way.

As a starting point I asked myself what I would wish to see in my Association newsletter and the answer was primarily what we as an Association were doing, planning and achieving plus news from the wider beekeeping community, and practical, useful and informative articles with the odd touch of humour. I have been greatly helped by a number of faithful and reliable contributors, to whom my grateful thanks. I am keenly aware that the format and layout (and occasional sheer size) of *Beemaster* would benefit from revision but I prefer not to tempt fate by straying outside my hard-won comfort zone. I have been bedevilled recently by gremlins in my mailing system which have caused a degree of havoc and frustration: apologies to those affected, I think the problem has now been fixed.

I am delighted that Stuart Ching is able to be with us tonight at the AGM and would like to pay tribute to his long and diligent service as our archivist, acclaimed author and chronicler of Nottinghamshire beekeeping history and, of course, in the role of newsletter editor – you have been a hard act to follow, Stuart, and a steadfast guide and mentor.

And I would like to introduce to you another Stuart (Humphreys) who will be taking over the editorship very soon as I make preparations to move to the West Country. Stuart will make Beemaster his own and I hope that you will give him plenty of support and, of course, material to work with. So the eras pass: from the Chingian to the Forsythian and now, the Humphreysian [I'm sure that's not a real word – Ed]: it has been an honour and a privilege to be part of that history.

### **Alison Knox has written as outgoing Show Secretary**

It is with regret that I have had to take the decision to step down as Show Secretary, as my work life has reduced the time I have available to dedicate to the role.

It is disappointing that we have seen a marked decline in attendance and participation in the Honey Shows in recent times. It is my hope that my successor will be able to breathe new life into the events, and revive enthusiasm and friendly competitiveness, as well as encouraging the highest standards of presentation and quality of honey and hive products.

For my part, I have agreed to continue to support the honey show as Steward which is always an eye opening and educative experience.

I wish all Members a happy, healthy and honey-filled year ahead in 2020.

### **From Janet Bates as Membership Secretary**

As from December the Association have been using the BBKA/BDI online data base for online membership renewal and BDI insurance.

The study groups continue to work towards the BBKA module exams. The first group have taken module 7 and are working towards the last one, module 8. The new group are studying for module 2. We have had some excellent results. The November sitting produced 4 module seven passes – two with credits and two with distinctions.

The candidates taking module 1 gained a credit.

We have several beekeepers each year who take the Basic Certificate. All have worked hard and have passed with credit.

### **Asian Hornet Team Co-ordinator's Report by Penny Forsyth**

At the October 2018 meeting of the NBKA Council I was tasked with setting up an Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT) to monitor and report Asian hornet incursion into our region and to coordinate with the National Bee unit and the Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS). I recommended this action because it seemed most likely that the Asian Hornet would enter the UK by means of freight traffic from Europe and beyond: the north of our region is bordered by major routes to and from key points of entry to our country from abroad – the ports of Hull, Immingham and Goole; the Doncaster International Railport and the Doncaster-Sheffield international airport. The M1 and M42 motorways carry huge volumes of international freight to and from other major centres of commerce and

distribution, including the East Midlands and Birmingham international airports, and link further with major routes to and from practically every region of the UK.

I am the NBKA AHAT Team lead co-ordinator and principal point of contact and there are two regional co-ordinators and eight further team members. Pete Bull is the focal point for the north of the county with a total of five team members to call on and to liaise with AHATs from Lincolnshire, South Yorkshire and north Derbyshire. Alec Thomson is the focal point for the city and south and has seven team members to call on and to liaise with AHATs from south Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and south Derbyshire. Each team member has a set of Guidance Notes compiled with permission from the excellent resources produced by Somerset BKA and is kept fully informed of all confirmed sightings in the UK and the outcomes.

Although there have been no confirmed sightings of the Asian hornet in our region I have responded directly to two reports from members of the public via the BBKA reporting system. In each case a photograph was provided and I was able to reassure each person that the insect in question was not an Asian hornet: one was a giant wood wasp, quite a fearsome-looking creature, and the other was a carder bee, which is unusual-looking perhaps but not particularly fearsome. Both instances show that the public is keen to help but must be given appropriate means of identifying the target insect. To this end Alec took the initiative to have 200 copies of the Asian Hornet identification poster printed and laminated and these have been widely distributed to appropriate groups and businesses throughout the county.

Another report of a possible sighting in Alfreton in mid-August was passed to me by the Chelmsford AHAT co-ordinator, apparently from a post on their Facebook page. Derby and Chesterfield BKAs were also alerted but the sighting was never confirmed and nothing was found; however, the exercise showed that all AHAT co-ordinators were on the ball and ready to mobilise their teams swiftly.

Defra has reported that since 2016, there have been 17 confirmed sightings in England and nine nests have been destroyed. In 2019 a single hornet was seen in New Milton, Hampshire; a nest was destroyed near Tamworth in Staffordshire; a sighting was made near Ashford in Kent; and two nests were destroyed near Christchurch in Dorset. The picture in the Channel Islands is considerably worse: on Jersey, 27 primary nests have been found and destroyed; on Guernsey at least one primary and two secondary nests have been destroyed. Additionally, 24 queens were captured as part of a 'Spring Queening' project with monitored traps placed all around the islands of Guernsey, Sark and Jethou with two secondary nests destroyed on Alderney and another on Sark. The fight continues and the experience of the Channel Islands' beekeepers is informing practice on the mainland.

You will find updates and information in the AHAT News section in your monthly Beemaster plus links to useful sites and information on how to get involved. And believe me, we all need to get involved or, at the very least, informed, if we have any hope of managing this most unwelcome and lethal invader.

## NBKA cup winners for 2019

Alison Knox reports on the awards presented at February's AGM

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Congratulations to the following members who scooped awards for 2019 which were presented by our speaker, **Dhonn Atkinson**, at the AGM on 3 February.

### **Moorgreen Cup**

Best in show at Annual Honey Show judged by Alan Woodward

**Alec Thomson**

### **Fred Richardson Tankard**

Best in show for Autumn Honey Show judged by John Goodwin

**Martin Bowker**

### **Herrod Hemsall Cup**

Most points awarded at nominated shows for honey, beeswax and mead

**Martin Bowker**

### **William Marshall Cup**

Most points in wax classes 9 and 9A at nominated shows

**Alec Thomson**

### **Albert Scoffins Cup**

Most points gained in classes 11, 12 and 13 (cakes, preserves and dainties)

**Mary Carey Allwood  
Arlene Bull  
Karen Burrow**

### **The Novice Trophy** (also known as the Junior Cup)

Most points gained overall by a member with less than 2 years' experience in honey, beeswax and mead

**Alan Barton**

### **Bartle Memorial Trophy**

For granulated honey (at the Autumn Show only)

**Martin Bowker**

### **NBKA Display Trophy**

Best display at nominated shows

**Penny Forsyth**

### **Photography Cup**

Best photography to do with bees and beekeeping at nominated shows (see next page)

**Diane Kidger**



There were no entries in Category 6 for heather honey, so no award of the Alan Lewis Trophy was made.

## Prize & award winners

Dhonn Atkinson, RBI, made the presentations at the AGM:



## Photography Cup – the winning photograph

**Diane Kidger** describes how she took her pin-sharp image of a bee on a thistle:

“It was one of those rare occasions when everything came together...”

Diane was on her daily morning walk with her dogs along the Grantham Canal in July. The light was right and the bees were too busy gathering the nectar to worry about her.



Diane used a Sony compact camera, no macro settings, and the image hasn't been edited.

## Supporting your NBKA Honey Shows

**Alison Knox** encourages Members to support the Annual and Autumn Honey Shows

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Having now stepped down as Show Secretary for the NBKA, I am enthusiastically supporting **Karen Burrow** as she takes up the role and responsibilities.

I will continue to offer my services as Show Steward and so look forward to being involved 'behind the scenes', helping out the Honey Judges and filling in the certificates on the day.

Karen will no doubt have her own ideas as to how things should be done going forward, and I am sure she will be open to good suggestions and contributions from Members to ensure that the Honey Shows stay relevant and engaging.

As a reminder, we provide NBKA Members with the opportunity to gain 'points' to win the various Trophies and Cups by holding two shows – the **Annual Honey Show** typically held on the first Saturday in September, and the **Autumn Honey Show** on the first Saturday in October.

It is sad to note that the 2019 events were so very poorly attended. That takes nothing away from those who entered and won prizes, the judging was still very thorough, and no prizes were given where no prizes were warranted.

As an Association we are constitutionally obliged to offer a Honey Show to Members to allow them to gain points to enter at National level. As our Constitution states:

***SHOWS and TROPHIES*** *The main honey and bee produce competition is the **Autumn Show**, traditionally held on the first Saturday in October. Points may also be gained at other designated shows within the county. Shows are an excellent way of fostering friendly rivalry.*

Friendly rivalry aside, anyone who has ever prepared exhibits for a show will know that it also fosters a great pride in your bees, as you need to pay attention to presentation standards, and to ensure that the criteria for your chosen category of entry is fully met. All details of criteria are available in the Show Schedule, a copy of which is always published in Beemaster prior to the event.

The Honey Judge will always be sent a copy of the Show Schedule in advance of judging. In a world that seems set on 'fast and instant', the noble art of beekeeping offers us the opportunity to take our time with our produce, really pay attention to it, and care enough to put forward the best we have.

NBKA has some excellent beekeepers, and some of those have been consistent winners over the years, but that is not to say they hold the floor! The floor is OPEN TO ALL, you just have to show up, with your entries and register on the day.

I do hope that 2020 sees a resurgence of interest and enthusiasm from Members for something that we should all be proud of... the NBKA Honey Shows.

## The Asian hornet – it's time to get serious...

Penny Forsyth reports on the recent BBKA Asian Hornet Conference

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On behalf of the NBKA Asian Hornet Action Team, on 8 February **Alec Thomson** and I attended this long-awaited event in Warwick. Every beekeeping Association in the country was invited to send two representatives and the assembly hall at Myton School was filled to capacity with delegates eager to learn from an impressive panel of experts. Anne Rowberry, Chair of BBKA and organiser of the conference, gave the welcoming address and introduced the speakers for the day, who would participate in a question and answer session later.



Panel from left to right:  
Prof Steven Martin, Dr Peter Kennedy, Xesus Feas, Bob Hogge, Alastair Christie, Belinda Phillips, Sandra Gray

The first speaker was Professor Steve Martin from the University of Salford who gave a very comprehensive account of the life history of the Asian hornet, clearly describing the different stages of development, nest building, range and spread. The key messages from his talk were that: the Asian hornet is extremely adaptable to terrain and climate; Asian hornet nests produce more queens than any other wasp or bee species; and, they will pose a much greater problem in this country as we have much smaller tracts of open land and woodland compared to France and Spain.

Our second speaker was Xesus Feas from the Academy of Veterinary Sciences of Galicia, eminent researcher into *Vespa velutina nigrithorax* and author of research into pheromone disruptors as a means of control and eradication. Dr Feas gave us the chilling facts about the scale of the invasion in northern Spain: from two nests to over 10,600 within 4 years, causing a 65% loss of bee colonies and an annual loss in production of 4.5 million euros. The impact is not only on beekeepers and honey producers but on forestry, fruit growing, viticulture and on human health and activities. The Asian hornet is attracted to fruit and is a natural carrier of yeasts, which can affect the yeast content of grape juice and spoil the harvest: it is also a danger to fruit and grape pickers. The rapid spread of the Asian hornet in northern Spain and its consequences has led to indiscriminate mass trapping and the dissemination of false information. Hence, Dr Feas believes strongly that there should be a drive to educate the public by all means possible including posters, real images and clear messages.

On the scientific front, Dr Feas believes that it is vital to set up a joint project with interdisciplinary sharing of knowledge and development of strategies, easily available and accessible to all. His own research has evaluated types of trap, the characteristics of Asian hornet venom, specific biocides, and pheromone disruption. In the course of his studies he has examined more than 400 nests, collected late at night and then frozen, and has found surprising populations of hornets present even in winter; stores of a pollen-like substance; and the totally unexpected presence of hibernating queens in the roof of some nests. This essential research has no external funding and local funding can easily be cut if the findings are seen to contradict received wisdom: the Asian hornet has become a political issue in Galicia.

After Dr. Feas came Alistair Christie from Jersey, who described succinctly and without drama the very rapid growth of the Asian hornet population in the Channel Isles, a more than tenfold increase from the 5 primary and 10 secondary nests discovered in 2017. Their close proximity to France makes it impossible to prevent Asian hornet incursion into the islands and so the focus is on rapid response to reported sightings, setting up bait stations to enable tracking and triangulation, and nest location and destruction. The small size of the islands' population has made it much easier to disseminate information – of 49 nests tracked in 2018, 31 were reported by members of the public. Not all nests were located high in trees: some were found in low hedges, some in buildings, one in a rock crevice not far above the tideline, another in a compost bin – it was impossible to check out such a range of possible nest sites without public cooperation.

Alistair described the structure of the Jersey AHAT group as a guide to mainland BKAs and stressed the importance of good organisation and communication between the co-ordinator, who acts as the central point of contact, engages with the media, prioritises action, directs the volunteers, arranges removal and destruction of nests, collates records, and the team, which comprises verifiers, tracking directors, bait station managers, observers and spotters (also assessing risk), all communicating via WhatsApp and email: they also hold weekly meetings. Reporting and recording are key, and Alistair detailed the various channels and software employed. He also stressed the importance of involving other professional groups such as estate agents, builders and surveyors alongside farmers, horticulturalists and landscape gardeners, birders, ramblers and wildlife groups. We need all the help we can get to deal with the threat posed by this unwelcome invader – the first Asian hornet queen of 2020 was found on Jersey on 2 February.

*NB. It is important to realise that the Channel isles are subject to different rules from the rest of the UK which allows them to handle, release and destroy Asian hornets: in mainland UK permits are required and the removal and destruction of nests is carried out by the NBU.*

Peter Kennedy and Juliet Poidatz from the University of Exeter gave a detailed account of current research into ways to prevent further expansion and minimise the impact of the invasive Asian hornet, working on developing dynamic models of its spread and ecological niche preferences. Juliet's work includes studying apiary management techniques, including the effectiveness of different traps and baits; comparing defensive behaviours of different honey bee colonies with a view to selecting for defensive behaviour; and studying the impact on the wider pollinator communities due to Asian hornets' demand for nectar and consequent inadvertent pollen collection. Other areas of research include cataloguing

parasites with a view to developing biocultural agents; testing radiotelemetry methods for locating nests; evaluating the cost/benefit balance of different control measures; developing effective educational campaigns; and developing trans-national strategic plans.

Next up was the National Bee Unit, represented by Sandra Gray and Belinda Philipson. Sandra, who is the National Bee Inspector, described the actions taken by the NBU in the face of the threat from the Asian hornet, namely specific training of inspectors, raising beekeeper awareness and encouraging the setting up of AHATs.

The NBU has developed a specific sequence of action once a sighting is reported: identification is verified by photo or sample; the local RBI/SBIs respond and contact the local BKA, AHAT and council; bait stations are set up, frequency of visits monitored and triangulation/line of sight used to locate the nest; the nest is destroyed at night with Ficam B and removed in the morning. Sandra then went on to give a detailed and very interesting account of all of the confirmed sightings and actions taken to date: fortunately all of the hornets found were from populations that have colonised Continental Europe and did not, therefore, represent an incursion from Asia; no nests had progressed to the stage of releasing sexually reproductive hornets.

Belinda Philipson outlined the Defra Bee Health Policy, under which the Asian hornet is classified as a non-native invasive species as established under EU Invasive Alien Species Regulations, which have now been converted into British law. Under these current regulations captive Asian hornets may not be released, which precludes marking and tagging. Future action includes monitoring, building relationships with BKAs and briefing ministers about desirable changes to the law.

Anne Rowberry then took to the stage to tell delegates about a short certification qualification which the BBKA is introducing as a means of gaining recognition for the positions of Asian Hornet Co-ordinator and AHAT Team member. This has been introduced to enable insurance cover to be made available for up to 15 members per Association along the lines of the existing cover for swarm collectors, which includes Public Liability insurance. There will be a qualifying form on the BBKA website consisting of 15 multiple-choice questions, the successful completion of which will award qualified and insured status to the candidate. A few sample questions were shown as an example of the level of knowledge expected, which was easily within the remit of members of an efficient and well-informed Asian Hornet Action Team.

The day was rounded off with a Q&A session in which all of the speakers and BBKA officials participated. Questions came thick and fast and the answers often threw up interesting facts such as that Asian hornet queens found and dissected so far have mated with a single drone only and that Asian hornet queens collect the highly nutritious sap that weeps from oak trees attacked by goat moth.

There were many questions about the next steps in organisation, education and publicity: a draft action plan for AHATs is being considered but there is excellent advice on the Jersey and Somerset AHAT pages; education at all levels needs to be much clearer as to the reasons why it is imperative to prevent the Asian hornet gaining a foothold in the UK and this must be a focus, it cannot be left to the BKAs alone, although they have a role to play in using local events and media to aid identification of the Asian hornet and spread the

message. BBKA has provided information to marinas and fruit farmers and will now include other groups suggested by delegates; talks have been held with some bodies in the pest control sector. Worcester BKA pointed out that A3 posters to help ID the Asian Hornet are available from Non-native Species: free hard copies of the alert poster and identification sheet are available, contact [nnss@apha.gov.uk](mailto:nnss@apha.gov.uk) and there are useful downloads available from <http://www.nonnativespecies.org/alerts/index.cfm>.

Responses to questions about trapping stressed the absolute importance of taking measures to avoid bycatch and of daily monitoring in spring. Trapping at present means killing all hornets caught as present law forbids the release of invasive species: it is unlikely that the law will change but licences are available. The law also prevents the tagging of hornets for telemetric tracking, used to good effect on Jersey.

The main question was, of course, what chance do we have of keeping the Asian hornet out of the UK? The answer is, inevitably, that there is zero chance of keeping it out but we have a head start on methods of containment and management thanks to the experience of other countries and Jersey and the considerable body of prior and current research. To date all incursions can be traced back to the single queen that entered France in 2004: it is direct incursion from Asia that we have to fear the most.

No-one attending this conference can have any doubt that the establishment of a breeding population of Asian hornets in the UK will be disastrous for our ecology and for our economy. As beekeepers we form the front line and there is much we can do, both in our apiaries and in the wider community. Education is the key: the more we know, the more effective we can be in dealing with this menace. It's time to get serious.

# NBKA Asian Hornet Action Team news

**Penny Forsyth** reports on the current UK situation

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There were no further reports in 2019 other than those already detailed so far. However, the first Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina nigrithorax*) of the year was found on 2 February 2020 (first confirmed sighting in 2019 was 6 February) by a member of the public in St Brelade, Jersey after being disturbed from hibernation. The insect was reported with a photograph which confirmed the sighting: it's a **reminder to us all** to start thinking about monitoring for these non-native insects here on mainland UK: check sheds, garages, roofs of beehives, leaf litter. Asian hornet queens could be emerging from hibernation very soon: there have already been reports of queen wasps emerging thanks to the milder weather, so it's not too early to start looking. We still need to be looking upwards: as the leaves have fallen there is a better chance of spotting nests in trees, especially in sycamore, birch and apple. On the ground you may see dead larvae which have been ejected and dead worker and drone adults- so..... **See it, Snap it, Send it!** Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS)<http://www.nonnativespecies.org>

On 3 September 2019 an Asian hornet was found alive in **Hamburg, Germany** which roughly has the same latitude as **Manchester** here in the UK. So far this is the northernmost occurrence of this originally South-East Asian species in Europe and in the world. If the Asian hornet gets a foothold in Britain, we will join other countries in Europe that are suffering economic losses – that's a fact. In a 43-page report published by the European Commission in September 2019, Invasive Alien Species represent a major threat to biodiversity in Europe and worldwide and can cause significant damages to the ecology, economy and livelihood of countries affected. <https://www.ahat.org.uk/>.

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](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk) and please let me know. If you have any queries about identification, please send me a photo; the smart phone app has useful pictures.

Download the identification pdfs, laminate them and put them up in your apiary, on your allotment information board or local notice board.

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/home/index.cfm>

Somerset BKA has produced some excellent information pdf's available to all: you can access them via the link on the AHAT website: <https://ahat.org.uk>, where you can read up about traps and baits ready for next season.

If you have not already registered your apiary on Beebase then please do so now. If there is an Asian Hornet incursion in your area it is vital that every beekeeper can be located and contacted. When you register and record your apiary information you can also report whether or not you have AH traps in place. Follow the link below:

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/login.cfm>

The NBKA Asian Hornet Action Team is now registered on the AHAT website and with the BBKA. If you would like to be involved please contact me at [pennyforsyth16@mail.com](mailto:pennyforsyth16@mail.com).

## Small but mighty!

Anne Mason proudly reports on Bees Abroad, NBKA's chosen charity

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"I am proud to be supporting Bees Abroad as a fundraiser because although Bees Abroad is a small charity it is also MIGHTY!"

This is the sentence I responded with recently when I was asked why I support Bees Abroad. In the March 2020 edition of the BeeCraft magazine there is a centerfold article all about 'Celebrating 21 years of Bees Abroad' in which Claire Waring, one of Bees Abroad's founding members writes about how this small charity came about.

From its small beginnings in April 1999, and with a clear aim of relieving poverty in developing countries through beekeeping, Bees Abroad during the last 21 years has through 100 projects (!) helped lift 50,000 people out of poverty in 15 countries! No mean feat for a charity run by volunteer beekeepers with the support of their part-time administrative assistant, Veronica.



Richard Ridler is currently the Chairperson of Bees Abroad which now has 15 Project Managers working on 40 or so projects in 12 countries. If you would like to know more about Bees Abroad and its work come to the charity's stand at BeeTradex on Saturday, 14 March where Mary and John Home, themselves involved with Bees Abroad from its early days, will be pleased to talk to you. Alternatively, Richard who spoke at one of our NBKA meetings in 2018 will be at the BBKA Spring Convention (non-profit organisations area) on Friday 3 and Saturday 4 April, as will Rob and myself.

## A Kiwi conundrum

**Alan Moulton** ponders the full environmental impact of beekeeping in New Zealand

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I visited my son in New Zealand a year ago to the month; I was there for six weeks and was able to help with his bees at the end of the season.

I had taken a spinner (brand new) on business class (so no problem) and as you will recall (see June 2019 Beemaster) extraction was dead easy – very runny clover honey in New Zealand: they take the honey off once a year just as my father did when I was a child

So, what has happened since this last honey harvest now a year ago, New Zealand being six months different to here at home? Well, my son's bees have been very productive so that he has more than a surplus. Previously the honey was for household use and bartering; now the excess needs to be sold and so presentation both with jars and labelling, to comply with regulations, is in my view essential and so be attractive enough to promote sales.

To these ends, as a present, I ordered the bottles (jars) from the only supplier on South Island, Beeswax Ltd, who do beeswax products mainly but have a small facility for the beekeeper (not unlike the two big bee equipment suppliers in this country, Thornes and Maisemores), but as for the labels, well that was a different story. I rang the helpful girl at Maisemores and added to my ordinary renewal label order some with New Zealand honey labels with my son's name and address, all compliant with regulations and posted half of the roll to see him through this year.

There are no glass manufacturing plants in New Zealand. Yes, they had some jars locally, just not in glass but in polyethylene, so not even reusable, not even in New Zealand. They would only be recyclable if shipped in bulk to China for processing miles away by sea!

What about the glass that we use? Bristol Glass will supply economically in bulk and so exportable on pallets. So, is there a problem with beekeeping in New Zealand negating the ecological benefit of having bees in the first place due to the environmental impact of using plastic bottles? Economically, glass purchased in quantity from the UK – even with shipping costs – would afford local beekeepers 100% profit per jar if retailed at New Zealand prices.

The four Rs are Reuse, Repair, Recycle and Refuse – the choice sounds like Refuse to me. This is because the shipping to China for recycling offsets any good to the environment being done by the bees; this could only marginally be improved by using glass from the UK, giving an equal carbon footprint in transport. Economically, there would be a 100% mark-up on selling the bottles in New Zealand and the opportunity for reuse and recycling locally!

Something on which to ponder as I see to my own bees locally and in France...

# An excellent kickstart to the beekeeping season

Anne & Rob Mason report on the Derbyshire BKA Pre-season Annual Conference

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Saturday, 29 February: The beekeeping season is upon us and Rob and I have just returned from taking the Bees Abroad shop to our first event of the year!

This is the third year we have attended this local event (held in Crich, Derbyshire) which serves as an 'appetiser' for the forthcoming season. Today it once again entertained and informed the 60 or so beekeepers who had booked their kickstart to beekeeping in 2020!

There were four speakers:

**Celia Davis** spoke about '**Swarming and Swarm Control**', referring to the biological triggers that lead to bees swarming and how the beekeeper can use that information to control swarms. Based on her lengthy experience (40 years+) of beekeeping she provided a wealth of advice for beekeepers from beginners to the more advanced. For instance, she advised:

- Never to remove a queen cell without ascertaining whether the colony has a queen in situ;
- Never shake a frame with a queen cell on it to remove the rest of the bees, instead use a feather in preference to a bee brush;
- Only keep one queen cell, a spare queen cell could be used if wished to create a small colony in a nucleus box.

**Professor Stephen Martin** gave a talk entitled '**Understanding the evolution of varroa – tolerance mechanisms in various bee populations.**' He reviewed how different bee species have responded to the emergence of the parasitic varroa mite. Whereas the behaviour of African bees can actively reduce the numbers of varroa, European bees are very susceptible to varroa infestations. Future work is intended to breed European bees which have the traits to cope with varroa better, and Professor Martin is looking forward to announcing a development, in which he hopes beekeeping communities will be able to be involved themselves, at the forthcoming BBKA Spring Convention in April.

**Trisha Marlow** spoke about her experience of being one of Bees Abroad's current 15 Partnership Managers – '**Into Africa: Bees, Beekeeping and the reasons why.**' She had only returned a couple of days ago after visiting a number of projects that she is overseeing in Ghana. Bees Abroad currently has over 40 projects in 12 countries mainly in Africa but also in India and, more recently, Fiji. By working with indigenous bees (sometimes stingless ones!) and local materials where possible, Bees Abroad aims to set up sustainable projects working with on-site Project Managers to help local communities living in poverty and through helping women in particular, support children.

The traditional 'Honey Hunters' destroyed bee colonies in order to get access to honey but nowadays they are more likely to become beekeepers themselves. However, beekeeping in Africa faces many different challenges with defensive bees, a wide range of pests and predators as well as difficult weather conditions and, unfortunately, people themselves who may accidentally or deliberately cause damage to apiaries.

Advice with planting for pollinators including food crops and trees, guidance with small business management including marketing honey and hive products as well as practical ways of working together are all part of a Partnership Manager's role.

Poverty alleviation through beekeeping – which is Bees Abroad's aim – helps keep more children in education, which in turn gives new opportunities to young men to get local employment and helps break the cycle of early marriage for young girls/women.

For more information and to sign up for Bees Abroad's newsletter please visit [www.beesabroad.org.uk](http://www.beesabroad.org.uk) or email [info@beesabroad.org.uk](mailto:info@beesabroad.org.uk).



*Anne with Trisha Marlow, Bees Abroad Partnership Manager*

**Dhonn Atkinson** was the final speaker of the day on the subject of **'Problems and Diseases which we could face this coming season.'** Talking about Foulbrood, Varroa, Nosema and then finishing with the Asian Hornet, Dhonn gave his take as a Regional Bee Inspector as to what beekeepers need to be looking out for and how they should respond.

In future beekeepers will need to download National Bee Unit documents regarding Bee Pests and Diseases as the cost of producing them is proving prohibitively expensive. He reminded everyone of the availability of the **'Asian Hornet app'** for smart phone owners.

All in all, a very well spent day indoors learning more about beekeeping at home and abroad whilst the weather was doing its own thing from heavy rain to sunshine, snow and hail!

# Recipe of the month: Fish with Sweet & Sour Sauce

Courtesy of **Linda Jordan**

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## Serves 4

### Ingredients:

4 tablespoons water  
4 tablespoons honey  
2 tablespoons lemon juice or rice vinegar  
2 tablespoons dry white wine  
1 teaspoon cornflour  
½ teaspoon garlic salt  
1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon,  
thyme or basil  
450g (1 lb) fish fillets

### Cooking method:

1. Put all the ingredients except the herbs and fish into a small saucepan.
2. Cook over a medium heat, stirring until the mixture thickens.
3. Simmer for two minutes.
4. Add the herbs and mix well.
5. Remove sauce from the heat and keep warm.
6. Place the fish on a lightly-oiled baking sheet to grill, or fry gently until the fish turns opaque and flakes easily when tested with a fork.
7. Spoon the sauce over the fish to serve.

## Beelines

Notices, views and news

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### From Oliver St.John, Beekeeping Tutor, Plumpton College

Please could you let your beginners and local divisions know about the Hive Assembly workshop that I will be running at this year's BBKA Spring Convention? Apparently, feedback from previous years asked for such a course and I was lucky enough to be asked to run it on the Saturday (4 April).

It's a one-day course (tried and tested here in Sussex) that allows beekeepers to assemble and take home a cedar National hive complete with two supers, frames and wax. (It's a Thornes 'Bees on a Budget' £160 National.) They get a comprehensive handout which far exceeds what the manufacturers provide, and the course will complement any local Taster Day and Beginners' courses that you are running this year.

They can book online here:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/britishbeekeepersassociation/t-xoajkg>

Many thanks.

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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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Major cards accepted.

Normal opening times: Wed, Thu, Fri and Sun 12.00 – 5pm

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