

# Beemaster

**The Newsletter of the  
Nottinghamshire Beekeepers' Association  
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*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

**Zoom Q&A** to be held on Monday, 2 November

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Association in-person meetings remain cancelled until further notice.

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

[www.nottsbees.org.uk](http://www.nottsbees.org.uk)

Following October's Zoom presentation on Top Bar Hives (see page 14), the Nottingham region plans to hold Zoom-based meetings on the first Monday of each month.

The November meeting will be a general Q&A session to which all members will be invited by email.

Members will have received an email from Janet Bates on 21 October containing the latest COVID-19 advice from DEFRA.

As a reminder, 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 NBKA website contains back issues of *Beemaster* from January 2019 onward.

## From the Editor

**Stuart Humphreys** introduces this month's newsletter

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As the rain lashes down outside and the latest lockdown looms, welcome to November's *Beemaster!*

As ever, my thanks go to this month's contributors...

**Griff Dixon** celebrates officially becoming a bee farmer and somehow finds time to engage in some historical detective work.

In my 'View from the Vale' I have the unpleasant task of removing a colony of drone-laying workers but am enthused by a trip to Thornes.

Despite our apiaries being relatively quiet at this time of year, **Penny Forsyth** manages to come up with an impressive list of essential tasks we should be doing in November. Penny also provides an update on the Asian Hornet Team; touch wood just the one sighting on the UK mainland so far this year.

I have written a summary of Mick Flower's Zoom presentation on top bar hives. This 'natural' beekeeping approach is not uncontroversial (apologies for the double negative) and **Maurice Jordan** has written a short article to provide an alternative perspective.

I should mention that Penny – my predecessor as Editor of this newsletter – will be stepping down as Asian Hornet Team Coordinator in December as she plans to move to pastures new. Penny will be sorely missed but, in the meantime, she has been kind enough to describe her beekeeping journey in the latest of our 'Meet the Council' series.

Speaking of detective work, in this month's 'New members' corner' **Owen Edwards** explains that he was inspired to take up beekeeping by none other than Sherlock Holmes...

**Anne Mason** provides an update on the latest gift offerings – some very attractive mugs – to support the important work of Bees Abroad.

**Alan Moulton** reflects on the friendship he has formed with a beekeeper in France.

And **Linda Jordan** provides us with a recipe for lemon honey cake which she is honest enough to say she hasn't tried!

I hope you enjoy the read. And stay safe.

# Notes from Norwell

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

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## In the apiary

During October all my hives were mouse-guarded – a bit late as foam nibbling was noted at a couple of hive entrances – and winter syrup feeding progressed. Most of my hives are on English feeders and are now up to three feeds with the polyhives, with the big Miller feeders also consuming at a fast rate. I have used some 400kg of sugar; with the added hot water this makes for a lot of heavy carrying in the buckets I use and many kettles to boil. But it's almost done now: I'll need to keep an eye out for when they stop taking it down and turn the summer crown board to winter by adding carpet for insulation.

I have gone for Oxybee© as a winter varroa treatment as it seemed to work well last year. When I say worked well, I mean it was easy to apply rather than noting if varroa mites dropped out... I can never tell. I have a lot of spare syringes if anyone is wanting some to enable the fluid to be squirted along the seams. I only managed to get a few hives Apiguard© treated at the end of summer and did not get ahead of the game with taking the final supers off and the heather migration. I have still not extracted the heather honey yet which got reduced to 6½ full supers when I removed all the partial frames that could not be used.

I am now a Bee Farmer as my application to join was accepted so I will be utilising the logo at every opportunity. It was my sole objective to become a bee farmer once I understood the rudiments of beekeeping, plus the fact that you did not need to take any exams! Nottinghamshire has six other bee farmers according to the Bee Farmers Year Book, with three being members of the NBKA. Hopefully, we can guide others who may be thinking of taking this route.

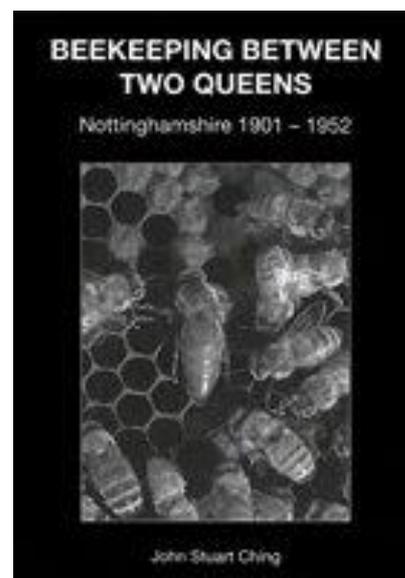
## NBKA matters

The NBKA Constitution is currently being reviewed. By chance, when searching for something else in the depths of the HonSec meeting notes back in 1884 through 1900, I found a copy of the original Constitution which made for some interesting reading. For example, the original subscription was 5 shillings which equates to around £32 in today's money. Bearing in mind that the BBKA are looking for a £2 uplift in 2022 our current subscription – £25, which is the lowest beekeepers' association subscription I am aware of – ours may need to go up!?

Certainly, if it wasn't for the beginners courses and annual auction, the NBKA's savings coffers would not be as healthy as they are at the moment; and they have acted as a buffer against subscription increases. Of course, COVID-19 may well have a bearing on our accounts this year and into next year due to this year's auction being cancelled and beginners courses being uncertain for next year. The Honorary Treasurer is on the case looking at how all this may affect the Association's finances.

As mentioned I was searching for information relating to a 1911 silver NBKA medal. This was found by a member in their mother's personal effects and they were looking for any information we might have in our archives. This drew me to the memorandum books containing all the minutes of meetings and AGMs back to the start of the Association. We appeared to have more members then than we do now (although our numbers have risen during the lockdown period). Unfortunately the archived HonSec minutes in my possession stopped at 1910, which puzzled me momentarily. Then I realised that Stuart Ching had produced a couple of books which contained a complete history of the affairs of the Association in two volumes (the second volume being from 1901) and that he must have all the memorandum books after 1910. So I could not reply to the member about the silver medal as I had no details.

By chance I remembered that I had been given 10 copies of the first part entitled 'Beekeeping in Victorian Nottinghamshire 1837-1901' for safekeeping, to be offered to members at a reduced price of £10 instead of the retail price of £18 but this never got put forward to members. To enable me to track down information about 1911 I needed the second book 'Beekeeping Between Two Queens – Nottinghamshire 1901-1952'; this retails at £25.



I contacted Northern Bee Books who did not have any record of having sent the NBKA copies to the Association back in 2018 so some copies were sent to me.

I have had a quick scan of both books and thought "Wow!", how did Stuart Ching compile such an enormous amount of information about the affairs of the NBKA and BBKA and from other sources to paint such an amazing picture of beekeeping in those decades!? Swarms were sold at 10/6 (ten shillings and six old pennies) and the honey shows and awards were highly sought after, hence the silver and bronze medals. I did come across a beekeeper, a Mr G Marshall from Norwell, who seemed to win a lot of things. These books make for a fascinating insight to how things were done many decades ago. You get feel for the comradery and friendship between beekeepers when times were very different.

But I still haven't tripped over the 1911 silver medal information yet...

Back to the present day and current topics of conversation revolve around different tiers of lockdown. Who would have thought that the National Honey Show would be online and we would be watching presentations either live or through recordings later!? The NBKA is coming through the latest lockdown period with a clear view of getting things going and engaging with members albeit through internet and web conferencing.

If you are looking for that special Christmas present, the two books by Stuart Ching at £10 each through the NBKA rather than £18 & £25, then contact me and I will get them sent to you. These are an amazing read. First come first served – we only have a limited supply.

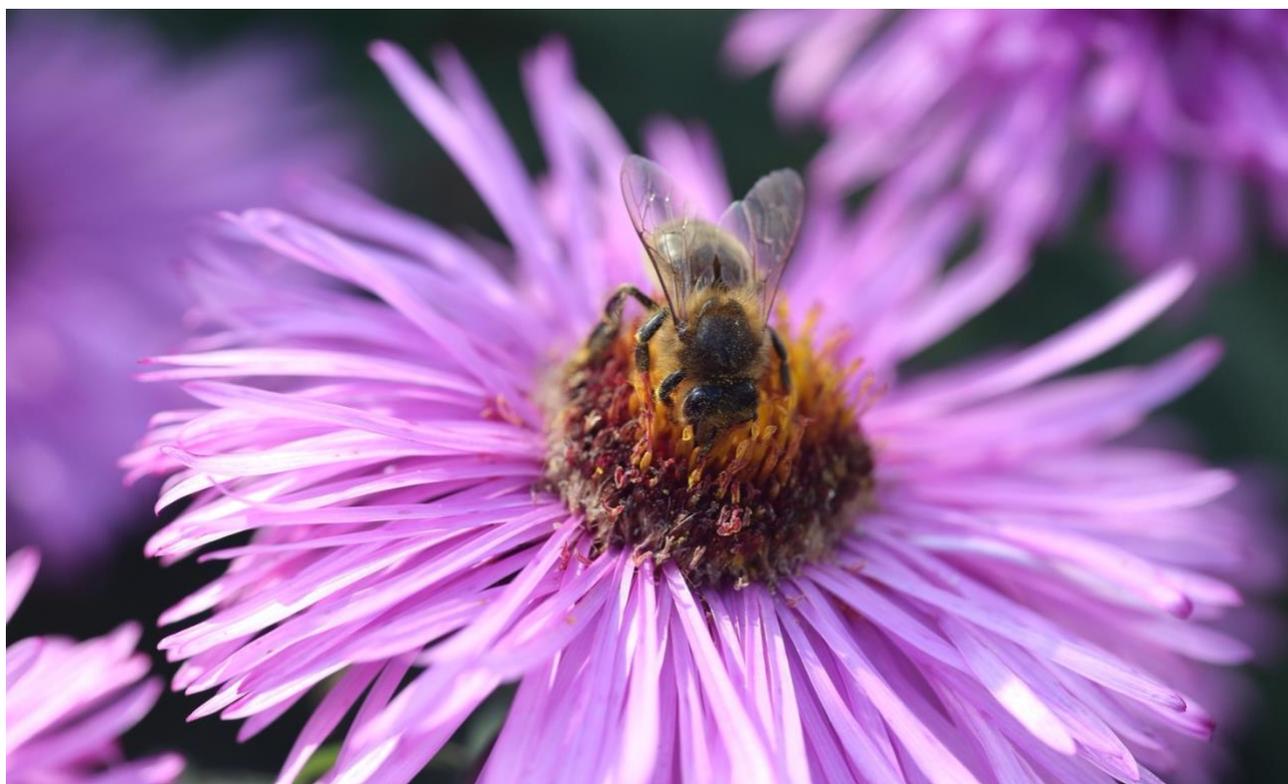
Stay safe, keep to the DEFRA guidance and finish getting your bees ready for winter.

## View from the Vale (of Belvoir)

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

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During October the weather was almost uniformly cold and grey. A few bees would venture out for water or to collect the final nectar of the season from dahlias and asters, but otherwise the apiary has been pretty quiet.



As I mentioned last month, we did have the unsavoury task of dismantling a hive containing laying workers. On one of the rare days when the sun made a fleeting appearance and the temperature rose above 15 degrees, we shook the bees off their frames at the bottom of the garden. Some of them returned to the apiary and flew around for a while before, one assumes, being allowed into one of the remaining hives. The rest formed a clump on an unused garden gate. Day by day their number diminished, a sad end which makes us more determined than ever to make sure that we keep a close eye on the four colonies that we are looking to take through winter.

On a happier note, we made our annual trip to Thornes to convert wax (accumulated when extracting honey) for new foundation. Our (or, rather, our bees') 12lb of wax equated to 90 frames of brood foundation plus 10 frames of super foundation. This will come in handy next spring when we'll make a concerted effort to ensure that none of our queens are having to lay eggs and raise brood on comb that is more than 2-3 years old. One of the team at Thornes was kind enough to fix a broken part on one of our smokers, so that made the trip doubly worthwhile.

Looking ahead to November, we see that Penny (in the next article) has produced quite a long list of tasks – we intend to tick all these off the 'to do' list in the coming few weeks...

## This month in your apiary: November

**Penny Forsyth** finds there are still a lot of things to think about as the nights draw in

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November is a quiet month in the apiary: as the days shorten, activity within the hive lessens as forage is scarce. If the weather is benign there is perhaps a little pollen from late-flowering plants such as Michaelmas daisy and ivy but hardly any nectar. Because of this reduced activity the lifespan of the workers increases dramatically. Most of these autumn bees will survive until early spring, ready to take up their duties when the colony begins to expand.

Since our bees do not hibernate but simply slow down their metabolism, they require food in order to survive and to provide the energy needed to regulate the temperature and airflow within and around the winter cluster. In mild weather the cluster expands and the bees fan their wings to cool and ventilate the hive: in cold weather the cluster contracts and the bees vibrate their powerful flight muscles to generate heat. All of this activity requires energy and this comes from the food stores that the colony has built up, supplemented of course by the beekeeper if a late honey crop has been removed.

It is vital, therefore, that each colony has sufficient stores to see it through the winter season and that these stores are close enough to the winter cluster for the bees to access if the weather becomes very cold. It is too late now to feed home-made sugar syrup as the bees are not active enough to process it for safe storage; they must convert the majority of the sucrose into glucose and fructose, which is much easier to digest, and to remove excess water. Unprocessed syrup may ferment and lead to dysentery, but this will be avoided if you use a commercially produced, ready inverted syrup such as Ambrosia or a fondant-type product.

Keep hefting or weighing and regularly check the varroa floor inserts for signs of uncapping of stores – this will give you an impression of how quickly the colony is consuming stores and help you locate the cluster. After a prolonged cold spell it may be advisable to quickly open the hive to check that the bees have not become isolated from their stores and, if that is the case, to move combs of food right up against the cluster. If the bees are at the top of the frames with no food above them, place some fondant, candy or damp sugar bags over the feed holes in the crownboard: you will need an eke or empty super to give space, which can be filled with quilting or some other form of insulation such as a carpet square or bubble wrap. Running out of food shouldn't really happen in November or December if the bees have been properly fed, but accidents can happen and a really quick check should do no harm. You have, of course, removed the queen excluder? The bees will not go through it to access fresh stores if it means leaving the queen behind and they will almost certainly starve.

As you carry out your essential apiary management – anchoring hives, weeding and brush clearing, general tidying – keep an eye out for any evidence of the presence of Asian hornets. Look out for signs of old nests in trees and hedges, possibly but not always high up, ejected dead larvae or dead worker/drone adults on the ground below. Any new queens that may have emerged from unseen nests will be looking for a good place to hibernate for the winter: check sheds, garages and leaf litter.

## Jobs for November

-  Check that your hives remain secure against predators, weather and flooding, and look out for evidence of water ingress through roofs and corners.
-  Check your hives for damage after strong winds and adverse weather.
-  Consider insulation on hives in exposed positions and insulate all deep roofs.
-  Check that hive entrances are clear of debris, dead bees, snow, etc.
-  Cut back grass and foliage under and around your hives to reduce dampness.
-  Keep varroa floor inserts clear of debris that may allow wax moth to breed.
-  Continue to monitor varroa drop and plan further treatment if needed, e.g. oxalic acid.
-  Complete cleaning, repairing, sterilising and storing your equipment.
-  Check that your valuable stock of stored comb is well protected against damp, mice and wax moth.
-  De-coke your smoker, clean your hive tools, wash your bee suit.
-  Complete your colony records and your varroa treatment record card.
-  Continue to evaluate your beekeeping season and make plans for the new one.
-  Read or re-read those beekeeping books and maybe enrol on a course.
-  Melt down and clean all those bits of wax and make candles, hand cream, soap.
-  Check out any attractive hibernation places for Asian hornet queens and look out for old nests.
-  If you haven't already done so, remove queen excluders.

## NBKA Asian Hornet Team news

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

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There have been no further reports of Asian hornets seen on the UK mainland since the first verified sighting on 8 September in Gosport, Hampshire, coincidentally during Asian Hornet Week. The hornets were first reported flying around a bunch of grapes in an area north of the town. Bee inspectors quickly set up monitoring traps and tracked the hornets to an apple tree. The nest was small, 20cm diameter, and was destroyed. There is as yet no report from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) National Wildlife Centre on the genetic origin of the insects. This is the first confirmed UK sighting since October 2019, when two related nests were detected and destroyed near Christchurch, Dorset. DNA tests on those nests and two others found in 2019 have shown that the queens all came from France. Inspectors are monitoring for any other Asian hornets in the Gosport and Portsmouth area.

In the Channel Islands the total number of Asian hornet nests found this year has remained at 38, a dramatic and unexplained reduction compared with 77 nests found in 2019 and 55 in 2018. The last colony was found on 28 September, whereas 12 colonies were found in October 2019, and the number of queens found dropped from 69 in 2019 to 42 this year. One of the two queens found this month was resting on a buoy, proving that the sea is no barrier. There is no room for complacency, however, as there is definitely an established Asian hornet presence in the Islands and there is a strong expectation of a reinvasion next spring from the French mainland, where numbers have continued to increase. Factors in this year's reduced numbers are thought to be: damp conditions and variable temperatures between January and March, which made hibernating queens susceptible to fungal diseases; the constant pressure of patrolling activity by the Jersey Asian Hornet Team, supported by an extremely well-informed public; and, reduced traffic from the Continent.

The Jersey Asian Hornet Group is active throughout the Islands whilst fully observing government COVID-19 restrictions. Their Facebook page is a useful source of information, pictures and often fascinating video footage, some in French, and this month including the location and destruction of a Giant Asian hornet nest in Washington State, USA – well worth a look.

Autumn is the time when Asian hornet nests produce large numbers of potential queens, up to 350 from a large nest. Only a small number of these will successfully mate and come through the winter to found new colonies in spring. These foundress queens will now be seeking out suitable hibernation sites, possibly in buildings or equipment stacks, so we need to redouble our vigilance. As we look out for old nests in trees and hedges (easier as the leaves fall) it goes without saying that we should regularly check 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@eh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@eh.ac.uk) and please let me know.

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. Clicking on the pin gives the name and contact details: you will find the map via the Asian Hornet tab on the BBKA website.

The role of an Asian Hornet Team Verifier is to respond to reports of possible sightings from members of the public, either directly or via the Co-ordinator, and to liaise with local teams and national agencies in any subsequent track-and-trace operations. In order for AHT Verifiers to obtain BBKA members' insurance to cover them and the general public in the course of responding to and dealing with sightings they are required to complete a training exercise, also open to all members, and which is available via this link

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/asian-hornet-action-team-map>.

If you would like to be involved in the NBKA Asian Hornet Team please contact me at [pennyforsyth16@mail.com](mailto:pennyforsyth16@mail.com).

## Nottingham regional meeting: Top bar hives

Stuart Humphreys summarises a lively discussion held over Zoom

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On 12 October, via Zoom, Mick Flower gave a presentation top bar hives. Just over 40 members participated, no doubt starved of beekeeping discussion and debate during the lockdown and, in my case at least, curious about this 'natural' approach to keeping bees.

In spite of the detailed planning that Mick and Janet Bates had put into the event, initial proceedings were bedevilled by a poor internet connection to Mick's outpost in deepest Nottinghamshire. Whilst he went about fixing that, one of our new members, Alison Brown, kindly stepped up to the plate and described her experience of keeping bees in top bar hives. Alison explained that she and her husband had acquired their first top bar hive last year and had successfully brought their bees through the winter. This year they housed a swarm in a second top bar hive. As Alison explained in her article in September's *Beemaster*, she and her husband follow a 'fairly natural approach', e.g. harvesting honey only when the bees need more room. For Alison one of the main advantages of top bar hives is avoiding the need to lift heavy supers. Problems experienced included 'cross-combing' where comb is effectively built across two bars rather than one.

Internet connection duly restored, Mick explained that Phil Chandler's book, *Building a Top Bar Hive*, was the inspiration for his interest in the subject. Having built three such hives, Mick noted that, compared with, say, Nationals, they require quite a large footprint; also, his hives had tended to warp (which is not good when you are keeping two colonies in a single hive and relying on a 'follower board' to keep them apart).

Mick moved on to discussing Warré hives. If a top bar hive is essentially a log on its side, then a Warré hive is an upright log but the basic principal is the same: present the bees with bars with the expectation that they will build comb downwards.

Mick described a Warré as a 'leave alone' hive. Its layout means you cannot open it up every week for inspections – you basically leave the bees to their own devices.

One complication is that as the comb is built top down, new boxes have to be added underneath ('nadirring'). Apart from the sheer weight of boxes that have to be shifted in order to add new ones, other difficulties include separating boxes because of propolis and comb attached to the sides of boxes; extracting honeycomb is also 'bit of a faff'.

Clearly in possession of impressive carpentry skills, Mick described a new type of hive he had designed to try to overcome some of these problems. He also showed us photos of a rather perilous-looking Warré hive that he had sited on the roof of the Park Plaza hotel! In summary, Mick said that his aim was to keep bees in his garden; any honey extracted would be a bonus. He recommends the 2019 film, *Honeyland*.

The ensuing Q&A was lively and morphed into a full-blown discussion of the pros and cons of treating for varroa. It seems that top bar hive enthusiasts tend not to undertake regular, invasive inspections or apply periodic varroa treatments, in the belief that either (a) the nature of top bar hives helps keep varroa numbers down and/or (b) bees will eventually adapt to live with varroa (apparently there is some anecdotal evidence for this from a group of beekeepers in North Wales). This approach to keeping bees is somewhat controversial and in the next article Maurice Jordan provides an alternative perspective...

## Top bar hives

**Maurice Jordan** sounds a note of caution

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One of the things about Zoom meetings is that I do not have to get the car out to attend. (Normally it is a problem for me if I want to attend Nottingham meetings as it involves a 30-mile trip in the dark.) So I looked forward to the first Nottingham Zoom meeting, the topic being top bar hives.

Now I have no experience of top bar hives, although I do understand their design and I do know they are not for beginners. Our speaker for the evening was Mick Flower, who initially had a problem with his internet connection; in the meantime, a couple of our other members explained why they kept bees in top bar hives. One reason was to avoid having to lift heavy supers; there are ways around this problem, of course. They also informed us they do not worry if the bees swarm or if they don't survive as they do not believe in using any form of varroa treatment...

I am sorry, but you are not beekeepers you just keep bees, there is a big difference.

Mick did eventually solve his internet problems and gave an interesting talk on building top bar and Warré hives for the same reasons, e.g. he could go away and leave the bees to get on with it. Back in the day this was called 'let alone' beekeeping: you had hives at the bottom of the garden and you paid them no interest until the end of the year when hopefully they were still alive and had some honey to steal. Nowadays with the advent of varroa and the viruses associated with it this is no longer a way to keep bees.

Finally, a word of advice to anybody who thinks they can keep bees without practising swarm control and varroa treatment of some kind... Your bees are going to die.

## Meet the Council: Penny Forsyth

Asian Hornet Team Coordinator (and former Editor) **Penny Forsyth** tells her story...

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On 23 July this year I stood in my apiary, smoker in hand, enjoying the buzzing busyness of my dozen hives and thought back 10 years to the same date, when I collected a nucleus of bees from Maurice Jordan and drove them triumphantly home, where a spanking new National hive was waiting to receive them...

My family had presented me with a Thorne's starter kit for my Bus Pass Birthday the previous December and, rather at a loss where to begin in winter, I joined our Association and began attending meetings in Nottingham and Newark.

It was a struggle at first to get myself taken seriously as lurid publicity about Colony Collapse Disorder in the US had inspired a multitude of would-be beekeepers, many of whom had some seriously half-baked ideas and a somewhat rose-tinted vision of what they might achieve. Nevertheless, I kept on turning up, listening attentively, asking questions and making notes, grateful for any crumb of encouragement.

I attended the teaching apiary at Brackenhurst, went to Spring Convention at Stoneleigh and immersed myself in lectures and workshops given by important people, watched field demonstrations from our own local legends, then finally got my bees and managed not to lose them in the most severe winter since my childhood.

In the spring I took my Basic, did my first artificial swarm, marked my first queen, tasted my first honey straight from the hive, and felt that I was finally getting somewhere – and I've never looked back!

Two hives became five and when a local farmer offered me an apiary site I joined the swarm collectors list and added six more – a baptism of fire and a steep learning curve but the bees and I survived.

I took on a stall at my local market and set about introducing the good people of Retford to the real taste of honey, the scent of beeswax and the fascinating world of the honeybee. I started giving talks to schools and community groups both on my own account and on behalf of the NBKA and soon found myself busy and in demand: I've been in education throughout my life, at home and overseas, and I love an audience so it's been a lot of occasionally quite sticky fun but with a serious purpose, especially at this time of climate crisis and pollinator decline.



I have talked about the vital role of pollinators at countryside stewardship events in my local area, recalling my 1950s childhood memories of hedgerows and meadows alive with birdsong and the busy hum of insects, lost to us now.

In my 10 years of beekeeping I have soaked up as much wisdom as I could find, conventional or otherwise, watched my bees closely and made my own choices... sticklers look away now! I run my cedar Nationals in brood-and-a-half configuration; don't use queen excluders (or clip queens); I allow my bees to swarm naturally when the time comes; collect and keep swarms in skeps before hiving; I harvest honey only when a hive can spare it, always leaving plenty for the bees, and they winter on their own stores; I don't treat for varroa every year; and I tell my bees everything.

I have served on Council for seven years, first as a general member, then as Newsletter Editor and currently as Asian Hornet Team Co-ordinator. During this time I have learnt that the lion's share of the work is done by a small cohort of willing and dedicated people, most of them very long-serving as no-one else ever comes forward to replace them. 'Twas ever thus, sadly, and so they soldier on, generating our income, training and informing our members, raising and maintaining our profile, keeping us on track: we owe them our thanks. It has been an honour and a privilege to serve alongside them.

## New members' corner

New member **Owen Edwards** describes his journey to joining the NBKA

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WHACK! The bee slams into my veil at full speed. She is quickly followed by about a hundred of her enraged brethren. Their pattering on my hood has become so numerous that it now reminds me of summer rain falling on a conservatory roof.

Simultaneously, dozens of bees are trying to squeeze their way into the join at the neck of my bee suit. I bring the smoker up and puff it directly at them, deterring only the few who loop into the air and dive-bomb me again.

Worryingly, this is all happening some 30 feet away from the open hive which throbs angrily in the distance. Like the instruction on the side of a firework, I have endeavoured to 'retire to a safe distance.' The bees have disagreed.

Now I've had some experience of African bees, but this is undoubtedly the angriest (and clearly queenless) hive I've ever faced. As I look at the numerous spent stings poking from my gloves, I ponder to myself why I ever got into beekeeping in the first place.

My obsession with apiculture started more than 15 years ago, when I was still a teenager. I was, and remain, a huge fan of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories and was struck by the romantic notion of beekeeping on the Sussex downs (Holmes' pastime when he retired from being a consulting detective). At the time, I lived in Hampshire, but I reasoned it was close enough.

Many years, and thousands of stings later, I found myself doing everything from splitting hives to collecting swarms and breeding queens. As someone at the younger end of the usual demographic for a beekeeper, I always seemed to be the one called to collect bees from the most awkward places. I've taken a seven-year-old hive from inside the wall of an outbuilding, been hoisted up a chimney and climbed more trees than I care to count.

When my wife came to Nottinghamshire for work I, the bees and other animals moved too. Although this is my first season here, I have found the county most conducive to beekeeping and (lockdown aside) the Association fantastically welcoming. I hope I get the chance to meet many of you face-to-face (or should that be veil-to-veil?) in the near future.

Oh, and as a postscript, I re-queened the angry hive with a Buckfast Cross (which I sadly had to buy in as I haven't got things properly up and running up here yet). This tamed the savage beast.

## An unprecedented opportunity

**Anne Mason** encourages us to support Bees Abroad

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This year as part of Bees Abroad's 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary, two mugs were commissioned from the Derbyshire ceramicist artist, Sally Lugg. The watercolour designs 'Daisy' and 'Poppy' each depict a variety of flowers that honeybees like to visit and are featured on the mug's outside, inside and down the handle making them unique.

An ideal Christmas present priced at £12.50 each.



Please email me ([anne.mason3@btinternet.com](mailto:anne.mason3@btinternet.com)) or ring (0115 9223703) if you wish to buy a mug(s) or any items from my Bees Abroad shop – Christmas cards, Chain Bridge Honey Farm creams, lip balms, soap plus any of the other bee-related items I usually have on my stand at the NBKA meetings.

There is a Bees Abroad online shop at [www.beesabroad.org.uk](http://www.beesabroad.org.uk) which gives you more of an idea of what we have available to raise much needed funds for this small charity that has been helping to relieve poverty in developing countries for 21 years. Please also see our advert on page 21.

## A memory triggered

A recent BIBBA webcast resonated with **Alan Moulton**

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In France, where I lived part-time, some years ago I met a local beekeeper, Jean-Paul, at a market. Later I went round to his house/honey house/apiary to buy enough honey to liven up my market stall in England with his very attractive labels. Over the years we always got on well and he always gave me a deal "prix pour un ami".

And so all went well, and then his son went off to university to study beekeeping (as one can do in France)... Things changed slightly when son took the business over from dad – no longer as much of a discount as I had had from the old man. And when I suggested buying a nucleus or a queen for England, total rejection – local bees only! This way of thinking is very much in line with the new group, BIBBA, that is currently giving meetings on Zoom.

(He also stopped his father dipping his finger in the ripeners to test the product!)

So now (well, at least pre-COVID) I always wait for the coast to be clear of the son, then I will go round and see Jean-Paul on his own and so buy at the old rate and have a chat.

We are then two old codgers, together once more.

# Recipe of the month: Lemon honey cake

Courtesy of **Linda Jordan**

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*Linda writes:*

Recently on the Channel 5 programme *My Farm*, Kate Humble visited a beekeeper who made mead and she then baked a lemon drizzle cake with some of his honey.

Here is a recipe from the BBKA Honey Show in 1998. (I haven't tried it!)

## **Ingredients:**

4oz soft butter  
2oz caster sugar  
4oz honey  
Grated rind of one lemon  
9oz plain flour  
2 tspn baking powder  
1 tspn bicarbonate of soda  
Pinch of salt  
1 oz chopped mixed peel  
2 eggs  
Vanilla essence (a few drops)  
3oz milk

## *Glazing:*

2 tbspn caster sugar  
1 tbspn honey  
3 tbspn lemon juice

## **Method:**

Topping:

1. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt and bicarbonate of soda in a bowl.
2. Cream butter, lemon rind, honey and sugar.
3. Add eggs one at a time.
4. Combine with the flour mix, add milk, vanilla essence and mixed peel and beat.
5. Put the mixture into a 2lb loaf tin.
6. Cook in a low oven for 1 hour 45 minutes.
7. Heat the caster sugar, honey and lemon juice together and pour on the cake.

# Advertisements

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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).

### ADVERTISEMENTS

NBKA accepts no responsibility for advertisements appearing in this newsletter. Please mention **BEEMASTER** when replying to advertisements.

### 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.



For our 21st anniversary year, we have designed two bespoke mugs called Daisy and Poppy. Each mug features bee-favourite flowers and of course a honey bee. A very special Gift.



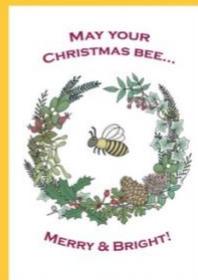
Best seller

These Beeswax wraps continue to be a very popular gift. Made from high quality, fabulous African printed cotton using pure beeswax, pine resin and coconut oil at our beekeeping project for women with Alabanism in Tanzania. Price: £14.95



Design your own clock

This is a great gift for the artist in the family. Made from ply-wood you can paint your own design or colour to match your surroundings. Simply add the honey bee decoration and attach the clock hands and battery pack. (paint not included). Price: £15.00



May your Christmas be Merry and Bright!

Emma Lawrence has designed these bespoke cards to support our work. You won't find them elsewhere online.



Beehive and Robin in the Snow

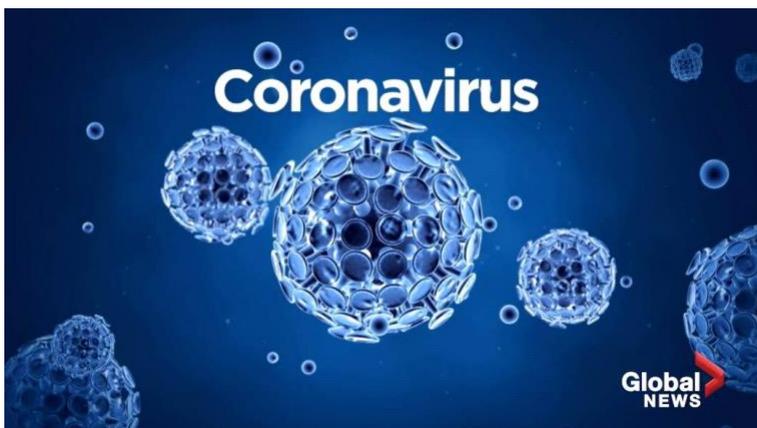
One pack includes five cards of one design. The message inside reads Season's Greetings. The reverse features a photo and short description of our project work in Uganda. High-quality cards and envelope. £6 per pack incl p&p



Prefer to send an e-card? These two cards are available at [www.dontsendmeacard.com](http://www.dontsendmeacard.com). Sign up and choose to support Bees Abroad.



Choose an image, write your message, make a small donation. You can send up to 100 e-cards.



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](http://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,

**THORNE'S AGENT** Stocking most of the popular items you need, the other items by order.



Frames and Foundation

Spare Frames

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Bee Suits and Jackets

**The Honey Pot**

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## Candlemaking Equipment

Extensive range of high quality candle moulds  
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## Feeding

Everything you need to feed your bees



## Hives and hive parts

W.B.C., National, Commercial, Langstroth  
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