

HONEYCRAFT

April 2019



Spring Cleaning : bee-style

Dorset County Beekeepers Association

Editor's Note

Not the prettiest of pictures on the front cover perhaps, but a very necessary hive activity as the new spring bees replace their winter sisters. Some hives leave their dead beside, or even in, the entrance while others carry theirs further away!

The reports that follow in this issue of HoneyCraft show that Dorset beekeepers have been busy attending a wide range of talks, social events and courses over the winter; some of these are covered in more detailed reports. Judy Easdale and Kim Hughes report on the BIBBA study day on queen rearing, while Sarah More has some thoughts on queens and drones. All give food for thought. You may not agree with the views expressed, but they are all worth thinking about—the old adage is that if you ask three beekeepers for an opinion, you will get four answers—so if you disagree with anything that you read or have an alternative view, please let me know ; there is room on these pages for lively discussions!

There is also room for bee-related offers and wants. It is inevitable that over the coming summer season some members will decide that this may be their last year and others may find that their operation is expanding rather faster than anticipated—the next issue of HoneyCraft will be published in July and this would be a rational time to start thinking about future equipment needs, or indeed bees.

Finally, I am taking the editorial liberty of including a holiday reminiscence, in the hope that others might contribute similar pieces to future editions.

Thank you to those who have taken the time and trouble to write. I hope that everyone has an enjoyable and successful beekeeping season.

Tim Villiers

Index

Contents	Page	Contents	Page
Editor's Note	2	Building a Bee Library	15
Chairperson's chatter	3	BIBBA meeting—Sustainability	17-18
The Inspector reports	3	Some thoughts—on queens and drones	19-20
The Dorset BKA AGM	4-5	Travellers tale	20
Asian hornet update	6	Dorset Dates	22
BBKA ADM report	7	Who is who	23
Blandford & Sturminster BKA	8	Advertisers	
Dorchester & Weymouth BKA	10	The Bee Shop	6
East Dorset BKA	11	Thorne	9
Sherborne BKA	12	Becky's Beezzzs	12
West Dorset BKA	13	Caddon Hives	16
The healing hive	14	Northern Bee Books	18
		Maisemore	21

Chairperson's Chatter

I have become your Chairperson once again and I hope the DBKA goes from strength to strength. Following Geoff Buckland is a demanding act to follow and I hope our beekeeping survives the many threats to it. There are a number of things that I hope we achieve.

The monitoring of the Asian Hornet is a priority and we are fortunate that Kevin Pope is our Seasonal Inspector and will give us instant information about any sightings, as will Mark White our country AHAT (Asian Hornet Action Team) coordinator. I hope every branch has an action team and a number of traps out that are being monitored.

All the branches run beginners courses and I hope the number of candidates taking their Basic Beekeeping exam increases. We have a number of skilled beekeepers who give time and expertise to pass on their skills. The beginners I have met are wonderfully enthusiastic and determined to become good beekeepers. We ought to encourage those who have passed their basic exam to go on to the next stage of the modules or/ and the General Husbandry exam. Even going to talks without taking the exam means that you have a chance to find out more about bees and beekeeping.

As the new season begins please feel free to go to as many talks and meetings as take your fancy. Enter the shows as they come along and show the public our honey and hive products. You are all members of the DBKA and have paid your subscription. The DBKA exists to give us all a chance to find out more about our wonderful bees.

Lesley Gasson

The Inspector Reports

The season is upon us.

Hello again..... these "HoneyCraft" issues seem to come round very rapidly, following on from the previous edition so it seems that this also means that the new season is upon us. I hope that you and your bees have come through the winter well and are now raring to go.

There is not a lot I have to tell you all at the moment except to remind you all to be vigilant with all things pest and disease related. Have a good look at the brood when doing early inspections and ring your inspector if you have any worries.

As far as Asian Hornets are concerned, over the winter there were a couple of suspicious nests found in trees after the leaves had fallen; luckily they were not in Dorset and even more fortunately neither of them were AH. I have not heard categorically what they were but they were not AH. We must all be vigilant (there's that word again) to spot any hornets of the Asian variety. I am sure you have all set traps to find out if we have any over wintered queens here but it doesn't stop there. We must of course keep looking for the workers all through the season. It could easily be our turn this year for THE hornet as it appeared in Cornwall and Hampshire last year and Devon the year before. At some point, it will be us so please be "Vigilant".

Regarding your inspectors, geographical layout of where the bee inspectors actually live in the southern region, will probably result in a bit of a re-shuffle with regard to who inspects which area. Robin Oliver may be covering a little further west and I may be going up into Wiltshire but nothing has yet been finalised. Needless to say though, there will be change---after all nothing stands still for long! I'll let you know via this forum as soon as confirmation is received, but in the meantime the only things you as beekeepers need to do are:

- a, ensure you and friends are registered on bee-base so that we can easily notify you of any outbreaks and then
- b, check on bee- base and telephone the appropriate number.

I will finish with "that word" again. Somewhere in Dorset, Foul Brood is brewing so please be "VIGILANT".

Looking forward to seeing many of you during the season---have a good one!

Regards, Kevin

Kevin Pope

Dorset Beekeepers' Association 2019 Annual General Meeting

The 2019 AGM took place on 10 March in the Community Hall at Sunninghill School, Dorchester and the afternoon began with refreshments provided by West Dorset BKA.

Before the AGM Margaret Murdin, current BBKA President, gave a clear and interesting talk to an audience of around 45 members about queen honey bees. Margaret spoke about the ways in which queens are adapted for their role in the colony, the differences in the ways in which queen and worker larvae are fed, the importance of the diet in the first three days as a larva in producing first class queens, and queen mating and pheromones.

After the talk and before the AGM members had the opportunity to chat while enjoying a wonderful tea hosted by West Dorset BKA.

There were 41 members present at the AGM and all Branches were represented.

The minutes of the AGM on 8 April 2018 were signed and there were no matters arising.

The audited accounts were adopted.

Given the financial saving arising from the change in the format of Honeycraft from paper to electronic the Council proposed a reduction in the county capitation fee from £6.00 to £3.00, to be reassessed in January 2020, and this was approved.

Following the election of officers and others the holders of positions in Dorset BKA are as follows:

<i>Position</i>	<i>Elected</i>
President	R Norman
Vice Presidents	Ken Bishop, Mervyn Bown, Chris Slade
Chairman	L Gasson
Vice Chair	T Ford
Secretary	L Rescorla
Treasurer	R Camping
Education Officer	G Buckland
Examinations Secretary	T Payne
Membership Secretary	R Benjamin
Show Secretary	R Norman
Honeycraft Editor	T Villiers
Accounts Examiner	M Clarke
Website Manager	S Potts
BBKA Delegate	To be nominated at Sept 2019 Council mtg
SWBKF Representative	R Benjamin, L Rescorla, C Slade
BeeCraft Trustees	G Buckland, R Camping, L Rescorla
National Honey Show Delegate	L Gasson

Thanks are due to Geoff Buckland for all the work he has done as Chairman on behalf of the Dorset BKA over the past three years. Geoff has been a pleasure to work with, always supportive and completely reliable. Dorset BKA has been lucky to have had Geoff as Chairman and our luck continues, as he takes on the role of Education Officer.

Welcome to Lesley for a second term as Chairman, and to Trevor Ford as Vice Chair and Stephen Potts as Website Manager. Dennis Clemens and Sarah Wootton stepped down as Vice Chair and Website manager respectively, and I am very grateful for their past help.

Thanks also to Richard Norman for stepping forward once more as Show Secretary.

Other Business:

the South West Beekeepers' Forum has asked all participating associations for a subscription of £50 for 2019 to cover the costs of venue hire for meetings, travel and other expenses for the SWBKF Secretary, and to maintain a contingency fund; this was approved

a proposal that the County Membership Secretary should be able to claim travel expenses to attend the 2019 BBKA Spring Convention to attend training on the new eReturn membership system was approved

a proposal that the County Asian Hornet Coordinator, Mark White, should be able to claim reasonable travel and accommodation expenses for a trip to Jersey in 2019 to gain experience which will be useful in his role was approved

Presentations and congratulations:

The Hambro cup, awarded to the Branch achieving the greatest increase in membership in the previous year was awarded to Sherborne BKA

East Dorset BKA achieved the highest percentage of successful Basic Assessment candidates out of Branch members in one season and will receive a refund of fees in respect of those candidates

Thank you to everyone who came to the AGM, to those who helped to set the room up and clear away after the meeting, and special thanks to West Dorset for providing early refreshments and that lovely tea.

Liz Rescorla

Dorset BKA County Secretary



Asian Hornets

So April is here and your monitoring traps should have been in place for the last few weeks already. Remember at this time of year the emerging Asian hornet queens need a sugar boost to get themselves started, so a sugar-type bait should be used.

This winter has seen a change in the behaviour of the hornet which could be a little worrisome. In the north of Spain winters can be surprisingly cold, enough to force the hornet to hibernate. However we have seen for the first time hornet colonies continuing through the winter months and not dying out. An Asian hornet nest that was removed in Spain and moved some 12 miles from its original site was stored in a garage. The nest was due to be used for research and to be dissected to learn more about this flying predator. An Asian hornet queen was seen to be paying interest around the garage and the nest and eventually caught. On opening the nest it was found the the said queen had recycled the nest and inside had built a new embryonic nest with larva inside. The nest had not been exposed to any insecticide so allowed the queen to build. This is the first known case of a queen re-using nests.

A little closer to home in Jersey, the first queen had been spotted in some sacking in early February. Now in April a few queens have already been caught and local AHATs are now being called to remove the foundations of primary nests. I have spoken to a bee inspector who argues the point that sightings of hornets on the mainland do not mean they are established here. All confirmed sightings have been as a result of a transportation issue into the UK.



I plan to travel to Jersey in the coming months once the season is in full swing. This will allow me to come face to face with the hornet and hopefully pick up some tips on how to take on the challenge. Jersey has now issued its reports for 2018 and its action plan for 2019 which makes interesting reading. I will work with all association AHAT officers and make sure all updates are set out to you as soon as we can. But at the moment we sit and wait and see what the season throws at us.

Make sure your traps are out and check them regularly – that's the main thing you can do at the moment. We are all experts compared to the man on the street. The public love talking to beekeepers and this presents a fantastic opportunity to educate them on the Asian hornet. In the meantime in May I will be manning a stand at the Farmer Palmers Farm Theme Park. This will give me a good opportunity to spread the word and educate not only on the bees but the Hornet too.

As always, if anyone has any concerns I am more than happy for you contact me, or your association AHAT officer.

Mark White

AHAT coordinator, Dorset

www.thebeeshop.co.uk

Quality Beekeeper Clothing At Affordable Prices

Full Suits, Smocks, Bee Vests & Veils

Full adult suit – £52 (with free postage)

From Somerset

Email: michaeljohnduckett@gmail.com

A report on the Annual Delegates Meeting of the BBKA

January 2019

I attended the ADM as the Dorset delegate. There were 66 delegates but many more people attended including past trustees, current trustees, advisors, supporters of delegates, candidates for office, employees of the BBKA and so on. The morning was devoted to applications to join the BBKA by groups, and voting for trustees or members of the Education and Husbandry committee. It is a very bureaucratic procedure which takes about 2 hours

The afternoon was spent discussing and voting on the proposals sent in by the various area associations and the executive. These include amendments plus amendments to amendments, all of which need to be voted on. It is not a laugh a minute! There are always hidden agendas, as well as not-so-hidden agendas; for instance there is some tension between large associations and small ones. This means that if a proposal is disliked by a large association they can ask for a membership vote and a few large associations with a large number of members can swamp any number of small associations with few membership votes.

On the whole the BBKA does not like lots of small associations because they are expensive to run, so small groups applying for membership tend to be turned down. It is also protective of the Annual Spring Conference and sees anything likely to change it as difficult. It is not so protective of the National Honey Show.

Below is a list of the propositions and their outcomes. There were 11 propositions:

The BBKA adopt a new Trustee Dispute and Discipline Resolution Procedure : passed with improvements to be made.

BBKA adopt the constitution amended to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation : passed with some amendments.

BBKA allows proxy votes at the ADM if notified in good time : passed.

A new category of School and Educational Establishments be admitted as a category of membership. The schools must be Ofsted registered and covered by the schools insurance : passed.

Non-recyclable plastic wrapping on BBKA News be replaced with a recyclable alternative : passed.

Dorset's proposition – BBKA to participate in Bee Tradex Exhibition at Stoneleigh Park was not voted on.

To wind-up BBKA Enterprises Limited Company within twelve months of the BBKA becoming a CIO : passed.

Video Conferencing be available for all trustee meetings : passed

At least four hours of every ADM be dedicated to debating propositions from area associations : not passed

A summary of all elections, appointments, and committee meetings be available on the members only website : passed

The BBKA to contact suppliers of beekeeping equipment not to supply leather gloves in beginners kits : passed.

Lesley Gasson

Blandford and Sturminster BKA

This winter's winds have been very destructive. Our apiary is on rather an exposed hillside with a hedge on one side. The wind blows across the site and twice this winter some hives have blown over. Because they are not under our noses it can be sometime before anyone notices that a hive is lying across the grass and the bees are trying to survive. They are pretty unpleasant when picked up and put together again, so rescuing them is not easy.

Besides the concern for our colonies and the effects of the weather, we have been preparing to monitor Asian hornet queens should they appear in our area. Ian Condon ran an Asian hornet trap-making workshop in the Shillingstone Church Centre in January and we should all now be able to identify a hornet and take the necessary steps to notify the right body. Our AHAT leader is Kerry Redman (07989 871790) who has gone on training courses with Mark White to ensure Asian hornets are correctly identified.

Margaret Ginman, the Secretary to the Bee Farmers, gave us a very interesting and informative talk in February on bee farming. The UK produces only 5% of the honey that is consumed here. She feels we should not under sell our honey as it is a unique product. The bee farmers are now running apprenticeship courses which should bring more young people in to the craft; like the rest of the farming community the average age of bee farmers is in the 60s.

The period from April to July is every beekeeper's busiest time. We started on 6th April with our Introduction to Beekeeping Day, with our hives in good condition and ready for the teaching year. The Introduction Day involves almost as many members as visitors. It is all organised by Terry Payne, who also gives the three lectures. There are talks in the morning, lunch provided by Pam Payne, apiary visits in the afternoon and finally the usual splendid beekeepers' tea and cakes.



Among our visitors this year were two grandchildren of Elizabeth Green, whose family had generously presented two new National hives to the association in memory of Elizabeth. The hives were on display and admired by all, including Rosie and Jonathan, shown in the picture on the right, who had come down from Scotland to join us for the day. The hives will be taken to the association apiary and put to good use very shortly.



We do not have many external visits during April and May because we want our new beekeepers to learn how to handle the bees and gain confidence. Our first apiary visit is to Steve Toop's and Sarah Watt's apiaries on 25th May which should be very interesting. Steve farms and has been trying to include bees in his farming methods.

The bees themselves are busy at this time of the year building up the colonies, getting ready to swarm and bring in most of the honey harvest for the year. I do not think we appreciate the wonder of our bees enough; they don't argue they just get on with their many jobs in wonderful harmony in spite of our interference.

Lesley Gasson

Future Dates

25th May Visit to Sarah Watts and Steve Toop 's apiary 1.00pm -4.00pm

22nd June Beekeepers' BBQ at White House Shillingstone 6.30pm

13th July Visit to Vita's apiary and research lab in Basingstoke 10.00am -4.00pm



THORNE

Quality British Made



Equipment

THORNE - we lead where others follow

E H THORNE (*Beehives*) LTD
BEEHIVE BUSINESS PARK, RAND, Nr. WRAGBY, LINCOLNSHIRE, LN8 5NJ
Tel. 01673 858555 sales@thorne.co.uk www.thorne.co.uk
like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/E.H.Thorne or follow us on Twitter @ThorneBeehives
subscribe to our YouTube Channel at <http://bit.ly/2BXpFns>

Dorchester and Weymouth

dorchesterandweymouthbka.com



Our first event of the year was an **Asian Hornet Evening** in February led by Mark White, the county coordinator. It was very successful, over 40 members turned up. We gave out a free AH trap + bait and asked members to give us the location of where their trap will go. Everyone willingly did this; so we now have a map on our website of areas currently covered by AH traps - have a look <https://dorchesterandweymouthbka.com/>

We also gave out A4 laminated ID posters. Most members took at least one to display locally in an area where the public will see it. We have also got one at the Portland Bird Observatory plus a trap, and at the Dorset Wildlife Centres in Weymouth; in addition, we did a 2 week display at Weymouth Library. Both the Observatory and DWT were well aware of the AH threat and had been actively looking out for it which is very heartening.

Our annual auction was held on Saturday 2nd March. For some reason it was not as successful as previous years. We were down on vendors, lots sold and active purchasers. Discussing the auction at our last committee meeting, we couldn't come up with any definitive reasons why this year was so poor but these were suggested: no-one giving up beekeeping this year; more members buying equipment online; too early in the season. The upshot is that we have decided to hold one again next year but at a later date in April to see if that makes a difference. It would be a shame if we can't continue with it, especially as weather doesn't matter now, with the new indoor venue.

We are busy planning some seasonal apiary visits and so far we have provisionally arranged:

9th June: Apiary Safari Day with Kevin Pope around Bockhampton/Moreton/Wool area

July: Furzehill Farm, Lynch Lane, Weymouth, site overlooking the Fleet

July/August: Oolite Farm, Osmington on a site owned by Heritage Seeds <http://www.heritage-seeds.co.uk>

Once confirmed all details will be put on our website.

We have been invited to a Spring Fayre at Puddletown on Saturday 13th April and we have a big event coming up in June called **'The Beefest' to be held on the Great Field in Poundbury, Saturday 29th June**. We will be there in force with our usual information stand, skep-making, observation hive, honey tasting and extracting (in the adjacent school). There will be loads of people, stalls, food and music. We are having a tintamarresque (hole in a board for heads to go through) made and will be trying it out here before taking it to the Dorchester Show.

We are starting our Beginners Course on 6th April, hopefully the weather will have warmed up by then. We started too early last year, mid-March, and during the first session we had snow. Our course is based around the BBKA 'Guide to Beekeeping' and we give each beginner a copy of the book. We feel it is worth the outlay to give them a good reference book not only for the course but to take them further.

We keep having our 'Get-togethers' every month in the back bar of the Colliton Club, Dorchester DT1 1XZ. These are usually at the beginning of the month on a Wednesday or Thursday. The next ones are Thursday 4th April and Wednesday 8th May. Anybody is welcome, they are informal, turn up and go as you please. So come and meet some members and chat bees. Details are always put on our website.

Sally Leslie

Secretary

East Dorset BKA

EDBKA has just completed a very successful six-week indoor course for new beekeepers and all twenty-three will now move onto their outdoor practical sessions at our apiary which begin in April. The Association will have seven candidates for the Basic Bee Assessment this year.

Of course, much planning has been done to be ready for the Asian Hornet threat. Members received a three-line whip to place monitoring traps in their apiaries and gardens and to register on Bee Base as a monitoring station. Our members have also been well briefed as to what to do and who to contact if they make a sighting or trap an insect. We are lucky in having the experienced Mark White as our Asian hornet guru who has been giving talks throughout the county. We were delighted that Dorset BKA approved a small grant for Mark to visit Jersey in the summer and work directly with Asian hornet hunters there, which will be of enormous benefit to us in Dorset when the threat becomes a reality.

Our Apiary at West Moors was suffering particularly badly from our resident wood ants who seem to have had a bumper spring. Our nuclei are under considerable attack and to a lesser extent the hives. We have moved the nuclei away for the time being and put cartons of vegetable oil under each hive stand leg which seems to be making a big difference.



As you can see from our images, our continuing work with the Dolphin Shopping Centre is paying big dividends. The Centre has hives on the roof and the hives are performing well and, as you can see, one has a cracking queen. The activity on the roof is relayed via a live cam so that shoppers can watch inspections and bee activity on a regular basis.



We have been lucky to have had three stimulating indoor meetings this winter. Our Seasonal Bee Inspector, Robin Oliver, gave a talk in January which was most valuable for the insights he gave us on beekeeping and challenged us to think again about some of the practices we have adopted

as 'right'. Robin is also the only person that I have met to date who has actually encountered an Asian hornet and he assured us that we would all recognise one if we saw one. In February Geoff Buckland conducted a lively evening on Swarm Control and received some difficult questions which he handled with his usual aplomb. Then in March, our chairman-in-waiting, Jim Dunne gave an illustrated talk on Queen Rearing. Jim had prepared a fantastic Power Point presentation and also brought along virtually every sort of contraption to do with the subject imaginable. We are most grateful to all three speakers.

Ivor Kemp
Chairman

Sherborne BKA

We have one more Winter Meeting to come which is a talk at Castle Gardens and shopping evening.

The other winter meetings have been well attended...

Lesley Gasson talking on Pheromones in December

Annual Festive Meal in January,

Andy Willis talking on Maximizing your Wax crop in February

Claire Barker talking about the inception of Hive Originals in March

Over the winter we had a casualty of the shed whose roof lining blew off in the gales, so the committee had to rescue the sodden contents and take them off to be stored safely and dried/cleaned etc. It has now been re-felted with extra security.

We are running our 3rd Introduction to Beekeeping Course and have 6 attendees. We are hoping they join us in our group when they have completed the course.

At the recent Dorset Beekeeping AGM in Dorchester we were awarded the Hambro Cup for the greatest percentage of new members. While we are pleased about that, we would like to encourage more of our membership to take an active role in the association. We are all busy people, but a visit to the apiary one Saturday afternoon would be greatly appreciated, if only to find out how you are doing with your bees.

We have offered our members an Asian Hornet trap and are putting up posters in surrounding villages to make the public aware and encourage identification and prompt reporting.

Judy Easdale



Becky's Beezzzz Ltd

FOR ALL YOUR BEEKEEPING NEEDS...

WE SELL LIVE BEES AND MATED QUEENS

At Beckys Bees we sell top quality mated queens and nucs as well as stocking a wide range of beekeeping products from cedar hives and varroa treatments to smokers and fuel and bee feed.

All our nucs comply to the standards set by Defra and NBU.

Manufacturers of Corex boxes that take both national & commercial frames, ventilated for optimum air flow when transporting bees. Light, strong and secure.

Stockists of Top quality cedar hives • Polystyrene & Ply Nuc Boxes • Frames & Foundation • Rauchboy Smokers & Smoker Fuel
Varroa Treatments & Medicines • Vita Gold & Vita Green • Ambrosia Fondant & Syrup • Pollen Substitute • Disposable & Leather Gloves • Bee Suits & Gaunflets • Feeders • Extractors • Jars and lots lots more...



Distributors of Aulumgaards Ambrosia Beefeed & Enolapi Candipolline Gold, Competitive quotes for pallets orders.

Visit our online shop for our full range at www.beckysbeesonlineshop.co.uk



Discounts given where I can. Please email me at beckysbeezzzz@gmail.com or Contact us on **01264 351104 • 07973 423628**

Members of



BEE FARMERS ASSOCIATION

News from West Dorset BKA—April 2019



We started our year off with our joint talk with East Devon, which was well supported. The refreshments afterwards by East Devon were scrummy. Please see article by Caroline Dilke on the Gerry Brierley talk. Next came our New Year's annual lunch on the 20th January, when 50 of us had an enjoyable time at the Bridport Golf Club.

We had a large meeting of over 60 people from our bee group, gardening groups and other interested parties for our awareness campaign for the Asian hornet, with the talk kindly given by Peter Crabbe our Asian hornet co-ordinator for West Dorset BKA. Traps and posters were available on the night. I only have a few traps left now. Our chair, Caroline Dilke, wrote another good article on the Asian hornet, which went into the local newspapers (this time they actually had the correct photo of the Asian hornet!). It also went online on our Facebook page in February, bringing the attention of the general public and beekeepers to this predator that will attack our honey bees and many other insects.

On the 19th February we had a frame-making evening with fish & chips brought in half way through - this proved a great success, and was fun for everybody. Mainly beginners came along to practice their skills, in anticipation of getting their own bees in the future.

Our beginners course has been a great success again. We have had 24 students for seven weeks of theory, which is followed by practicals in March and April. We were very lucky with the first group on the 24th March as it was a glorious day and the bees were flying well. The students were all excited to see inside the colonies after they were suited and booted. The four colonies had made it through the winter; we were all relieved after last year's disaster with drone-layers and disappearing queens.

Members of other associations are most welcome to come along to any of our talks and apiary meetings

Date	Time	Event	Where	Details
Sat 4 May	2.00pm	Apiary Meeting for members	Netherbury Apiary Park Farm DT6 5LY	Clean suits, gloves and boots please, if wearing your own.
Sat 1 Jun	2.00pm	Apiary Meeting for members	Netherbury Apiary	Clean suits, gloves and boots please, if wearing your own.
Sat 6 Jul	2.00pm	Apiary Meeting for members	Netherbury Apiary	Clean suits, gloves and boots please, if wearing your own.

“A journey into the healing hive”

Talk at Whitchurch village hall by Gerry Brierley, 10/1/19,

to West Dorset and East Devon beekeepers

Gerry Brierley is a woman of many parts – online she is listed as being a qualified pilot and also a Druid – but the relevance of her talk to us was that she is a beekeeper, with a special interest in hive products and their potential use in pharmacology.

She describes herself as an “accidental apitherapist”, having had a bad experience with ticks and contacted Lyme disease, among other infections, four years ago. She believes she cured herself by using controlled amounts of bee venom – 4,500 stings in total -- after other treatments had failed.

Gerry prefaced her talk with a disclaimer, saying anyone interested in using substances from a hive as medicine should “consult a medical doctor before taking any bee products discussed in this presentation”. With that out of the way, she presented her audience with a formidable list of pharmacologically active substances, all produced by honey bees. A remarkable total of 400 or so such compounds are to be found in honey, propolis, bee venom, pollen, royal jelly and wax, as well as ground-up drone larvae.

It has been known since ancient times that a beehive is a potential pharmacopaea. Historical figures down the ages, including Hippocrates in 370BC and Leonid Brezhnev in the 1970s, have had recourse to bee products in search of cures for such varied problems as paralysis, arthritis and even cancer. Of course the bees themselves, lacking a strong immune system, rely on inputs such as propolis for antibiotic and antiseptic help in keeping healthy.

It was interesting to note the huge range of active compounds that have been identified in bee products such as melittin from bee venom (highly anti-inflammatory – smells of ripe bananas) and propolis (used to treat ulcers and burns). The name of propolis, given it in ancient times, means “defender of the city”. As with many other hive products it is more valued on the Continent than in the UK; it is sometimes known as the “Russian penicillin”.

Often bee products are used in conjunction with acupuncture, when injecting small amounts of substances such as bee venom.

Gerry enlivened her talk with anecdotal evidence of the usefulness of hive products, especially in treating arthritis, and when she opened the floor to questions the audience had more to add. One beekeeper told us his tennis elbow had been cured by stings; a man who had contracted Lyme disease said changes in diet had helped – and he had eaten lots of honey. Others asked if, given the exposure of honey bees to contaminants such as diesel, we should be cautious about hive products. Gerry said she takes a lot of trouble to use products that are as pure as possible.

In discussion over tea afterwards, some doubted whether using a natural mixture of active compounds – rather than a refined, targeted drug to attack a specific ailment – was the right way to practice medicine. But there is room for alternative therapies, and Gerry, who is a PhD student at Cardiff Metropolitan University, had given us a wealth of data and some interesting stories to think about.

East Devon beekeepers, who arranged this talk, provided a splendid feast afterwards.

Report kindly provided by Caroline Dilke, West Dorset BKA

Building a Bee Library

Previous articles have discussed several books which every new beekeeper should consider adding to their library but I do not mean to exclude others (and there are many) which are worth discovering for yourself. A little research on-line will be worthwhile and of course the BBKA themselves have a list of recommended books for every level of ability. In addition, if you have read some of those I have suggested, you might be ready to look further afield particularly if you want to think about the modules and want to add to your library's variety; the Green and Orange books by Yates will have given you a sound foundation.

With that in mind, there are two books by Celia Davis which I have found very helpful. They are '**The Honey Bee Inside Out**' and '**The Honey Bee Around and About**'

The first, as you might imagine from its title, addresses the biology and behaviour of the bee, while the second is wider ranging dealing with disease, raising queens, foraging and myriad activity by the bee as it gets on with its job. Celia declares that her intention with both books was to make them readable and accessible to the non-scientist but at the same time to make them relevant to the BBKA examinations. Those aims have, for me, been achieved and they both deserve a place on the beekeepers bookshelf, whether or not you plan to take any exams at all. Published by Bee Craft Ltd they are usually available at a discount when both are bought together.

If you have read the examples I have given in these articles and still want to read more, then you are probably already into the module exams where more advanced books are going to be necessary to help your progress and you are no longer 'New' to beekeeping.

Snodgrass and Dade are names that speak for themselves in the world of beekeeping and both are well worth buying to help you for the later stages of the exams if that is your aim. They were both written long ago but Dade in particular has been updated and, in any case, the principles and biological facts described endure.

You could also look out for the '**Illustrated Encyclopedia of Beekeeping**', edited by Roger Morse and Ted Hooper. I believe it is now out of print but can be found in second-hand in specialist book shops on-line. The encyclopedia format allows you to look up and cross reference any item of interest to give you an insight to a question without having to plough through a lot of books.

I hope that my suggestions – or at least some of them- have been of interest or use to you and I hope that you will continue to read and learn from those authors, as well as from your own practical experiences for which there is no real substitute.

Happy reading,

Terry Payne



Caddon Hives

Quality hives made from
Western Red Cedar.

Langstroth
National
Smith
WBC

Beekeeping accessories also
available including:
Clothing, Frames, Feeders, Smokers, Tools etc



www.caddon-hives.co.uk
or call 01896 850 755

ATTENTION ALL DORSET BEEKEEPERS

BEE HEALTH DAY

run by Kevin Pope and his fellow bee inspectors

SATURDAY 20th JULY 2019

10.00am — 4 .00pm

BLANDFORD SCHOOL

Details to be provided through associations

Sustainability – Bees & Queens for All

Recently Exeter BKA hosted a meeting of the South West branch of BIBBA (Bee Improvement & Bee Breeder Association) www.bibba.com . Roger Patterson was the speaker.

There is a growing concern amongst UK beekeepers of all abilities and experience about the increasing importation of bees and queens. This is on several grounds, including the possibility of introducing pests, diseases and pathogens, aggression in subsequent generations and unsuitability to our fickle climate. Defra has recently conducted a survey which showed that the majority of beekeepers prefer home reared queens, but need help to produce them. Statistics given showed that bees imported from EU countries went up from 400+ in 2011 to 17,000+ in 2018. More worryingly, the number of Queens imported from Argentina in 2018 was 525, which could contain genetics of Africanised Killer Bees.

Roger set out to convince us that with his 'tried and tested' methods of raising our own queens we could put a stop to the ever increasing numbers of imported queens.

With the majority of beekeepers stating that the preference would be for 'home reared Queens' to be used, why isn't this happening? Reasons listed as 'lack of experience, confidence and time' as well as a number of myth's that have been passed around over the years such as 'using swarm cells to produce queens perpetuate swarms', 'emergency cells produce inferior queens' etc., etc. Time was spent dispelling these myths and building up our confidence to embark on our own programme for rearing our own Queens.

Most importantly we need to have an understanding of the life cycle of the queen, make a plan, keep records, learn to assess our stocks and above all keep it simple – few of us realise that we are already doing most of this in our normal beekeeping practices. Roger then considered some aspects of queens :

- they can live for 3 – 5 years,
- might, or might not swarm,
- supersedure used to take place at the end of the season, and failures occurred in the Spring'.

But these facts are not necessarily true today.

He went through the reasons for swarming and stated that culling is important in raising the quality our bees. We all want:

- Bees with good temperament
- Calm on the comb – which gives the beekeeper longer time to assess
- Bees to suit local conditions

Some of the reasons for bad temper:

- Weather conditions – rapid drop in barometric pressure
- Single source crop
- Bad handling – always the beekeeper's fault
- Indiscriminate use of smoker
- Second generation cross from pure queen

The afternoon covered an outline of the more traditional routes for bee breeding referred to by Roger Patterson as 'Artificial Methods', these include cell punch, the W cut -better known as the Miller method, larva transfer or 'grafting' and cell plugs using Jenter and Cupkits all of which warrant a standalone workshop and plenty of practise!

We were then treated to a detailed account of the 'Roger Patterson' method , using nuc's and relying heavily on the 'Patterson Support Unit', a simple means of ensuring that there is always a readily available supply of good quality clean drawn comb. These methods can both be accessed via the Dave Cushman website www.dave-cushman.net , which Roger now runs and continually updates and which is also injected with his own pearls of wisdom acquired from over 50 years of keeping bees, for instance, putting more colonies into the winter, and uniting in spring if we don't want as many.

Some Thoughts

Sarah More is a member of West Dorset BKA, and is a retired veterinary surgeon who spent most of her career practising in Somerset and Dorset.

Many of us beekeepers are concerned about the increase in queen failures. It is believed that 25% of virgins don't get home. Some may be going back to the wrong hive, so why not have different patterns over the front doors, and try not to keep your hives in straight rows?

What about the other 75+%? There may be many reasons for it including poor quality drones and queens and also other things including deformed wing virus (DWV), pollution with microplastics, pesticides, herbicides etc.

Some things we can do little about, but some we can. We can ensure our colonies are strong and healthy enough, with abundant food supplies to produce the best quality queens and drones. Kevin [Pope] said about 40% of production colonies he inspected last year weren't in that condition. All larvae need the best food. This means the nurse bees need to have had the best brood food when they were larvae to develop into good nurse bees producing high quality brood food. The young queen larvae need to be stuffed full with the highest quality royal jelly.

Wally Shaw has reduced his queen failure rate by ensuring that his virgins have been mated in May or June and no later. He believes DWV levels are too high after this. Virgins can be infected in the brood nest and also by infected drones. DWV is a sexually transmitted disease. A queen can then pass the infection on to her brood. DWV was a topic at the Somerset Lecture Day. I think I will try and see this year if his theory works. I will encourage them to want to swarm and do artificials, hopefully in April or May, and if colonies I want daughters from haven't wanted to swarm, will split them towards the end of May. I still think swarm queen cells are better than emergency ones. Splits should only be done when the colony is big and strong with lots of well-fed nurse bees.

We can also replace old comb regularly to get rid of toxins. We can't stop them getting hold of microplastics and pesticides outside the hive but we can use only the soft pesticides such as acids and thymol in the hive, not the hard ones like Apistan to control varroa. Hard pesticides increase both queen and drone infertility. They may be in purchased foundation. Varroa must be controlled as they open the door to DWV and sac brood and cause stress.

So what about the drones? Many beekeepers still think of these amusing chaps as idle gluttons eating their honey; a waste of valuable resources. For a long time now the majority of beekeepers have put only worker brood foundation in the brood box and we have been and still are encouraged to cull drones to control varroa. God forbid if you forget to remove the drone brood when it is sealed! They say if you let it hatch, all you are doing is producing varroa. Poor maligned creatures. If you must cull drones, do it judiciously. Thoughtful beekeepers like drones and think they are important. It has been suggested the drones and drone brood produce a lot of heat so allow the workers to get out sooner in the day instead of staying in to keep the temperature up in the brood nest. The workers like them around. We are learning more about them but I wish more research was being done. We can encourage the production of quality drones to maybe help reduce queen failure rates. Wild colonies produce about 2,000 drones. A good drone congregation area (DCA) is composed of about 10,000 drones. This requires 15,000 drones, as mature drones have a max flight time of 25-30mins before refuelling; so some are in transit. They make three to six trips a day out to the DCAs. Like the queens, drones need the best food as larvae. They have royal jelly for the first 50hrs and then receive drone jelly, a protein-rich diet. Testes need lots of protein to develop properly. Once the drone hatches, it needs more high-quality food to help the sperm migrate to the seminal vesicles. The drones start mating flights about 12

BIBBA lecture continued

Roger believes that teaching apiaries must be prepared to help and promote new beekeepers to make queen rearing an important part of their practice, maybe introducing our own programmes which would be supported with help from BIBBA.

Overall, a thought-provoking day well spent with fellow bee keepers; not all that we heard did we subscribe to but the mental list of questions we took with us all covered, some in depth and some to be followed up. Several Dorset associations were represented. It would be great to use the impetus provided by this day to form one or more groups in Dorset to undertake practical workshops – encouraging each other and growing good bees into the bargain.

Kim Hughes Blandford & Sturminster BKA & Judy Easdale Sherborne BKA



OVER 400 TITLES AVAILABLE

www.northernbeebooks.co.uk

days after hatching, the time when enough sperm have migrated. Flight durations increase up to maximum at about day 22. A queen probably has about the same flight time but she can go further (so she doesn't mate with her brothers) as mating is so fast: two to three seconds per drone, with another second or two to remove the previous drone's mating sign. Think of a drone as a sperm rapid delivery unit: the sperm is in the seminal vesicles ready to be ejected into the queen in the blink of an eye. So 15 matings take place in less than a minute!

About 50% of drones are now thought to be infertile. Poor feeding and pesticides are two of probably many reasons including heat waves. So some of us are now actively encouraging our colonies to produce drones. Brian Godfrey puts wired BS deep foundation into his 14x12 frames, two per colony. The empty bit at the bottom is for the bees to build drone comb in. Kevin with his 16x10 frames puts super foundation in his brood frames, again two per colony. I put at least two wired frames with either a starter strip or a sharpened turned wedge per brood box just inside the store frames. Both work well.

Sarah More

Editor's Note. This article first appeared in a West Dorset BKA newsletter. I am grateful to both Sarah and WDBKA for permission to re-produce it.

A traveller's tale

Those who read travel brochures will know that Costa Rica, a country in Central America (the green one on the map), is a popular tourist destination, being known principally for its huge range of wildlife, its beaches and its volcanoes. Although being only 0.03% of the world's landmass, it is home to 5% of the world's biodiversity of flora and fauna. The economy is less dependent on agriculture than it used to be, but there are still significant areas devoted to the growing of tropical fruits (look at the origin of the pineapples on sale in most English supermarkets) and other crops, such as sugar cane, as well as cattle rearing. On the whole, the fruit is grown on the lower ground near the coasts, while crops such as coffee and flowers are grown inland on the higher ground.



We are lucky enough to have a son who lives there; consequently we have visited this tropical paradise a number of times. On a recent visit, I decided to see what I could find out about bees and honey production in the country. I left it too late to make contact with any beekeepers (so that is something to do on our next visit), but they clearly exist as I returned home with five jars of honey from different producers, purchased in different places and at different times – all 'runny' you will notice; I could find none that had crystallised or was creamed. The prices are similar to those here—350gm at the equivalent of £6.00, but the packaging varies, as you can see



Blue Zones. The jar on the left of the photo comes from Nicoya in the north west of the country which is one of the world's 'blue zones' – According to the National Geographic magazine these zones are regions of the world where research indicates that people live much longer than average, principally owing to their diet – so if you see me looking unduly healthy, it may be the Nicoya honey that is the cause! The other blue zones are Okinawa (Japan), Sardinia (Italy), Icaria (Greece) and Loma Linda (California).

Coffee. While no longer quite as important as it once was, coffee growing and processing remains a major industry in Costa Rica and takes place in a number of distinct areas which are at an altitude of between 1800 and

3600 feet. Two of the jars/bottles come from coffee growing areas, where I was told that bees compete with humming birds to pollinate the coffee crop.

The final two containers are simply labelled 'floral honey'. So much for an initial look; clearly there is more exploration to be done – watch this space (or, better still, visit Costa Rica yourself)!

Tim Villiers



MAISEMORE APIARIES LTD

MANUFACTURERS & SUPPLIERS OF ALL BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT

We also do an excellent wax exchange, straight swap or conversion!



- Frames
- Hives & Hive Parts Cedar
- Rock Bottom Hives Cedar
- Polystyrene Hives & Polystyrene Hive Parts
- Extraction
- Clothing
- Smokers
- Bee Health & Fumigation
- Books
- Beeswax Foundation
- Glass Jars & Containers
- Marking
- Queen Rearing
- Honey For Sale
- Gift Vouchers £5 £10 £20
- Hive Tools & Hardware
- Labels
- Bees on Comb & Queens
- Feeders
- Bee Feed
- Parts & Accessories



OLD ROAD, MAISEMORE, GLOUCESTER, GL2 8HT

TEL: 01452 700289

FAX: 01452 700196

sales@bees-online.co.uk www.bees-online.co.uk www.woodenbriquettes.co.uk

Dorset Dates

Members of all Associations are **WELCOME** at all meetings. However, if it is not your parent branch, please contact the organiser beforehand, so that they can ensure that there are enough seats (cake?) for all attendees.

Date / Time	Branch	Event	Contact	Venue
4 May 2.00pm	West Dorset BKA	Apiary meeting for members	Carole Brown	Netherbury Apiary Park Farm DT6 5LY
25 May 1.00-4.00pm	Blandford & Sturminster BKA	Apiary visits	Lesley Gasson	
1 June 2.00pm	West Dorset BKA	Apiary meeting for members	Carole Brown	Netherbury Apiary Park Farm DT6 5LY
9 June	Dorchester & Weymouth BKA	Apiary safari with Kevin Pope	Sally Leslie	Bockhampton/ Moreton/Wool
22 June 6.30pm	Blandford & Sturminster BKA	BBQ	Lesley Gasson	The White House Shillingstone
29 June	Dorchester & Weymouth BKA	Beefest	Sally Leslie	Great Field, Poundbury
30 June	Dorset BKA	HoneyCraft copy due (for April/May/June)	To : Tim Villiers	tim@ familyvilliers.co.uk
6 July 2.00pm	West Dorset BKA	Apiary meeting for members	Carole Brown	Netherbury Apiary Park Farm DT6 5LY
13 July 10.00am-4.00pm	Blandford & Sturminster BKA	Visit to Vita apiary & research lab	Lesley Gasson	Basingstoke
20 July	Dorset BKA	Bee Health Day	Lesley Gasson	Blandford School

Show Dates 2019

Gillingham & Shaftesbury Wednesday 14th August
 Melplash Thursday 22nd August
 Dorset County Show Saturday 7th & Sunday 8th September

Who's Who in the Dorset County Beekeepers' Association

President Richard Norman

Vice Presidents: Ken Bishop, Mervyn Bown, Chris Slade

Chair	Lesley Gasson,	The White House, Candys Lane, Shillingstone DT11 0SF
Vice Chair	Trevor Ford	trevorlanners@gmail.com
Secretary	Liz Rescorla, 01305 889916	5 Cowleaze, Martinstown, Dorchester DT2 9TD winkyozz@uwclub.net
Treasurer	Robert Camping, 01202 849338	Yew Tree Cottage, Higher Row, Holt, Wimborne BH21 7EB yewcot@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Ben Benjamin	chrisbenbenjamin@googlemail.com
Education Officer	Geoff Buckland, 01305 567950	The Willows, Icen Lane, Weymouth DT3 5PY geofbuckland@aol.com
Examinations Secretary	Terry Payne, 01747 811251	Brookman's Farm Bungalow, Dunns Lane, Iwerne Minster DT11 8NG twpayne@btopenworld.com
Honeycraft Editor	Tim Villiers, 01963 364384	The Old Vicarage, Stourton Caundle DT10 2JN tim@familyvilliers.co.uk
Website Manager	Stephen Potts	sbfpotts@gmail.com <u>web site</u> www.dorsetBKA.com
Asian Hornet Co-ordinator	Mark White 07747 620920	18 Allen's Road, Upton, Poole, BH16 5BU markaj2000@hotmail.com

Blandford & Sturminster	Lesley Gasson, 01258 861690	The White House, Candys Lane, Shillingstone , DT11 0SF imgasson@btinternet.com
Dorchester & Weymouth	Sally Leslie, 01305 823043	86 Chiswell, Portland, Dorset DT5 1AP sallyfrances86@hotmail.com
East Dorset	Jenny Wellman, 01202 873292	32 Compton Crescent, West Moors, BH22 0BZ jenny@jenny32.plus.com
Sherborne	Judy Easdale, 01963 220984	Townsend Farmhouse, Poyntington, Sherborne DT9 4LF sherbornebee@hotmail.co.uk
West Dorset	Carole Brown 01308-456210	11 North Hill Way, Bridport. DT6 4JX secretary@westdorsetbees.org.uk

Seasonal Bee Inspector	Kevin Pope 07775 119466	kevin.pope@apha.gov.uk