

HONEYCRAFT

April 2020



Whoops! A mouse family had made a nice winter nest out of bin liners and leaves in this super at the BSBKA apiary—two lived to tell the tale , but one did not !!!!

Dorset County Beekeepers Association



Editor's Note

Among the branch association notes in this issue you will find the expected regrets that so much has had to be cancelled, but also reports of talks and social gatherings, and of training that was completed before the coronavirus lock-down was imposed. At the time of writing, all gatherings have been prohibited and association apiaries are being looked after by small teams. But while we humans are in lock-down, the bees most certainly are not! Although they have not enjoyed the damp winter and some colonies are weaker than their owners would hope, the increasing daylight and warmth in the sun is causing both bees and plants to be about their usual spring-time business. And so must we, as beekeepers; our insects will require their usual care and attention.

Some of the articles in this issue may be familiar to some readers already, as branch secretaries will have distributed the BBKA and NBU advice on looking after bees during the period when movement is restricted. Some may also have distributed information on the AGM and constitution amendments. However, all are worth repeating, as they matter; moreover this magazine acts as a record of beekeeping activity in Dorset.

Our webmaster, Stephen Potts, will be keeping the information on the coronavirus up-to-date on our website at <http://dorsetbka.com/covid-19> ; please keep an eye open for changes. Asian hornets are a threat to us all. Mark White has written an update on AHATs and branches will be contacting their members to set up a monitoring operation across the county—it is in all our interests that this is done conscientiously by all who can help.

For those who have time on their hands or want to brush up their knowledge and techniques, Chris Harwood has compiled another helpful guide to beekeeping videos. Without face-to-face practical instruction being available in apiaries these are wonderful learning tools for less experienced beekeepers and handy revision at the start of the season for all of us.

Finally, aren't we fortunate to be able to sit out the current lock-down in beautiful countryside, with a legitimate reason for being out and about!

Happy reading.

Tim Villiers

Editor

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Chair Chatter

I know that at present everyone is concerned about how they are going to look after their bees, especially if they need help lifting brood boxes and supers; however here is a different problem.

Is Roundup a good thing? I know it is not a pesticide or insecticide but it is very widely used by both farmers and gardeners. Recently, I was contacted by a beekeeper in south Oxfordshire who said that he had 43 hives in September and that now he has about 21. He said where he lives 70% of the land is arable and glyphosate is used widely to clear the farmland before spring. He said when he looked at his hives there was plenty of food, the queen was there with quite a bit of brood and almost no bees. He thought the Roundup had upset their ability to fly home. I heard a similar story about someone who keeps their bees beside a vineyard. The vineyard is sprayed with herbicide to keep down the weeds and nearly all the bees in the adjoining field died. When you think about the Californian almond orchards where the trees are regularly sprayed underneath to stop dandelions growing and distracting the bees from pollinating the almond blossom, there is a huge colony mortality. Apparently about 30% of colonies die. If this was livestock such as cattle, sheep or pigs there would be an outcry.

I told Norman Guiver that we kept our bees in an area where there is a large amount of livestock farming with woods and hills. He said he thought that we lived in paradise. As a result of his colony losses he has set up an organisation called "Bee Watch" which farmers in his area have signed up to. If they are spraying anything a message comes on his smart phone that lets him know where and when the spraying will take place so that he can protect his bees in good time. This is shared with beekeepers in his area. Let's hope we never need it.

Lesley Gasson

BBKA Exams 2020

The BBKA Exam Board has notified us that all practical assessments have been cancelled until September.

This will apply to Advanced Husbandry, General Husbandry, Bee Breeding, Bee Health, Basic and Junior Certificates.

The Exam Board will review the situation in September regarding the Microscopy Assessments.

Candidates who have applied already will receive a free transfer to next year or a refund if they prefer.

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South West Beekeepers' Forum

The most recent meeting of the South West Beekeepers' Forum was held on 11th February 2020 with nine of the 11 member area associations represented, plus a representative from the NBU.

The meeting opened with the chairman emphasising the need for all of us as beekeepers to engage with the public regarding the importance of Asian hornet incursion. He also commented on the need for effective communication between the forum and its associations - to ensure that association members are familiar with the activities of the forum.

The Asian hornet threat was a central issue in this meeting. Firstly, the **South West Asian Hornet Action Team Convention** on 28th January was discussed; its description of good practice and the formulation of plans, while increasing skills and knowledge, was noted. The success of the meeting was acknowledged and thanks were given to Lyn Ingrams and Somerset BKA for their organisation of the event. Somerset in turn generously offered their services in organising a further Asian hornet meeting next winter.

Secondly, Anne Rowberry (the new BBKA Chair) reported on the **National AHAT Conference** on 8th February. This was also highly successful, especially as it proved to be complementary to the SW meeting, in that the focus was on research rather than the practicalities. Major issues covered included recording, monitoring and the need to engage with the public.

Finally, and staying with the wretched Asian hornet, Dr Peter Kennedy of Exeter University spoke to the meeting via Skype. He outlined his continuing research in the tracking of Asian hornets using radio telemetry – which he hopes to develop early in the coming season. This is a continuation of the research that we, through the forum, contributed to in 2017.

To advance this project, his department asked for £1,826 to cover the purchase of improved, lighter radio tags (x6 at £225) plus an activator. After some discussion, and questions, it was agreed that delegates would ask their associations to contribute toward this project. We were assured, that this would be put to good use in funding team members' expenses.

Afternote: in the following six weeks all the participating associations made pledges to a total of £2,185, covering the costs with a small surplus, with Dorset, approving a payment of £240 towards the project at our AGM on 8th March. Sincere thanks have been received from members of the Exeter team and from the university itself.

The use of improved telemetry will not be a replacement for the Jersey method of track & trace, which works remarkably well; rather it will speed up the process, especially when nests are difficult to locate, and will release manpower to focus on the major task in hand.

The terms of the officers of the forum were discussed and, in particular, my role as Treasurer. I was formally appointed for three years from February 2020. I gave a brief account of the financial position of the forum and it was agreed that a request for subscriptions of £50 per association should be issued soon to cover participation for the coming year.

Roland Benjamin (Ben)

Note:

A description of the South West Beekeepers' Forum (SWBKF) was given in the January 2020 issue of HoneyCraft.

DORSET COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

**Unadopted Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 8 March 2020
held in Sunninghill Community Hall, Dorchester**

Recorded attendees: 27

AGM Chair, Lesley Gasson; Secretary, Liz Rescorla

Apologies were received from Chris and Carol Donaghy, Michele Vassar, Ivor Kemp, Jim Dunne

Minutes of the AGM on 10 March 2019 were signed as a true record. Proposed by Geoff Buckland, seconded by Carole Browne

Matters arising: none

Council reports: all previously circulated. Comments:

Education Officer Geoff Buckland advised the meeting:

A. the Dorset BKA Convention to be held on 4 October 2020 at Blandford School will be on the theme of honey bee queens. Confirmed speakers to date are Clive de Bruyn and Michael Waite; further details will follow.

B. Geoff Buckland will run a queen rearing course over three days: 9 May, 13 May and 16 May 2020. Methods will include Miller, Jenter and grafting; further details to follow.

Asian Hornet Action Team: report previously circulated. The County AHAT Coordinator advised the meeting that Dorset BKA AHATs have joined forces with Bournemouth and Dorset South BKA and New Forest BKA and have agreed to pool resources if necessary. In April 2020 they will commence two months of trap monitoring. In respect of recommendations in the report:

equipment: it was agreed that the County Association will pay for one set of equipment for each Dorset BKA Branch Association. The County AHAT Coordinator will draw up a list of equipment together with Ben Benjamin and purchases will be made in bulk for both standardisation and cost benefits

AHAT Coordinator trips to Jersey BKA: it was agreed that the County Association will not fund trips to Jersey. Individuals who wish to take up Jersey BKA's invitation will need to meet the cost themselves and/or arrange funding with the prior agreement of their Branch Association

Proposed by Ben Benjamin, seconded by Geoff Buckland

County Honey Show: it was agreed to accept the recommendation of the Council to discontinue the County Honey Show with effect from 2020. Proposed by Peter Crabbe, seconded by Chris Slade

Adoption of audited accounts: copies of the accounts were distributed. A query was raised about the high postage, stationery and miscellaneous expenditure for 2019 compared to 2018. The Treasurer advised that this was due to the Honey Show prize money provided to Dorchester and Weymouth BKA in respect of the 2019 County Honey Show. The accounts were adopted; proposed by Geoff Buckland, seconded by Tim Villiers

County capitation fee: the Council proposed a fee of £3.00 which will be reviewed at the January 2021 Council meeting. The fee was approved; proposed by Terry Payne, seconded by Carole Brown.

Proposed constitutional amendments: the following changes were agreed:

Officers: notice previously circulated

remove Show Secretary

include Membership Secretary, Website Manager, County Asian Hornet Action Team Coordinator

Proposed by Terry Payne, seconded by Judy Easdale

Change to the name of the County Association bank account from Dorset County Beekeepers Association to Dorset

BKA: this had arisen shortly before the meeting due to the pending introduction by the bank of a 'confirmation of payee' scheme; the name of the account needs to be shorter to fit into the payee box

Proposed by Cuffy Laverton, seconded by Geoff Buckland

Election of officers and others

<i>Position</i>	<i>Current Officer</i>	<i>Elected Officer</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Seconded</i>
President	R Norman	R Norman	Nem con	
Vice Presidents	Ken Bishop Mervyn Bown Chris Slade		Nem con	
Chairman	L Gasson	L Gasson	Nem con	
Vice Chair	T Ford	T Ford	Nem con	
Secretary	L Rescorla	L Rescorla	Nem con	
Treasurer	R Camping	R Camping	Nem con	
Education Officer	G Buckland	G Buckland	Nem con	
Examinations Secretary	T Payne	T Payne	Nem con	
Membership Secretary	R Benjamin	R Benjamin	Nem con	
Honeycraft Editor	T Villiers	T Villiers	Nem con	
Website Manager	S Potts	S Potts	Nem Con	
County AHAT Coordinator	M White	M White	Nem Con	
Accounts Examiner	M Clarke	M Clarke	Approved	
BBKA Delegate	2020 ADM L Gasson	To be nominated at Sept 2020 Council mtg		
SWBKF Representatives	R Benjamin, L Rescorla, C Slade	R Benjamin, S Potts, L Rescorla	Terry Payne	Cuffy Laverton
BeeCraft Trustees	G Buckland, R Camping, L Rescorla	G Buckland, R Camping, L Rescorla	Nem con	
National Honey Show Delegate	L Gasson	L Gasson	Nem con	

Confirmation of uncontested re-elections proposed by Cuffy Laverton, seconded by Sue Billington

Treasurer Robert Camping advised that he will step down at the 2021 AGM and invited anyone interested in the role to contact him

Membership Secretary Ben Benjamin would also step down at the 2021 AGM if anyone was interested in the role

Any Other Business

SWBKF

subscription: this will be £50 for 2020

contribution to Asian hornet tracking research project [Peter Kennedy, Exeter University]: information previously circulated.
The Council proposed a contribution of £240 [£225 tag + £15 share of activator]

Both approved. Proposed by Mark White, seconded by Terry Payne

Module Study Groups: for several years these groups have been run by three Association members; DBKA Chair Lesley Gasson reminded members that anyone could consider setting up a group to work through a Module syllabus for learning support and/or exam preparation

Presentations

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

the Branch with the highest percentage of successful Basic Assessment candidates out of Branch members in one season, based on Spring capitation figures, was Blandford and Sturminster BKA for the 2019 season

The meeting closed at 4.05 pm

ecr 09.03.2020 unsigned, unadopted

Constitution - Dorset County BKA

Following the changes agreed at the AGM, the revised constitution is shown on pp 21-24

Margaret Ginman - General Secretary, The Bee Farmers Association

In her talk to the Dorset Beekeepers Association before the AGM, Margaret Ginman provided an overview of the honey industry, described who and what a bee farmer is and outlined the role of the Bee Farmers Association in support of its members.

In essence, a bee farmer keeps bees as a business, selling honey in bulk containers, while most Dorset BKA members keep them as a hobby (which may bring in some income) and sell the honey in jars. The average bee farmer in the UK has 100 hives, in the European Union (EU) the average is 150 hives, and in the United States it is 30,000!

In addition to honey, bee farmers will sell a full range of hive and bee products, such as wax and propolis, but mead is hard to sell! Many bee farmers provide pollination services to farmers and the Bee Farmers Association have an officer whose main responsibility is to set up pollination contracts on behalf of association members.

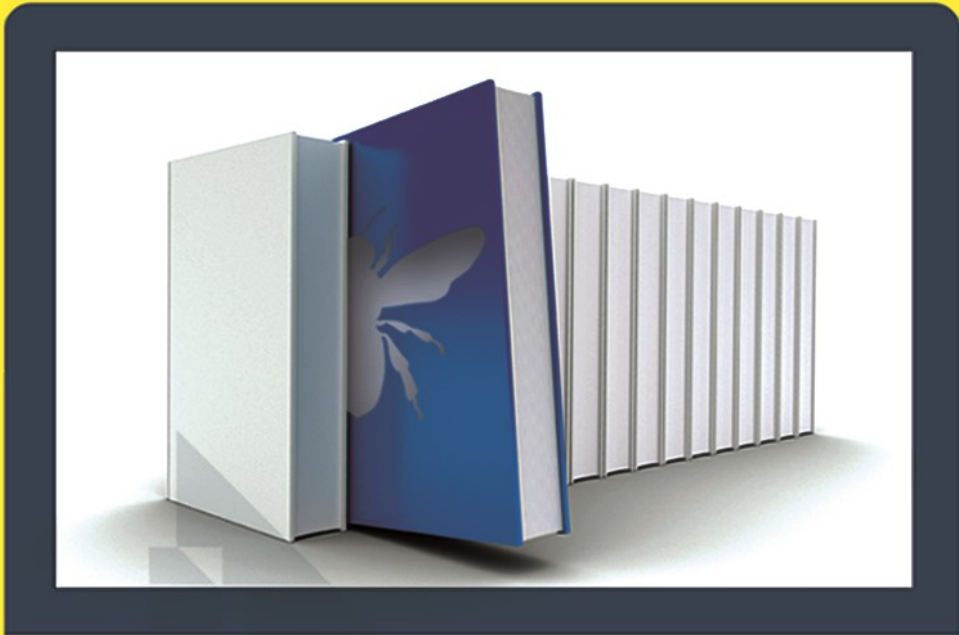
More honey is sold in the UK than jam, but home production can only satisfy 14% of the demand; the balance has to be imported, coming from both the EU and elsewhere in the world, notably China which is the world's largest producer. Within the EU, Romania and Spain are the largest producers.

50% of UK households buy honey regularly, buying on average 2Kg p.a. 70% of these households eat their honey at breakfast. The health benefits of consuming honey are promoted by the NHS.

This led Margaret into stressing that honey produced by UK bee farmers and hobby beekeepers is a PREMIUM product and should not be undersold. She suggested that purchasers at places such as farmers markets are interested in the story behind the product and that opportunities should be found to put this across and thus promote the quality of the product.

This was an excellent and informative talk and was brought to a conclusion by a wide range of questions from the audience.

Tim Villiers



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The Inspector Reports.....

Hello everyone.

This is usually an article about bee disease but a human virus is going to influence the bee season hugely.

At the time of writing the only thing I know for sure is that I will not get updates this year by attending regional meetings and I will not be going to York for our annual Tech Training week. I shall be forced into joining the 21st century for conference calls and Skype meetings! It looks like I will be inspecting bee hives but on my own or with the beekeeper at least 2m away---- most definitely not at the hive side.

I am not sure how this will work. I am waiting for communication from the NBU to fill in all the blanks as there are bound to be a lot of questions from me to you the beekeeper, to check on biosecurity etc. All this is bound to slow me up.

When you put all this with the fact that we still don't have an inspector for the New Forest area of Hampshire, I may not get around to as many of you this year! Dan Etheredge (South Berks, East & North Hampshire and IOW) and myself will share the extra area so my patch will roughly stretch from Lyme Regis to Lyndhurst and up into some of Wiltshire.

All this means that you the beekeeping community will have to be very vigilant with your bees and call me in when needed. Please send me photos of things you are not sure of; I will get back to everyone as soon as I can.

I think maybe as beekeepers we have a sense of this already but one thing that this COVID 19 does show us is that we forget that we are only smart monkeys at our peril----- nature is most definitely in charge!

Just as I am finishing this, I have had an email from the NBU sent to me as a beekeeper not an inspector, setting out what we can do. I'm sure the majority of you reading this will have received it too but the main message it gave me is that it is our responsibility to make sure we look after our livestock properly.

That of course opens the proverbial can of worms ----- what is 'looking after them properly'?

Rather than making this article never ending with an attempt to answer----I'll leave you with that thought

Take care and keep well and keep safe.

No doubt I'll be talking with many of you over the coming months.

Kevin

Time on your hands?

1. The "Enterprise" section of 'The Sunday Times' carried an interesting article on 15 March headed :*To bee or not to bee:...* about the use of bees as pollinators in the USA. Not surprisingly, it is not a happy story! The article can be accessed at:

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/past-six-days/2020-03-15/business/to-bee-or-not-to-bee-the-great-dilemma-zrlztxw15>

2. Meanwhile, The Daily Telegraph includes in its list of "5 Unusual Series to Watch Online":

"Honeyland - the extraordinary story of a Macedonian beekeeper whose solitary, rather beautiful life is threatened when a family arrive nearby"

This film (which I have not watched yet—Ed) can be accessed on the BFI Player. bfi.org.uk.

3. and The Economist writes about the effect of COVID-19 on China's beekeepers:

file:///C:/Users/user/Documents/Bees/HoneyCraft/2020%20April/The%20honey%20trap%20-%20China%E2%80%99s%20beekeepers%20feel%20the%20sting%20of%20covid-19%20_%20China%20_%20The%20Economist.html

From the Secretary's desk

COVID-19 AND CARING FOR HONEY BEE COLONIES

The situation is changing almost on a day by day basis; however at the time of writing (25 March 2020) the following applies:

Swarm collection: the latest advice on the BBKA website, dated 24 March 2020:

BBKA Chair Anne Rowberry says:

The swarm collection service will still be in operation during the pandemic

Swarm collection can go ahead but you must take into account social distancing

Risk assess the situation and do not take unnecessary risks as health services will be under pressure due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

As always, only collect when it is safe to do so. We are working with DEFRA

You can find info on swarms and our map of collectors here: www.bbka.org.uk/swarm

As far as Dorset BKA is concerned, swarms should only be collected if the beekeeper can do so safely whilst abiding by the government's current instructions on both social distancing and not undertaking unnecessary travel

The same applies to responding to calls in respect of possible sightings of the Asian hornet

For either swarm collection or Asian hornet call outs, Dorset beekeepers should be mindful of the position in respect of their insurance and if they are in any doubt should check their insurance BEFORE undertaking any swarm or Asian hornet sighting travel or activity. They are advised not to put themselves in a position where they might accidentally invalidate their insurance by being involved in an incident or accident whilst undertaking a journey or activity which their insurers might deem to be in contravention of government advice, instructions, or emergency legislation.

National Bee Unit advice on tending bees in respect of Covid-19: advice is available on BeeBase.

The current advice is set out below; beekeepers who are registered on BeeBase should get updates by email; as always, all beekeepers are strongly advised to register on BeeBase

Please also keep checking on the BBKA website for any updates on advice in respect of swarms and/or Asian hornet calls

COVID-19 and Beekeeping – advice from the NBU

As beekeepers, please be aware of the following guidance when looking after your honey bees. Updates to this guidance will be provided where necessary. You should keep up to date with the latest guidance issued by the government as it is subject to regular change.

Defra, Scottish government and the Welsh government ask you as beekeepers to be responsible and to ensure that you continue good beekeeping practices, effective stock management and health checks whilst observing the Government's guidance on COVID-19.

You should follow Public Health guidance on social distancing. Everyone, including beekeepers, should avoid gatherings of more than two people and this includes at your apiary. You should maintain a distance of two metres between yourself and others to limit the spread of COVID-19.

General advice for beekeepers is as follows:

- You should continue to work and care for your animals in the normal manner, as far as possible. You should not take measures that compromise the welfare of the animals in your care. You should maintain good biosecurity at your apiary.
- You should not share beekeeping equipment with other beekeepers, particularly hive tools and other handheld devices and protective clothing.
- In line with the general advice on COVID-19, you should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and hot water before and after you come into contact with any animal. Use hand sanitiser if that's all you have access to.
- There are currently no restrictions on the movements of bee colonies – for example, moving bees to fulfil pollination contracts. However, you should observe the public health guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when carrying out these activities, including the guidance on social distancing *[NB Dorset beekeepers will need to make their own decisions depending on the circumstances as to whether moving bees is necessary at this time]*.
- If you are required to visit premises other than your own, you should familiarise yourself with the public health guidance on infection prevention and control and take measures to minimise the risks from contaminated surfaces.
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, you should be self-isolating at home and should not be visiting other premises. Ideally, another beekeeper should take on this duty wherever possible. We are suggesting that local associations consider how they can support those confined or unable to attend their bees at this difficult time for all of us.
- If your bees are due an inspection by a government inspector, you should be aware that this may be subject to a delay depending on available resources within the inspectorate.
- If your bees are due an inspection by a government inspector, and you are in a high-risk group, or are showing symptoms of COVID-19, you must let your inspector know ahead of the inspection. Arrangements will be made that will limit the chance of COVID-19 being spread. This may include the inspection proceeding without the beekeeper being present or delaying the inspection.
- For all inspections, two metre social distancing will be considered the minimum and so the beekeeper will not be able to stand at the hive side with the inspector while the inspection takes place.
- Imports of bees are still permitted. There is no evidence to support restrictions to international movement or trade in bees, and the UK has no additional rules for bee imports with respect to COVID-19.
- You should report any suspicion of notifiable diseases or pests to the authorities in the usual way – please see the bee health page on gov.uk for further information.
- You should use husbandry techniques to minimise swarming. If you have to respond to collect a swarm you need to ensure that you use the guidelines on social distancing when collecting the swarm. If that is not possible, then the swarm then should not be collected. Therefore trying to prevent swarms is the best approach.

BEES & HONEY SHOW

@

DORSET COUNTY SHOW

Saturday 5 / Sunday 6 September 2020

Optimistic as usual, this is a quick reminder that the Dorset County Show is only five months away. Much will have happened in that time but hopefully the show will go on and things will be slowly returning to a semblance of normality as we knew it a month ago.

Many events have been cancelled but the bees will still be working (and swarming) and when the summer is nearly finished you will be able to visit us in Dorchester. All Dorset County BKA members are invited to enter their products in our honey show. Schedules will be available on the D & W website and paper copies posted on request.

Richard Norman

Asian Hornets

It has been another extremely busy three months for the Asian hornet teams. The teams have been to a number of talks in Bridgewater and in Warwick. There's been a lot of progress in how we now work as one joint team. I'm very pleased to say that the five Dorset associations have joined with Bournemouth and Dorset South along with the New Forest Beekeeping Association to form one AHAT. This means that seven associations are now working with one common goal, to stop any possible incursions of the Asian hornet arriving in our area. We are now holding meetings once every two months to update each other on progress and to decide where we can share resources.

Regionally the South West is now in a very good position with a number of county associations coming together with the same purpose of sharing ideas and a common approach to tackling the Asian hornet. We now have a joint data information gathering system in place to allow us to see where our reports are coming from and where we need to deploy resources. We are also working regionally at the provision of resources for our bait and attractants known as Trappit. Our first joint coordinators meeting for the South West was held at Bridgewater on the 15th of March. At the AGM for Dorset County beekeepers Association it was agreed that each association will be provided with a kit box that can be used to tackle the Asian hornet if there is a positive sighting. I've been busy trying to source equipment at discounted prices for these kits to be put together.

As I write this update I have just finished doing a webinar on the East Dorset Beekeepers Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/events/627266918128735/>). This was a live broadcast, which was also promoted by the British Beekeepers' Association. We had originally planned to hold this meeting at our local community centre in Poole; however the coronavirus outbreak and restrictions prevented it. So we put the talk on-line to see how it would be received by our members; it proved to be extremely successful with the live-stream being viewed by people all over the UK and even as far as Tennessee in the United States as well as in Spain. I was a little taken aback as to how far the power of social media had pushed a live broadcast around the world. At the time of writing this the live-stream and subsequent video of it has been viewed over 1,500 times; this number will continue to grow as more people view it at their leisure. At the end of the live stream a question and answer session was undertaken. I'm pleased to say that our efforts also caught the attention of Dr Xesus Feas, who is one of the leading authorities on the Asian Hornet within the EU.

A date for your diaries. Dorset will be teaming up with the other county regions for the South West Asian Hornet monitoring week commencing the 10th of April which is Good Friday. We are simply asking you to place an Asian hornet monitoring trap in your garden or somewhere where it is easily viewable. We then ask you to simply check it once a day for seven days and report back if you find anything suspicious. This is being undertaken by all counties in the South West and I encourage you to take part in this. If you do not have an Asian Hornet monitoring trap then you can simply follow the steps on the NBU web page on how to make one.

The COVID-19 outbreak across the United Kingdom will inevitably hinder some of our work. It is already proving difficult in trying to source equipment as some of the companies have closed during this difficult time. But it also gives us the opportunity to take advantage of those manual beekeeping tasks we have all been putting off. Being in self-isolation means that we are able to concentrate on our beekeeping activities more. This is why taking part in an Asian hornet watch will mean you just sitting back in the garden and relaxing for 15 minutes each day watching the trap. If you're wondering what baits to use you can simply mix a little bit of marmalade with some beer and this will work wonders. Please make sure you empty out of your traps each night the other insects that may have inadvertently become trapped inside.

Whatever you doing and wherever you are I hope you all keep safe and well in this difficult time. Make sure if you do venture out to do beekeeping activities, that you remember your social distancing; with an open hive it will be easier than you think! So here's wishing you all well for the forthcoming season.

Mark White

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Blandford and Sturminster BKA



What a strange season we have had. First there was unending rain; now we have bright sunshine but a cold wind and with the coronavirus all of us are rather stuck. The picture above is what is the next thing to come. The oil seed rape is beginning to flower and in no time we will be putting supers on our hives and wondering when they are going to swarm.

Our association apiary is being cared for by our tutors for the next few months and our courses have been cancelled. We feel that a year of getting new beekeepers started has been lost. We hope they keep up their enthusiasm when all the lockdown is over and return to our courses for next year. I think people see beekeeping as not only interesting in itself but also a support for the environment.

There will be problems collecting swarms especially if they are in a populated area. Anne Rowberry has written some instructions for all members of the BBKA which will be circulated by the secretaries of all the associations. If you mark and clip your queens you reduce the risk of losing a large swarm. A clipped queen usually falls to the floor near the hive then crawls towards it or up one of the legs of the hive stand and hangs underneath the hive. You will see a small cluster of bees near her. You can pick her up and put her in a nuc. with her cluster. Then go back to the hive and sort out the queen cells. You will not have lost all your bees or your queen. Ideally you should keep an eye on your colonies before they reach this stage of swarming, but clipping queens is an added insurance .

Lesley Gasson

Recycling is nothing new

Sherborne Beekeepers website has a History Page. One of the pictures shows a Honey for Sale table at an event with John Howcraft adjusting the display (which includes several square sections). The table is covered by a cloth with a 'unique honeycomb type' pattern. I don't know the story but the same pattern cloth is still being used by Dorchester & Weymouth BKA to adorn the side of the Bees & Honey marquee at the Dorset County Show. We keep saying they need replacing but we can't find anything to match them.

Richard Norman



At least we managed to get two events under our belt before the shutdown started.

Our first event was a skep-making day held on Saturday 1st February.



We had 15 people attend. We had made up a 'start' for everyone as the traditional knot that the skep starts with is the most difficult thing to do. So, everyone got stuck in straightaway and all managed to take away something. Six members from BSBKA joined us which increased the numbers.

It was a good day, with a lot of chatting and laughing as people sat around working on their skeps. Have a look at the website where Stephen has written up a report on the day.

[https://
dorchesterandweymouthbka.com/
skep-making/](https://dorchesterandweymouthbka.com/skep-making/)



Quote from Richard Norman, the County President. **"Stay Home: Stay Calm: Make Skeps"**

Our second event was a talk by **Kevin Pope on queen rearing**. This was held on Thursday 27th February and we had a very interesting evening with approximately 35 members attending. Kevin gave us a presentation on his queen-rearing methods but also talked about other methods used. He brought in examples of his queen cups and explained how he made them and positioned them on the frames. He also brought in his instruments so we were able to see and handle them. He has been using a brush to do the actual grafting but will now try the Chinese grafting tool.

What became clear is that queen-rearing is something we could all do, with a bit of time and care. Kevin recommended Vince Cook's book: *Queen Rearing Simplified*. He suggested that an association formed a small group to carry out a queen-rearing programme; but as we all know, beekeepers tend to prefer working on their own. However, Kevin said that we could all do this as individuals on a smaller scale to re-queen aggressive/swarmy/poor-achieving colonies. By doing this we could eventually get better drones. Kevin said that it is generally recognised that queens are of a poorer quality now than previously. He wondered if this was because of poorer drones - and did the continued use of pyrethroids, adulteration of wax, and viruses have an effect? **One thing Kevin said that stuck in my mind is that after approximately 50 years of beekeeping and 11 years as a bee inspector, every time he opens a hive he sees something new.** *Sally Leslie*

Coronavirus

Stephen Potts, the D&W and county webmaster, has put a link on both the county and branch websites under the tab: COVID-19.

<http://dorsetbka.com/covid-19> and <https://dorchesterandweymouthbka.com/covid-19/>

You can get all the latest information on cancellations, plus the BBKA and NBU updates.

Do have a look !

East Dorset BKA

I'm afraid my report is rather short this time, due to pretty much everything being cancelled due to 'lockdown' - following government, BBKA and other advice, the association has had to cancel all our events for at least the next couple of months due to COVID-19 prevention measures.

Like many other things, all the associations organised events, including apiary training sessions, have had to be put 'on hold'. In an effort to make the best of things, Mark White live streamed his Asian hornet update, which was cancelled due to COVID-19, on the EDBKA Facebook site. Whilst I unfortunately missed it, some 3,145 people have now seen the video, which is still available on EDBKA's Facebook page.

Mark's talk appears to have been very well received, and gives us food for thought regarding other subjects/training that could be presented in a similar way. Well done Mark, and thank you.

I do have some good news: EDBKA were presented with the Hambro Cup at the DBKA AGM for the highest percentage of new members in the 2018/19 season.

I wish you all a good beekeeping 2020, and urge you to follow the instructions and guidelines from the National Bee Unit with regards to COVID-19 and beekeeping, most importantly, stay safe and well

Jim Dunne

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Sherborne BKA

The SBKA enjoyed a happy evening on 18th January at our annual dinner at The Mitre Inn, Sandford Orcas. We had sent out a survey prior to this event, canvassing members on various issues from gardening vouchers to varroa treatment. If they supplied their names with the completed survey, it was put in a draw; the lucky winner was Tony Thorpe, our AHAT volunteer.

In February John Barber came to talk to us on anaphylaxis, which was interesting and he gave us pointers to look out for when someone might be having an episode.

In March Paula Carnell spoke to us about how she handles her bees at The Newt in Somerset – and at home in Castle Cary. She is definitely a speaker to watch out for. She has travelled to far-flung places to see how people treat their bees and she gave us a taste of some of her honey collection.

Sadly our last speaker has had to be cancelled because of COVID-19. We started our Introduction to Beekeeping course early in March, with 10 attendees. We had completed two sessions when COVID-19 struck, so we have abandoned the course for now and will try again in the winter. Refunds were given to our learners. There was a discussion whether we would give the course by Zoom, but as we will not be able to give physical support in mentoring, we decided to cancel it.

Our apiary is ticking along quite nicely. It was a relief to have the directive from both the NBU and BBKA that we should tend our bees as normal, social distancing being observed.

Judy Easdale

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News from West Dorset BKA—April 2020



Once again we started off the year with our joint talk with East Devon, which was very well supported on a terribly windy and rainy night in January, in Bridport this year. Our speaker was Wally Shaw, a well known beekeeper from Anglesey, who spoke on Self-Sufficiency and Apicentric Beekeeping.

We then had our annual beekeepers' lunch in January at the West Dorset Golf Club. Forty-nine people attended and had an excellent meal. Lots of bee chatter.

Our beginners' course was again over-subscribed. We have had 25 on the course and sadly due to COVID-19 we had to postpone the very last evening of lectures and the forthcoming apiary visits; this is very distressing after all the hard work and anticipation of our students to actually handle bees for the first time. Hopefully things will improve in couple of months or so and they will be able to come to the apiary.

We now have our second log cabin up - which will now become our dirty cabin - this one was erected with amazing skill and speed, possibly fuelled by super food provided by Carole Astbury. Sally Boxall and Carole Brown painted the cabin in extra quick time in order to be ready for our students from the course this month. In the meantime the apiary will be managed by a small group of beekeepers, until the situation improves.



Several of us went in February to the Somerset lecture day, which was excellent as usual - you always comes away having learnt something, no matter how long you have been keeping bees.

I am sure every one of us, if we have to self-isolate with this virus (I do hope not) will have plenty of beekeeping equipment to clean and sort out, plus there will be plenty of time to catch up on reading those bee books and magazines!

All talks and apiary group gatherings have been cancelled until further notice.

Keep healthy.

Carole Brown



Beekeeping Videos

This is the third article in the Beekeeping Videos series. Clickable links are still in use and the list of similar videos continues to be interesting.

This issue's beginner beekeeper's video is https://youtu.be/_BBk1k5-qmg : Getting Started in Beekeeping 3: Late Summer and Early Autumn. Stewart includes a timely varroa and disease check reminder. There is also a reminder of his playlist of videos for beginner beekeepers or those who are considering starting to keep bees. If you are one of those who decide to start beekeeping soon then you might enjoy Stewart's short video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fl3yWIPf9-I> on how to establish a new apiary.

For the more experienced who are interested in queen rearing try <https://youtu.be/xnNtR7GjJvA> : Queen Rearing – this video discusses different methods of rearing queens.

Those who are interested in Tom Seeley's writings may like Honeybee Democracy at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRj9n7Vma48> Tom is a well known professor of neurobiology and behaviour, and in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnnjY823e-w> he reviews the history of behavioural studies of foraging honeybees and explains the process by which swarming honeybees choose a new home. This was his November 17, 2011 lecture to Cornell Association.

If you are interested in what is coming to be called Darwinian beekeeping, then you might like Tom's video on the subject of using wild colonies of bees because they have been chosen by natural selection in that they are still alive without artificial help. Tom's video on finding a wild colony of honey bees is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fCwoZwPilo>

If you are replacing wax to improve hive hygiene, perhaps using Shook Swarm or Bailey comb exchange then you may be interested in https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUc8_bz7oH0 which describes melting and filtering wax – you can either filter which is only slightly more expensive or do multiple meltings which needs more fuel so is not much cheaper. The video describes the use of US filter cones, but you can buy similar ones from Amazon.co.uk - a Vogue CN956 will cost £15.74 and a pack of 50 CN958 filter cones will costs £18.44 .

Much more topical at this time of year is this issue's swarm control method is the Demaree method. There is a short 'schematic' video at <https://youtu.be/mQ6CE8nCbHQ> and a much more discursive version at <https://youtu.be/d1tnjND8GXg>

Beekeepers frequently check for diseases. Stewart's video Adult Honeybee Diseases at https://youtu.be/_ECRct51DIQ shows how to watch for disease, especially nosema, the acarine mite and varroa; also, it shows what chronic bee paralysis looks like.

At this time of year many beekeepers are doing their best to stop colonies from swarming. In that situation it is important to know whether a queen cell is for swarming or supersedure. If the bees want to supersede the queen then it would be a mistake to stop them. This is one of those decisions that you want to get right. In <https://youtu.be/8zSrCIXxeZk> there is an exploration of the difference and how you might tell.

The sudden appearance of a lot of unexpected drone cells is sometimes taken to be a sign that the bees are thinking of swarming, but finding the queen is, as ever, useful because the behaviour of the queen might give you information on which to make a decision. In <https://youtu.be/wNRyTpSFcmA> there is a clear example of a supersedure cell. This video also shows good use of hive records.

And finally a heart-warming video of a swarm descending to its new home <https://vimeo.com/348067592>

Chris Harwood

**CONSTITUTION OF
THE DORSET COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION**

1. Name

The name of the Association (hereinafter called 'the Association') is the Dorset County Beekeepers' Association.

2. Objects

The objects of the Association shall be:

To promote the interests of its members and the public in beekeeping; to disseminate knowledge of the science, craft and practice in beekeeping; to raise public awareness of the crucial environmental role of beekeeping and to administer funds for these purposes;

To affiliate with other organisations and to permit other organisations to affiliate with The Association with the consent of an Annual General Meeting

3. Membership

The Association shall comprise such branch associations as may be approved by the Council and shall have paid a levy to the Association. Registered members of any such branch association shall be members of the Association. Other members may choose to become County Associate members. Branch associations shall contribute a sum calculated as defined in the rules.

4. Council

The Management of the Association shall be vested in the Council which shall consist of President, Vice-Presidents, Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Education Officer and Examinations Secretary of the County Beekeepers' Association, Honeycraft Editor, Membership Secretary, County Asian Hornet Action Team Coordinator, Website Manager, Branch Association Secretaries and one delegate for each 25 members or part thereof. All members of the Council may vote and the Chairman may have a second or casting vote. The Council may co-opt for some specific purpose not more than two members who may take part in the discussion but may not vote thereon.

Every elected or co-opted member of the Council shall retire each year but shall be eligible for re-election or continued occupation except as follows: when a member has occupied the chair for three consecutive years he or she shall not stand for re-election to the chair or vice-chair until two years have passed.

Ten members shall form a quorum.

5. Subscription

Branch association members shall on the first day of October each year pay an annual subscription, including a current minimum Bee Diseases Insurance premium, according to the Rules of the Association.

The Branch financial year shall end on 30th September and that of the County Association on 31st December.

6. General Meetings

An Annual General Meeting shall be held before 1st April in each year at such time and place as the Council may decide to elect officers and an accountant for independent review for the ensuing year. At this meeting all members are entitled to speak and vote. The Council shall present the meeting with a report of its activities and a statement of accounts approved by an independent accountant. Such meeting may consider any business brought before it by the Council or members according to the rules of the Association.

A Special General Meeting shall be called within 28 days of the receipt by the Secretary of a notice signed by 10 members of the Association or by 6 members of the Council setting out the resolution(s) to be proposed. The agenda of a Special General Meeting shall include such proposal(s) and be included with a notice of the meeting. No proposition shall be considered at such Special General Meeting which is not on the agenda. A Special General Meeting shall have no greater powers than an Annual General Meeting.

7. Alterations

Alterations to the Constitution and Rules may be made at any duly convened Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting provided that 35 days notice has been given in writing to the Secretary who shall at once notify each Branch Association of such proposals.

8. Rules

The Council shall have no power to make, alter or revoke any Rule or Article of the Constitution. They may recommend alterations to an Annual or Special General Meeting.

9. Vice-Presidents

The Council may propose at an Annual General Meeting any member whom they consider deserving of the title Vice-President for services rendered to the Association.

RULES OF THE ASSOCIATION

1. Finance

A banking account shall be held in the name of Dorset BKA for the purpose of carrying out the approved business of the Association. Cheques shall be signed by the Treasurer and one of two other nominated officers.

Branch Associations shall contribute to the Association funds an annual County capitation fee calculated on the number of subscriptions paid, such sums to be sent to the County Treasurer before the 31st March. Capitation fees from subscriptions paid after that date to be sent before 1st October.

The Council should recommend any change to the level of capitation fee, taking into account running costs and current savings, and subject this change to the members' approval at the AGM. Any chang-

es to the level of capitation should then take place the following October.

No payment shall be paid to the Association funds in respect of Branch Associate Members. County capitation fee shall be paid to the Associations funds in respect of those who choose to become County Association members, who shall receive the same benefits from county membership as those who are Registered Members.

Officers may claim reasonable out of pocket expenses incurred by virtue of their offices.

2. Bee Diseases Insurance

Of the total subscription paid by each Branch Member to his Association the minimum sum such as BDI shall from time to time decide shall be taken by the Association for a compulsory premium for Foul Brood Insurance with Bee Diseases Insurance Limited. Bee Diseases Insurance premiums should be paid direct by Branch Treasurers.

3. Branch Associations

Each Branch Association shall elect its own officers and administer its funds. The Branch Secretary or Treasurer shall give a receipt for any subscription received.

4. Branch Rules

A Branch Association may have its own rules but no branch rule may contravene the Constitution or Rules of the County Beekeepers' Association.

5. Branch Meeting

Each Branch Association shall hold an Annual General Meeting prior to the Association Annual General Meeting to elect its own officers and delegates to the Council and to transact its own business.

6. Publications

A Year Book or magazine may be published by the Association separately or in conjunction with any other County Association.

Each Registered Member and County Associate Member shall be entitled to receive a copy.

7. Expulsion

The Council shall have power to expel from the Association any members whose conduct it may consider to be injurious to the Association.

8. Council

Meetings of the Council shall be convened at least three times a year normally in January, May and September. The timing may exceptionally be varied at the Council's discretion. The Secretary will convene and take minutes of the proceedings.

At any Council meeting a simple majority of members present and voting shall be sufficient to carry or defeat a motion except motions under Rule 8

Any motion under Rule 7 shall not be carried unless two thirds of the Council present vote in favour of it.

On dissolution of the Association and after satisfaction of its debts and liabilities all assets shall be realised and passed to the British Beekeepers' Association to be invested and held in trust for a period of up to twenty years after which they shall become the property of the British Beekeepers' Association.

Any decision of the Council properly arrived at under the Constitution and Rules of the Association shall be final and binding on its members.

This Constitution was agreed at the Annual General Meeting 8 March 2020

Dorset Dates

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

PLEASE NOTE THAT, with the exception of the two events shown below, ALL EVENTS, TRAINING AND VISITS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Date / Time	Branch	Event	Contact	Venue
Saturday 5 & Sunday 6 September	Dorchester & Weymouth	Dorchester County Show	Richard Norman	Dorchester
Sunday 4 October		Dorset County BKA convention		Blandford School

Who's Who in the Dorset County Beekeepers' Association

President Richard Norman

Vice Presidents: Ken Bishop, Mervyn Bown, Chris Slade

Chair	Lesley Gasson, 01258 861690	Imgasson@btinternet.com
Vice-chair	Trevor Ford	trevorlanners@gmail.com
Secretary	Liz Rescorla, 01305 889916	winkyozz@uwclub.net
Treasurer	Robert Camping, 01202 849338	yewcot@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Ben Benjamin	chrisbenbenjamin@googlemail.com
Education Officer	Geoff Buckland, 01305 567950	geofbuckland@aol.com
Examinations Secretary	Terry Payne, 01747 811251	twpayne@btopenworld.com
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