

HONEYCRAFT

January 2023



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Dorset County Beekeepers Association



Editor's note

And so we roll into another year — a red one if you happen to be a newly-born and marked queen, in a well-run apiary, or the year of The Rabbit if you are Chinese — 2023 for most of us. The overall hope must be for a “normal” year, with average weather and minimal disease for both humans and honey bees!

This issue, my last as editor, contains the usual branch reports which tell of a varied past year; getting back together after the Covid-enforced distancing has been a huge relief to all, but the long, hot and dry summer proved challenging for many. But now a wet and cold winter is here which is equally challenging! However, with the snowdrops coming into flower spring surely cannot be too far away!

Elsewhere in this issue, there are reports of meetings of the South West Beekeepers Federation and the Dorset BKA council. The latter considered, inter alia, amendments to the constitution which will be put to the AGM. The revised constitution is shown in full so that members have a chance to consider it before the AGM on Saturday 11 March.

Stephen Potts, the country BKA secretary is also a webmaster — outlines the requirements of this role and provides advice on how the responsibilities can be discharged both legally and effectively. Elsewhere, Ron Briggs from North Dorset BKA describes how to make a hive floor that deters wasps, but also allows the beekeeper to monitor varroa levels.

Lastly, there are notices of two conventions which will be of interest to all beekeepers.

I hope that you enjoy what follows and thank you for your support and interest over the past five years.

Tim Villiers

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Chairman's message

I wish everyone all the very best for the New Year. There is so much to look forward to as we consider 2023, not least the DBKA Convention which will take place at Blandford School on either Sunday 22nd or Sunday 29th October (watch this space).

Despite this being a mild winter so far, it seems many people's bee colonies have been hit by either the unexpected cold snap we had before Christmas or the seemingly continual damp that has pervaded the South West for months. If you are a beekeeper who has suffered, please rest assured you are not the only one and the saying "onwards and upwards" really does apply here.

Best wishes

Ivor Kemp

Chairman

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BEE FARMERS ASSOCIATION

DORSET COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Report of the meeting of the Dorset Beekeepers Council held on 9th January 2023

The meeting was held by Zoom as this was both better for our health and better for the health of the planet. It was a well-attended meeting with a lot of discussion on a variety of topics.

The minutes for the previous Council meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.

The Treasurer's report showed that we have a healthy bank balance and a healthy set of income and expenses figures.

There were reports from each of the Branch Secretaries and all showed that we are a very active group with many beginners' courses being run in the spring and some branches are even running two courses.

Then we came to the matter of the AGM which must be held before 1st April. The provisional date for this is 12th March 2023 but as we have decided to hold it in person rather than by Zoom the final date does depend on the availability of a suitable room. We need a room to hold about 50 people and with good acoustics.

It is hoped that there will be a speaker and this is being looked into. There should also be tea and cakes.

The only Council member who is stepping down this year is Tim who is the HoneyCraft Editor. This is a vital role and if there is anyone who is interested then do let us know. Tim assured us that it was not an arduous role and required minimal technical skill.

One item which will be on the agenda for the AGM is the Dorset Beekeepers' Constitution. This can be approved only at the AGM. As Secretary I have made many changes but most of them were changes of style or just bringing it up to date. For example the section on finance referred to the signing of cheques but not to online banking. This has now been rectified.

The biggest changes have been to the make-up of the Council. It has been decided that the Council will consist of the elected officers plus the Branch Secretaries and one additional member from each branch. The reason for this was that under the present arrangements the Council could become so large as to be unworkable. It was also possible for one branch to have a disproportionate number of members on the Council. This too was felt to be undesirable.

The quorum for the Council meetings has been changed now to seven participants of which at least four must be serving officers.

All these changes were approved by the Council and will be presented to the AGM for final approval.

The meeting then went on to discuss the South West Beekeepers' Forum report. This was accepted without comment.

We also discussed the ADM held by the BBKA. For those confused by acronyms this is the Annual Delegate Meeting where Counties can propose changes to the way the BBKA is run and on what aspects of beekeeping we feel it should concentrate. It is the forum where we ask the BBKA to look at the effect of beekeeping on global warming or we ask them to lobby the government to tighten up on honey labelling to prevent honey adulteration. It is also the forum where the trustees for the BBKA are elected.

The BBKA want to move all the module exams to on line only. This makes administration easier and means that the BBKA do not have to hire local venues and arrange for invigilators. It also avoids any safeguarding issues. However not everyone who is a beekeeper is necessarily a good typist or familiar with online techniques. To move to online exams may exclude many potential beekeepers.

Cornwall has put forward a proposal that the move to just online exams be dropped. Dorset has supported this proposal and asked our delegate, Mark, to vote accordingly.

Discussion then moved on to the possible archiving of old documents. Sally has a lot of documents going back almost 100 years to the formation of the Weymouth branch. Contact has been made with the Dorset History Centre which is keen to use them in their resources department. The Council was keen to get some of the material digitised and we will investigate whether the Dorset History Centre can do this for us.

The Convention was then discussed. This is a meeting of beekeepers to be held in October when we can all get together – not in bee suits – and listen to speakers, discuss bees, browse the trade stalls and enjoy whatever other goodies are on offer.

This year the convention will be held in Blandford School on 29th October. Approval was given by the Council to proceed with arrangements and we look forward to hearing more.

The Council will next meet on Monday 22nd May and again it will be via Zoom. The meeting finished at 21:37.

Stephen Potts

Secretary

The Inspector reports ...

American foul brood

Vaccine for bees could protect hives from killer disease

By Rozina Sabur in Washington

THE world's first vaccine for honey bees has been approved by the US government, raising hopes it can protect colonies from a deadly bacterial disease.

It is hoped the "breakthrough" vaccine will help in the fight against American foulbrood, which originated in the United States and has since spread around the world.

Honey bees are a critical component of global agriculture, with a third of the world's food supply relying on pollination.

The US and other countries have seen a decline in colonies, with beekeepers required to destroy and burn any infected with American foulbrood to prevent further spread.

"Our vaccine is a breakthrough in protecting honey bees," said Dr Annette Kleiser, chief executive of Dalan Animal Health, the US biotech company behind the drug.

The vaccine is administered by mixing it into the royal jelly worker bees feed to queens, offering protection to future offspring once it is ingested and reaches the ovaries.

Some readers may have seen the adjacent recent article in The Daily Telegraph.

Kevin Pope, our Seasonal Bee Inspector, has kindly looked into the veracity of this report and has consulted some scientist friends. The consensus is that the work is still at an early stage and it is unlikely that the vaccine will be licensed for use in this country for several years.

Happily, AFB is a relatively small threat to bees in the UK, whereas it is widespread in the US where antibiotics are widely used to control the disease, resulting in there being less urgency for the vaccine's introduction here than in the US.

Therefore for the foreseeable future, our defence against this disease will be the education and alertness of beekeepers, backed up by the knowledge and professionalism of the bee inspectors.

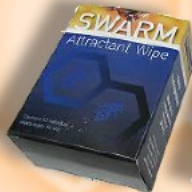
Tim Villiers

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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:

- a) 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;
- b) 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. Branch associations shall contribute a sum calculated as defined in the rules.

4. Council

- a) The Management of the Association shall be vested in the Council which shall consist of President, Vice-Presidents, Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Education Officer and Examinations Secretary, Honeycraft Editor, Membership Secretary, County Asian Hornet Action Team Coordinator, Website Manager, Branch Association Secretaries. In addition each branch can supply one additional member to sit on the Council.

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 in such discussions.

- b) 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 they shall not stand for re-election to the Chair or Vice-Chair until two years have passed.
- c) A quorum will consist of seven people of which at least four are officers on the Council.

5. Subscription

- a) 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.
- b) 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. The meeting will 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.

- b) A Special General Meeting must 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) 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. Electronic payments must be authorised by the Treasurer and one of two other nominated officers.
- b) 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 31st March. Capitation fees from subscriptions paid after that date to be sent before 1st October.
- c) The Council should recommend any change to the level of capitation fee, taking into account running costs and current savings. Any change must receive members' approval at the AGM. Any changes to the level of capitation should then take place the following October.
- d) No payment shall be paid to the Association funds in respect of Branch Associate Members.
- e) 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) A year book or magazine may be published by the Association separately or in conjunction with any other County Association.
- b) 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

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) Any motion to expel a member shall not be carried unless two thirds of the Council present vote in favour of it.
- d) 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.
- e) Any decision of the Council, properly arrived at under the Constitution and Rules of the Association, shall be final and binding on its members.

Stephen Potts
Hon Secretary

Report on the South West Beekeepers Forum meeting - held on 29 November 2022

There were seven of us on screen: Kathy Lovegrove the Secretary, Chris Slade, Mary Trace, Stewart Gould, Anne Rowberry, Graham Caines, Ben Benjamin, Chris Smith, the Chair, Meg Seymour, Kate Bowyer and Lynne Ingram. I had the impression that there were only the Chairman and Secretary at Taunton but later on, over lunch, I saw three others including Mark Houlton from Cornwall, the only one I recognised.

There was an introduction, minutes, matters arising. We have £550 in the bank. The Chair rotates every three years — Somerset has it next. All branches paid for 2021. Nobody has yet paid for 2022 as the invoices have yet to be sent. In 2023 we should have over £1,000 in the bank so maybe it'll be free. Standing orders: no change. Applications for membership: none.

Propositions for the ADM. Anne had to leave the meeting as she has an interest as chairwoman and four of the propositions are to do with the BBKA constitution.

Proposition 1: OK.

Proposition 7: BBKA election to be done by email before the day and not at the ADM.

Proposition 8: BBKA EC vacancy to be filled by single ballot on line with candidates chosen in order of number of votes received, either prior to the ADM or at the ADM as has been done in the last two years.

Proposition 9: nominees must have 51% of the votes. All nominees to offices must have 75% majority. Anne then left the meeting.

12.30 Zoom froze! No speech or movement for several minutes. No internet at Taunton so they were relying on phones and batteries so started a half-hour lunch break at 12.40. I lost my signal again and rejoined at 1.20. I could then see more people at Taunton as they clustered to look at a screen. They discussed the voting system for the ADM.

Nominations for Hon Membership of BBKA: 1 Margaret Wilson, past president. No comments. Mike ? Some sort of illegible that nobody has heard of.

Nomination of trustees of BBKA Four places, four applications. Lost signal again. reconnected. David Hunter (not thought to be related to Pam). Bev. Stephen Barnes. Joyce Nisbet.

Ringling Anne Rowberry to invite her to return.

Meg Seymour of the NBU took the stage. She wants a beekeepers' Local Recovery? Forum to run a Health Bees Plan. Three or four new bee inspectors are to train for next year to cover Avon and Somerset and most of Cornwall. David Packham is returning next season. Seasonal report due Xmas time. Destroyed 59 colonies this year in 29 apiaries with AFB. Treated 19 colonies with shook swarm, did a few sprays.

It is hoped to organise Bee Health days. BKAs can request safaris. The number of beekeepers on BeeBase has doubled but number of Inspectors hasn't increased. This is a concern as it means inspectors are having to be reactive rather than proactive. It also means that some apiary problems are having to be sorted out by phone calls and photos rather than visits.

Inspectors would love to have stands at County Shows etc but at present they aren't allowed to do that because of poor funding. Limited funding means they can't recruit more inspectors.

Propositions 2 and 3 - online exams. Supported by Dorset.BKA, wants BBKA to drop its idea of discontinuing written exams as there's poor internet in parts of Devon and Cornwall (like the place where I am at the moment!).

Proposition 4 Epipens. Two people there have Epipens. Problems administering adrenalin injections without prescriptions. Legal problems - need legal advice. Short shelf life. Price >£80 each. Legal minefield.

Proposition 5. Hants proposition to find and recognise local sources of honey. GDPR ID, also maintenance of database. ER2? Educate people on the benefits of local honey.

Proposition 6. Stafford, not seconded yet. Beekeeping needs to demonstrate that it's not contributing to global warming. Jo Widdicombe suggested an amendment that BBKA needs to demonstrate that we're not contributing to global warming — BBKA are already doing things e.g. wrapping BBKA News in biodegradable plastic and encouraging the reduction of colony density in London.

Review of Forum constitution. Lack of involvement by Hampshire who haven't paid their subs for years. Not New Forest who are separate and ok. Proposition to write to them inviting them to re-engage. Agreed unanimously.

Meeting ended at 3.40. Next meeting 11am Tuesday 7th February 2023. Hybrid.

Chris Slade



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Dorchester & Weymouth BKA



Final events in 2022:

Our AGM was held on 20th October with a talk from Kevin Pope first before turning to the business part of the meeting.

All the officers have remained in post and we have created a new role within the committee which is an Events Co-Ordinator. We tend to get invited to quite a few events throughout the year, some of which are worth attending, others not so good from our point of view. As we will always try an event once, this means quite a bit of organisation and rallying round for volunteers, which is why we have created this role.

Our Christmas Social was on 8th December. We held this as usual at the Colliton Club. It was meant to be a skittles evening but the skittle alley was too cold, so we remained in the bar, chatted and partook of sausages and chips.

Programme for 2023



We have already had our first invitation for 2023 which is for the Thomas Hardy Victorian Street Fair in June. The last time this was held was 2019. It was a good event for us. We had an information stand on the street and did skep-making much to the interest of the general public. It helped that we dressed up in "Victorian" clothes as much as we could.



Courses

We are running a beginners course as usual and this is now fully subscribed. We are also running an Intermediate course which again is fully subscribed. Both are starting at the beginning of February for six weekly sessions. Our beginners course will be followed by practical sessions as and when we can start to open the hives.

It seems there is still a widespread interest in bees and beekeeping as our 2023 beginners course filled up very quickly. Usually about a third of the beginners each year don't renew membership. Interestingly, with this year's and last year's beginners only about half renewed their membership. Perhaps the realities of keeping bees and the commitment needed differs from their expectations but better they realise this than go ahead with getting bees.

Dorset County Show

We have another change in that Richard Norman is stepping down as Show Secretary. He has been in the role for nine years and during that time has built up our relationship with the Dorchester Agricultural Society's County Show team. They have always been generous to us but we now have free electricity to the marquee, a reasonable say in the size and position of the marquee plus a generous allowance of tickets. Another innovation of Richard's was sectioning off a corner within the tent as a rest area where we could leave our belongings, put out some chairs and a table and have a well-earned sit-down with a cup of tea.

It has always taken a huge amount of time and commitment to organise the show tent over the two days. To ease the load a little we have divided the role into two, so we now have a Honey Show Secretary and a Tent Management Secretary, both supported by a small team from the committee. They are already looking forward to the 2023 Show.

We have a committee meeting early In January when we will start our programme planning for the year and finalise details on both our courses. I think it will be another busy year for us and hopefully a better year for our bees.

Sally Leslie

Solar Farm Sites

I don't know how many other branches in Dorset have experience of putting bees on a solar farm site. In the Dorchester & Weymouth area we have had bees on one site for nearly two years. We primarily went ahead with putting bees on the site on the basis of the solar farm company's "Landscape & Ecological Management Plan" (LEMP). This included planting wildflowers alongside the verge of the solar panels and regenerating the hedgerows. Their plan also included putting up bird/bat boxes and other landscaping measures that would result in a net gain for biodiversity in the area.

Unfortunately the bees on this particular site have not thrived and in some cases not survived. When we started to investigate the reasons for this we found a considerable lack of forage for our bees and I imagine for other pollinating insects. There had been no wildflower planting and very little, if any, hedgerow regeneration so, as far as we were concerned, there were big gaps in the implementation of this plan. When we approached the representative of the management company running the site, they admitted the plan had not been implemented.

Taking it further, initially with the help of a sympathetic Dorset County Councillor, we approached the County Planning Department. We eventually got a response from a Planning Enforcement Officer which was that, on this particular site, the enforcement period for the landscape plan had run out, so no action could be taken by the council. However they had talked to the management company and were happy with their response but would not divulge details on this. Again with the help of the County Councillor, we persisted and eventually got a response from the Senior County Ecologist with details as to how the management company are going to remedy the situation to give it the ecological benefits they originally promised.

The County Ecologist has also told us that more resources will be provided to ensure monitoring of solar farm sites will take place. This is particularly important in the light of the recent planning applications for solar farm sites in our area and in Dorset generally.

This was our first experience of putting bees on a solar farm site but we are being approached by more solar farm companies to do this. In most respects these sites do fulfil the beekeepers' needs for security and easy vehicle access but not for the bees who need forage of which we all know there is a wide scarcity in farmland generally now. This is why we have felt it was so important to follow up this issue of the LEMP not being implemented.

I would strongly advise any association involved with a solar farm company to make sure the LEMP's are implemented and maintained because, as long as they are, it should be beneficial for all but, if not, it will contribute to an already desert-like environment for our bees.

Sally Leslie

East Dorset BKA

Our first face to face AGM since 2019 was held in October. It was good to see members in the flesh despite the unpleasant weather on the night. Ivor Kemp stood down as Chair, taking a well-deserved break, although he remains on the committee as Vice-Chair. We are grateful to him for all his hard work for the association as Chair and are glad that we can continue to benefit from his experience and input. Karen Cadman has now taken on the role of Chair. All other committee members remain unchanged (names are on the website).

For some time we've been looking for a Press/Publicity Officer to help frame our external communications. We are delighted to be able to say that Sandra Palmer-Snellin has stepped forward and has been co-opted onto the committee.

We will be extending the footprint of the apiary in the New Year with a view to increasing our capacity and improving the layout of our hives, given the number of trainees we now have each year. We still have a vacancy for an Apiary Manager but for now our team of volunteers continues to monitor the apiary and is ensuring that the bees have access to fondant as the weather becomes colder.

We held a successful honey show on 12th November. Members of the association submitted a wide range of exhibits including honey, biscuits, candles, cakes, decorative wax and photographs. We were very lucky to have Mike Duffin to judge the show and provide feedback.

Our annual skittles grudge match with BADS took place with EDBKA winning the trophy. Next year is already booked. And a good time was had by all at the EDBKA quiz night on 21st November with the BaseCamp Beeks carrying off the trophy.

We're making good progress in organising our regular winter meetings. In January Kevin Pope will be speaking to us about queen rearing and we'll be following this up in February with a talk from Michael Woodhouse on how he approaches this and increasing his colonies in practice. We are also delighted that Derek Mitchell from Leeds University will be talking to us about his research into heat transfer and insulation in honeybee nests in March.

Karen Cadman

Advance notice of the Dorset BKA Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on Saturday 11th March 2023 at 2.00pm

at the Colliton Club, Dorchester

Formal notice of the meeting will be distributed to all members in due course.

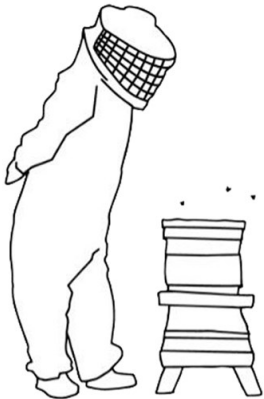
**In addition to the formal business, Master Beekeeper Lynne Ingram,
from Somerset, and Chair of the Honey Authenticity Network UK
will speak about honey adulteration.**

**Lynne is an expert in this subject and a highly regarded speaker,
so do make a note of the date in your diary now.**

Of course, there will be tea and many cakes!

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North Dorset BKA



2022 has been an unusual year for bee keepers. We have had extremes of weather; a very hot and dry summer; followed by a very wet November; followed by icy temperatures in December. Some people did very well and had a bumper honey harvest and others had almost no honey at all. Kevin Pope said to me that he thought we had lost more colonies in summer than in winter this year and that there was a real problem of failing queens.

We hope the winter bees survive and that our membership does not lose too many colonies in these unexpected times.

We held our AGM in November and were sorry to say goodbye to our retiring treasurer Robert Camping. Robert has been both our treasurer and DBKA treasurer for many years. He has successfully managed to turn us into a charity with all the paper work that entails and the production of a constitution acceptable to the Charity Commission . Cuffy, his partner, has helped by organising the rota and some of the arrangements for our entry in the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show. Our new treasurer is Julian Grazebrook who bravely volunteered for the job.

Our fundraising for the new apiary continues, though these are difficult times. We are doing things in stages and our current goal is to raise enough money to put in the foundations in 2023. Once we have something to show for our efforts, hopefully grant funders will become more interested. The membership will also be asked to help with fundraising as this will also help them by providing facilities for extracting honey and accessible, comfortable club rooms. Once we have the footings in we will send you pictures of our progress.

As usual we are running modular courses in winter. The most popular module is usually Module 1, Honeybee Management. I am running a course for this in February and half of March in Dorchester and Terry Payne is doing this in Shillingstone. You don't have to take the exams but you will learn something about your bees .

Lesley Gasson

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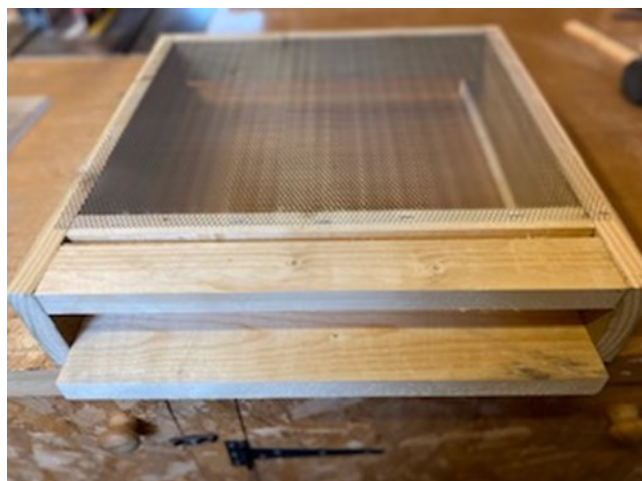
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Hive floor with an underfloor entrance



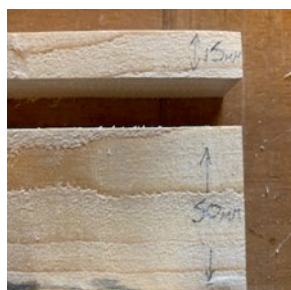
During my first year of beekeeping, wasps nearly wiped out all my colonies. I came across these floors with underfloor entrances, having got the idea from Laurence Edwards of Black Mountain Honey. He has a YouTube channel where you can see him making one. I have used them ever since and this year only one of my hives was attacked by wasps (it was a weak hive and a very bad year for wasps!).

The idea is that the bees fly into the front and then have to climb the board at the back of the entrance to access the hive. The bees work this out very quickly while the wasps struggle to work it out at all; should one of them work it out the guard bees can deal with it.

I have subsequently modified the design to incorporate a varroa tray, which I will describe later in this article. If you use just the basic floor that Laurence makes, you just need to lift the hive onto a board when you monitor and treat for varroa.

Also, I need to point out that my first floors were made with sawn treated wood. I have subsequently discovered that the chemicals in treated wood are not good for bees. So please be careful what you make your hive parts from. The rule of thumb is: if bees touch it, don't treat it; if they do touch it, do not treat the wood with anything with high Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs); if its water based it should be ok but please do check.

So, the eagle-eyed readers will notice there is some sawn treated in this build. The sides and rear are treated, the front parts where the bees touch is sawn but not treated.



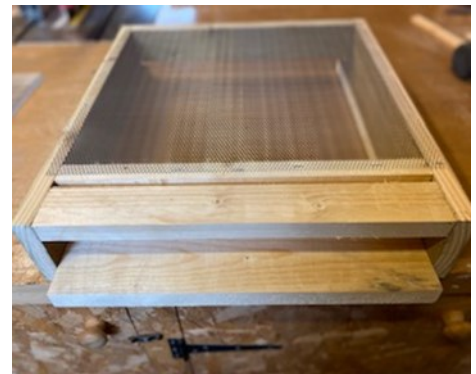
There are only two important measurements: first is that the outside measures 460mm; this is for a national hive: and the second is the actual entrance which is 10mm. The width and thickness is not important, so this is ideal for using up scrap wood. Because we are incorporating a tray you will need to adjust the measurements depending on the width of timber you are using and what you are using for the tray. I'm using timber that is 94mm wide and for my tray I'm using 12mm ply. You can use Correx for the tray which is cheaper and easy to wipe clean.

You will need two lengths of 460mm and four lengths of 460mm minus the thickness of two pieces of timber, so when constructed you will have a 460mm square.

I like to have a landing board: it is not necessary but I like to watch my bees coming and going. To achieve this I cut my front top board to about 50mm. I also cut a 15mm strip from the left-over piece for use later. I then cut two x 15mm strips from the rear board.



First fit the top front (50mm) board by gluing and screwing it to the two side pieces. Then fit the front back board leaving a 10mm gap for the entrance. The top rail of a frame is 10mm so using two of these as spacers makes this part of the job easy. Then fit the front bottom board; you can slant this piece down slightly to allow water to run off. Then fit the rear board.



Next trim your 15mm pieces to create a rim on the bottom of the floor for your tray to slide on. Then cut your tray to fit; it's best for everything to be very loose at this stage as when in use the wood will swell when damp. Finally add some varroa mesh to the top.

There is a company called PLUK that makes expanded mesh. It caters for beekeepers and sells varroa mesh. It sells single sheets or on the roll. I buy mine on the roll 10m x 46cm as I use it for floors, travel screens, honey processing and wax extraction. It costs about £65 for the roll but I could make 25 floors with it, so the cost per floor is about £2.50: much cheaper than buying a single sheet!

Finally, I paint and varnish the tray so I can see the mites and then wipe the tray clean. The cost for this floor is about £10. Some suppliers sell a floor for over £40, without the wasp deterrent.

Ron Briggs



Sherborne BKA

We started off our winter talks with an excellent talk from Wren Franklin, Site Manager of Ryewater Nursery near Holwell. His talk was entitled Wildlife Abundance in your garden and he took us through wildflower meadows and the difference between annual and perennial...what local butterflies are attracted to, the importance of hedges and what to plant for maximum effect from a wildlife perspective. We were energised for the year ahead. There wasn't a brilliant turnout given the icy conditions and prevalence of colds and flu and hopefully more people will be able to come to the next talk, which will feature our very own Kevin Pope talking about the 2022 beekeeping year on 17th January, 19:30.

Our previous venue, The Mitre Inn, wanted more time off for themselves, and although it was fine for committee meeting purposes it was cramped when there was a decent turnout.

This year our venue is at Mill Farm, Bradford Abbas, DT9 6RE. It is a very comfortable venue belonging to one of our beekeepers and thanks to Mark and Anne for offering us the facility.

The final talk of the season will be Paula Carnell with a short talk and a honey tasting session, so if you want to bring your own honey and see what she makes of it, it will add to the evening.

She has exotic honeys to share with us also.

We are hoping to do an "Introduction to Beekeeping Course" again this spring, so if anyone knows of likely candidates, please refer to the website.

Judy Easdale



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West Dorset BKA

Covid and now flu viruses are around now for all us to contend with — I wonder what will be in store for 2023!

We were able to have all our student and weekly Apiary visits at Netherbury this year, which was great. The attendance overall was very good: several students came along to the sessions. A few now have their own bees too which is very satisfying.

There was just one visit to the Apiary in December. On the 14th December five members turned up to observe and help with the winter varroa treatment. Half the colonies were not treated in the autumn. Three of these had developed high mite drops by November, but the highest drop was from one of the four that had been treated. We decided that all would be given Api-Bioxal by the dribble method. As this doesn't penetrate brood cappings we needed to check that the colonies had no or little sealed brood. We checked the first colony which had the most brood capping debris on the varroa tray and found no sealed brood, so we assumed the rest were broodless too.



It was a very cold day and all the bees were tightly clustered with between four and five seams in each colony. This led us to question whether in cold weather there is a tendency to under-dose with Api-Bioxal, which is given as 5ml per seam. Conversely in mild weather when the bees are more loosely clustered, as in last winter, they would get a larger dose as the same number of bees would be covering more frames. More questions to end the year!

Our AGM was held in November (the same officers are still in post). We had a great attendance from our members — the draw was no doubt Kevin Pope, who gave a great talk after the meeting! It was good to meet up and have a chat after a couple of years of Zoom AGMs. We then held a Christmas get-together in early December, with plenty of super food and mulled wine. This event too was very well attended — a lovely, happy way to start the festivities.

Our Beginners Course is full again, with a few on the reserve list. This coming year we have decided to keep the start of the theory sessions to the end of February, as it worked well with the practical sessions at the apiary, not having such a gap between the two.

Let's hope there are not too many losses during this wet winter we are having so far.

Happy New Year from West Dorset 🐝

Carole Brown

Being the webmaster



Failing to step back quickly enough I found I became the webmaster for our beekeeping association.

What is involved?

What did I have to do?

What were my responsibilities?

Purpose of the website

The first question I asked when I took over the website was "What is the site for? ". Possible answers included "We should have a website." or "We just want people to see what we are doing." or "We want to educate people about beekeeping."

Depending which answer you get will have a profound effect on how you approach your task. What you must be aware of is that your website is the window by which the world look in on you. Do not be surprised if you do not get many new members if a visit to your website shows it has not been updated since 2020.

The easiest task you face is just informing others what your association is doing. You are in the association so all you have to do is keep in touch with your association secretary and convert what they tell you into web copy.

The most challenging task is wanting to educate others about beekeeping. But more of this later.

Getting control of the website

When I first took on the role of webmaster the first task was to get the username and password so that I was the administrator of the site. That can prove surprisingly difficult. I know of one case where the previous webmaster had set up the beekeeping website on the same contract as his own sites and as such it was not possible to migrate the account to the new user and the result was that the new administrator had to rebuild the site from a blank screen! Needless to say this can be a daunting task.

Getting control of the domain:

The other thing you need over which you need control is the domain name. One of the beekeeping sites for which I am administrator is "dorchesterandweymouthbka.com". When the domain was due for renewal we could not find who owned it. Nor who had paid for it last. I was beginning to think that we would lose the domain and have to become "weymouthanddorchesterbka.com". Fortunately we got it sorted just in time.

Getting copy for the website:

Probably the most difficult part of being a webmaster is getting copy for the website. You would think it would be easy with so many beekeepers in your association but it seems that writing decent copy and beekeeping do not go together.

In my case I keep a close check on what we have organised. In addition I look at Facebook and Twitter to see what is happening. One advantage, and possibly the only one, of the Covid lockdowns is the fact that there are so many talks available on Zoom. By following sites that advertise lectures such as Eventbrite I am able to bring them to the attention of readers.

Putting the copy onto the website:

So having got my copy, the next stage is to get it onto the website. Depending on where the site is hosted Wordpress may be available. If it is then adding new copy is relatively easy. I say relatively easy but I do find that Wordpress and I sometimes differ on the best approach to the layout I want.

In the end I have opted for half the site on Wordpress and half the site on raw code. The latter allows me more flexibility but it is more difficult to create the pages. A big advantage of a templates website is that it will take care of the different screen sizes. To design a site which looks just as good on a laptop as it does in a smart phone is quite a challenge!

OK, so you have now got a website and a domain and you have added copy. What more is there for the webmaster to consider?

Legal requirements:

Well there are legal requirements which must be met or avoided. The regulations concerning the website are enshrined in the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). These are a complicated set of rules but as far as the beekeeping website is concerned compliance can be easy. The secret is not to store or even harvest any personal data from the users. If you have no forms on the website and you are not collecting any personal information there is no need for people to be able to "opt in" or "opt out" or consent to data being passed to third parties. Suddenly life is so much simpler.

Cookies

But what of cookies? I have wanted to avoid those annoying, but necessary, "consent to cookies" messages. I am not wishing to collect any information from the user. I am not wanting to tailor the user experience to match their preferences. Thus I do not need to use cookies to store any information and therefore I do not need to ask for user consent.

I do use Google cookies to allow me to track the route of users through the site. As these do not collect any personal information there is no need to ask user permission.

Images

One area where the webmaster can still run into problems is over the use of images for which they do not have permission. There are simple rules to follow:

- * Assume that there is a copyright holder.
- * Assume that the copyright holder needs to grant permission for you to use the image.
- * Only when you have permission can you use the image.

In my case I use Pixabay for my images. Those images are all clearly marked as to under what circumstances they can be used. Often the copyright holder simply wants an acknowledgement on your website. Other times nothing is required. It is up to you as webmaster to check that you are complying with the requirements.

There is a selection of pictures on Beebase on <https://nationalbeeunit.com> Most of these are all available for free but DEFRA requires you to acknowledge their source.

An alternative approach if you want to show pictures from a bee keeping catalogue is to come to an arrangement

with the suppliers. On my site if you click on the image you are taken to the page on their site. A win-win situation. I get a decent image and they get more interest in their site.

But what if you took the pictures yourself. Surely you are the copyright holder? Not always. You need to be certain that:

- * The image does not contain a third party copyright work. It is probably OK if the third party copyright work is clearly incidental to the image and not the reason for the image.
- * You have not passed the copyright exclusively to someone else.
- * You have not contracted to not use the image.
- * You were not acting as an employee when you created the image.

But a picture of your hive at the bottom of your garden should not be a problem.

Update at least monthly:

So you now have copy and pictures and the legal stuff is sorted. It is not over yet. If your website is to attract any visitors it has to be regularly updated or Google will not show it in search results and it will become increasingly difficult to find. It all depends why your association has a website.

Would I do it again?

The answer has to be "yes". In producing copy for a new section of information I have learned so much. Not only have I learned about techniques such as the use of the Snelgrove Board but then I have had to understand it so I can communicate it to others. Now I know what I am wanting to write I have to make it in concise and readable for the website. I am constantly learning and fortunately that is what I enjoy.

Stephen Potts

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DORSET BEEKEEPERS' CONVENTION

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Blandford Forum

Details to follow, but

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