



Newsletter April 2024

Committee members:

Pat Coleman (President), Ken Jeanes (Chair),
Mat Phillips (Treasurer), Anne Collyer (Secretary), Jane Jeanes (SBKA Trustee),
Tony Johnstone (Programme Secretary), Jeremy Lee (Apiary Manager), Guy Clothier, Brian Magor,
Dennis White and John Wood



Welcome to our April newsletter. By now, I am sure that you will all read and ingested the draft minutes of the Somerset County AGM. Not only do they give details of the change in charity status of Somerset BBKA to 'Charity Incorporated Organisation' but also show that Lionel Horler was awarded the West Country Honey Farm Award. He is the first member of the SESBKA to given this award and is recognition of not only his support and input into our own branch but to Somerset County BBKA as a whole. Congratulations Lionel!

Thank you to all who have contributed to this month's issue and we welcome any ideas for future issues. Please let me have articles, notices etc by the 25th of the month for inclusion in the next issue. As ever, if anyone needs more information or has a question to ask, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will put you in touch with someone who can help.

Anne Collyer, Branch Secretary SESBKA

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Lionel's April Bee Notes

*For further information please contact Lionel:
email lhorer934@talktalk.net*

First, I must thank Anne our secretary and the committee for proposing me for the West of England Honey Farms award which I was honoured to receive at the Somerset Beekeepers AGM this year.

The weather is still variable so if you are tempted to open your hives, only do so if it can be classed as "shirt sleeve weather." If you need to give your bees a boost you can now feed weak sugar syrup [1:1] fed through a contact feeder. Of course, if you see that the colony has already expanded, they may need more room so will need an extra super. You never know what you will find but we know they have been flying during those periods of sunshine, so be prepared!!

I have just returned from a holiday in Scotland, the weather there is varied from a sunny 16°C to near frosty conditions with snow on the mountain tops. One thing that did not vary was the price of honey in the shops, nothing less than £12 per lb

and even more for single source honey e.g. heather or chestnut.

As it is now April it's time to change your Asian hornet traps to the jar and wick type to observe and report worker sightings rather than trap queens. There have been reports of a couple of Asian hornets found, one of them dead and I suppose not badly decomposed. I wonder if this was a queen enticed out of hibernation by a warm spell and then killed off by a sudden drop in temperature. They do say that most AH queens that hibernate do not survive the winter. If this was the case maybe we should be glad of our variable climate.

The frame making with the beginners went very well. Thanks to all the helpers we completed the hundred brood frames for the Hook Valley apiary plus a few for the beginners. We now look forward to better weather when we can show the beginners around the apiary and they can get down to real beekeeping.

2024 Programme of Events



Tony Johnstone, Events Secretary tmj67@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 07973341557

NB Adrenalin Pen Users If you use an adrenalin pen you **MUST** bring it with you to any apiary visits and it **MUST** be in date. Please inform Jane Jeanes or the designated first aider that you have it when you arrive. Thank you

Don't forget that Dianne Sleigh is offering her click and collect service at our apiary visit on **13th April**. Details below.

As usual I would appreciate any members who are willing to host an apiary visit to let me know please. We really do need some new faces.

Important. When visiting any Apiary, including our own, it is important to be mindful of Apiary Hygiene. Please ensure your bee suit is clean and that you use new disposable gloves. If carrying tools make sure they are disinfected please.

In line with the changes imposed by the SBKA insurance company we will be asking members to sign in before apiary visits, as a health and safety matter together with an emergency contact number.

Hook Valley Apiary.

Thanks to the hard work by Jeremy Lee supported by Brian Magor, James Butt and many others we now have a fully functioning facility. This not only needs our support to develop it but it is also there for us to get hands-on beekeeping experience thus preventing swarming, disease and colony loss at our domestic apiaries.

*During **May, June & July** Jeremy plans to hold Members Evenings every **Tuesday** evening, weather permitting. Details will be posted on WhatsApp.*

Saturday 13th April 2024 @ 2.00pm A visit to our Hook Vally Apiary.

What 3 Words location- **grand.sending.scarecrow**

Located on the A371, 1/3 miles on the left from the Holbrook roundabout or ½ mile on the right from the Bratton Seymour crossroads.

Please arrive early and park in the main carpark and walk to the apiary. The gate will be manned should there be late arrivals. Jeremy Lee will give us a short talk explaining how we have developed and managed the apiary before inspecting the colonies. Bee suits are available if needed but please bring your own clean gloves – ‘marigolds’ or similar are fine.

In addition to the Apiary visit **Dianne Sleigh will be providing her click and collect service** at the Apiary.

Please order all your apiary needs from her at her very competitive prices and she will bring them over.

Her contact details are- sales@thebeedepot.com or 07879 811967. Purchases can be paid by card on the day.

Thursday 18th April 2024 At the Market House Castle Cary- Meet @ 6.45 Start @ 7.00pm

A Talk by Stephen Fleming co-editor of BeeCraft Magazine. His co-editor Richard Rickett spoke to us last year.

The subject of Richard's talk will be on “Drone Congregation Areas.” Drones often get a bad press but they are an essential part of our colonies.

Saturday 11th May 2024 @ 2.00pm A visit to Anne & Jeremy Collyer's Apiary in Shepton Montague

Location and further details to follow.

Saturday 25th May Shepton Montague Plant Sale. 2.30pm Details to follow. The first opportunity of the year to take our gazebo to a plant sale and talk about Asian Hornets, insect pollinators, bee keeping and sell honey. Volunteers needed please!

Bath & West Show Thursday 30th May – Saturday 1st June

This year much of the responsibility for the Honey Tent rests on our Branch's shoulders. Lionel will be seeking volunteers so please respond.

Saturday 15th June 2024 @ 2.00pm A visit to Brian Magor's Apiary in Lattiford.

Location and further details to follow. Brian has so much to see that we ran out of time during the Safari last July.

Brian would like to include Queen Rearing in the afternoon's programme.

Saturday 27th July From 10.00am. Our Annual Safari.

This year our Safari will be facilitated by Eleanor Burgess a former Bee Inspector. You may remember that last March Eleanor gave us a really interesting presentation on preparing for the new season.

The first visit will be to the apiary of John MacPherson in Buckhorn Weston followed by a visit to Pippa and Kevin Shillington's apiary near Cucklington, where we will be able to enjoy our picnic lunches, and finally to our chairman Ken Jeanes' apiary in Templecombe. Locations and further details to follow.

On a Date in August. An Apiary Visit. Location to be announced.

Saturday 14th September 2024 Yarlinton Fair @ Yarlinton House- All Day

An ideal opportunity to take our gazebo to promote beekeeping and sell our honey.

I am looking for two volunteer teams please, one to set up and one to pack up. Please let me know if you can help. Further details in due course

Thursday 19th September.

At The Market House Castle Cary- Meet at 19.15 start at 19.30 hrs A presentation by Ken Edwards of the Quantock branch.

Ken is going to give a presentation about his visit to East Africa where he was surprised by the ability of the African beekeepers.

Saturday 28th September 2024 from 10.00am. At the Ansford Academy carpark.

Dianne Sleigh will be offering her "Click & Collect" service to furnish your apiary needs. Sadly, she is unable to be at our Honey Show this year.

Her contact details are- sales@thebeedepot.com or 07879 811967.

Saturday 12th October (Set-up on Friday 11th) At the Market House Castle Cary.

The SESBKA Honey Show.

We are lucky to have Jack Mummary as our judge this year. Jack is a BBKA accredited honey judge.

Further details nearer the date.

Thursday 21st November. At The Market House Castle Cary.

The SESBKA Annual General Meeting followed by an invited speaker.

Chairman's Cogitations

Ken Jeanes, Chair

The vagaries of spring! One minute you are looking at your bees and thinking everything is so forward and then the weather changes and it is too cold to open them up. Be patient but ready to adapt to conditions.

We have a varied programme of events planned for this year to suit all abilities. It would be lovely to have to put out more seats in the Market House when we have outside speakers. It doesn't matter how long you have been beekeeping you can always learn something from speakers and other members. Come along on Tuesday evenings when it warms up and help out in the apiary and try to come to the apiary visits which are planned for the summer.



Chocolate and Honey Brownies

Ingredients:

370gm Plain Greek yoghurt
300gm dark chocolate (70%)
160ml honey
150gm flour

100gm butter
5 eggs, separated
100gm hazelnuts
12gm baking powder



Method:

Preheat oven to 170°C/150°C Fan. In a large bowl, pour egg yolks and honey. Whisk until mixture is soft and pale in colour. In another bowl heat the chocolate and butter in a bain-marie then add the yogurt. Add flour, baking powder, eggs and honey mixing well. Beat the egg whites until frothy and fold in to the batter mixture. Chop the hazelnuts and add to batter. Pour the batter into a baking tray lined with greaseproof paper and bake for 20 minutes. Allow to cool before serving.

News From the Apiary

For more information, please contact Jeremy Lee, Apiary Manager jglee@me.com

Will this infernal weather ever end!! I distinctly remember when Bojo locked us down for the first time four years ago what beautiful weather we enjoyed. Whilst our city dwelling cousins were getting cabin fever, I remember walking my dogs every morning in T shirt and shorts. Spring was in full flow and the trees and bushes were humming with bees. Roll on to last year, on this very date (28th March) my Jeep was being unceremoniously dragged backwards up the slope at the apiary by a large John Deere tractor. No change there then.



However, it is worth remembering that we are now equidistant between mid-winter and mid-summer and whilst we cower under our duvets in the morning, our precious ladies are making plans!! The dandelions on the roundabout near Wincanton are almost in full bloom and after what has been a predominantly frost-free winter, I think we will all be surprised just how far on the colonies will be when we 'crack the lid' for the first time this season.

Project 'double brood' took a major step forward a few weeks ago when a brilliant joint effort at The Market House put together 99 frames (yes one broke). I have just taken receipt of 25 kilos of sugar and with the help of James and Brian, will persuade the ladies to start drawing comb. Fingers crossed for a pleasant day on Saturday the 13th of April for our first planned divisional apiary visit when we can all suit up and get our hands into a hive.

BBKA News – Asian Hornet

Leigh Sidaway, BBKA General Manager

The following documents specifically aimed at AH Teams, have been added to the Asian Hornet resources pages on the BBKA website: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/resources-for-asian-hornet-teams>

- Asian Hornet Risk Assessment
- Protocol for Spring Trapping of AH Queens
- Protocol for Asian Hornet Monitoring Traps
- BBKA Insurance FAQs (with added AH questions)

From Kirsteen Thorne, BBKA Outreach Officer

Just a few bits from Kirsteen, including some good AH awareness posts and articles below that are worth a look, or could be shared on local social media pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/TheBritishBeekeepersAssociation/posts/pfbid02zBP5z6JoRQ1WpQgAiZCPwkRsbxMWDdbPbBF6FETMUcCxdFYV3r8eG5ha3EgZsUcKl>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheBritishBeekeepersAssociation/posts/pfbid0226LgPE1z5RsUZyvmWDGpJwc45ScPtNx7fhLXR DHWxWz3YfebSQwCqcx3HRzmvL5l>

<https://metro.co.uk/2024/03/21/map-shows-asian-hornet-sightings-uk-latest-one-spotted-20502453/>

Some local coverage in Kent, after the sighting at Ash, Canterbury:

<https://www.kentlive.news/news/kent-news/earliest-ever-sighting-asian-hornet-9178664>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clm7dyxn5j1ohttps://www.kentonline.co.uk/canterbury/news/confirmed-asian-hornet-sighting-in-kent-as-invasion-spreads-303686/>

There's been a lot of media coverage recently, some of which (mainly the tabloids) has contained factual inaccuracies, including images of the wrong hornet (again!)

So, it was decided a simple crib sheet that could be sent out to groups, media etc might be useful. Please click on the link to view the document that can be shared, and also hopefully provide easy at-a-glance facts and stats for anyone interested in doing media interviews. Much of it is fairly obvious, but we wanted to keep it as simple as possible to get the message across, for those non-beekeepers who are coming to this for the first time. Please feel free to share with anyone you think might find it useful. [BBKA Asian Hornet Fact Sheet v1 2024.pdf](#)

Finally, the Royal Entomological Society have expressed interest in working with the BBKA on raising AH awareness, in particular for their 'Insect Week', coming up in June. Basically, if any associations or individuals are planning talks or events during the week (24th - 30th June), if you register it on their website (<https://www.royensoc.co.uk/event/insect-week-2024/>), it will then gain further exposure and publicity as it will be listed as one of their official events. Could be a good way to further the AH awareness message to even more people.

Bee Diseases Insurance Update, AGM

and Tropilaelaps Mite talk Friday 12th April 2024

From Martin Smith President martin.smith@beediseasesinsurance.co.uk

BDI Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2023

In contrast to 2022 when the company suffered a reduction in investment assets, during 2023 we experienced a gain of £44,500. BDI remains financially strong. These investments are held for the long-term and enable us to fund research, as well as to build up a buffer in case of a major outbreak of disease, particularly any new 'exotic' pest such as Tropilaelaps or Small Hive Beetle, that might arrive on our shores. They are in addition to the reserves we hold in cash equivalents to cover our insurance requirements. Claims were 34% down in 2023, compared with previous years. This however reflects reduced inspections carried out by the National Bee Unit; in particular whilst they attended reported incidents of EFB, they were unable to do routine sweeps in the area. This was due to their increased work tracking Asian Hornet. We expect to see that they are able to recommence these inspections in 2024 which undoubtedly contribute to keeping the disease under control.

The company continues to use some of the investment surpluses to fund research into bee diseases, with just over £25,000 expended in this area in 2023. Details of all the projects being funded by BDI can be found on the [research pages of our website](#)

We are holding the AGM in person at the BBKA Spring Convention - in room M38 in the main Harper Adams building. The room is on the 1st floor - go up the stairs, turn left, M38 is the last room on the right. Alternatively, you can participate via zoom via this link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83128466047?pwd=Mmx0dXJIN1FFM2xGTzhrZmEvTWd3Zz09>

Whilst voting will be restricted to the official representatives of each BDI member association, please feel free to publicise the meeting to your members.

After many years of service to BDI, John Hendrie is retiring and a vacancy on the board has arisen. Nominations are therefore sought from member associations for a replacement as a non-executive director. Anyone interested in knowing more about the work of a director is invited to contact me to arrange an informal chat about what is involved. BDI will welcome applications from the full range of diversity and inclusion. Please note that the non-executive roles on the BDI board are unpaid.

After the formal business, at 11.30am, there will be a talk by Maggie Gill, Senior Scientist at DEFRA, previously Regional Bee Inspector for Wales

Maggie and her NBU colleague Dan Etheridge visited Thailand in 2023 to study first-hand the **Tropilaelaps mite** and how beekeepers there deal with it. This trip, that was part funded by BDI, has enabled the National Bee Unit to gain a greater understanding of the pest and help with the contingency plan should it ever arrive in England and Wales. The talk will explain what has happened as a result of the trip, and how the National Bee Unit has changed its policy in relation to this invasive species. The work undertaken by the team is now also influencing other countries' policies in relation to Tropilaelaps.

Whole Apiary Shook Swarm Trial

BDI and NBU have decided to extend the trial of the whole apiary shook swarm for a further year, to obtain a bigger sample. To date no reinfections of EFB have occurred in those apiaries treated and those who unfortunately experience an infection of EFB are encouraged to take up this offer. [More details on this trial can be found on our website](#)

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible either at Harper Adams or on the Zoom call.

Best regards Martin Smith President

martin.smith@beediseasesinsurance.co.uk <https://www.beediseasesinsurance.co.uk/>

Morgan Morrison needs your help!

Dear South East Somerset Beekeepers,

I am a PhD student at Royal Holloway, University of London. I work on pollinator conservation and citizen intervention and am looking for volunteers for the second year of the citizen science study called 'Optimow'. This study will be looking into how you can manage your gardens to help bees, butterflies and other pollinators. In the study you will be given a mowing frequency to follow and then you will count pollinators in your garden each week. The study will take 15-25 minutes a week.

This is the second year of the study. In 2023, we had an amazing 180 participants and saw a 75% increase in pollinator numbers in one of the groups!! We hope to build on this work, so we have robust advice to give members of the public about managing their lawns to help pollinators.

As members of a beekeepers' association, I hoped the study would interest you and you'd have a good skill set to complete it. If you are interested in taking part you can sign up and find more information on the google form below <https://forms.gle/scmLF3h1XvoHTkcSA>

Any questions don't hesitate to drop me an email.

Thanks in advance,

Morgan Morrison

Twitter: @morgsmorrison73

Please note: This email address has been created for the study. This is not a spam email. If you are apprehensive, please google search 'mark brown lab optimow general-7'. This will take you to a website with more information about the study. Or look at my twitter @morgsmorrison73.

Royal Bath & West Show 30th May – 1st June 2024

Bees & Honey Section Stewards Needed



In addition to Lionel seeking helpers for the Somerset area in the marquee, Bernie and Suzy Perkins, Bees and Honey Stewards, are seeking general stewards to help throughout the marquee, including the children's section, candle rolling, honey sales table, general stewarding and helping members of the public. Also most important, keeping an eye on exhibits. In return you will receive free admission to the show, spend half a day stewarding and the rest of the day enjoying all the show has to offer with main ring events, livestock displays, food and drink and our very own Pilton Festival Big top with live music throughout the day. If you can help please contact Bernie Perkins Email berniepm@gmail.com mobile: 07948408770 for further details.

If you would like to take part in the honey show competition – you have until 1st May to enter just follow <https://www.bathandwest.com/bees-honey-competition> for entry forms and rules. Good Luck!