



Southampton & District

Beekeepers Association
Newsletter

"Forag'ins" AUTUMN 2023

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Contents: Dates for your Diary – Speakers – Members contributions



Join us on "Zoom" for our regular talks or at the...
[Warren Centre, Warren Crescent SO16 5AY.](#)

Look for the black entry gates, approximately half way round Warren Crescent from either end. Opposite Stoke Road

National Honey Show Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ.

Opens at 9am on Thursday 26th October and run until 4:30pm on Saturday 28th October. The Show is celebrating its Centenary in 2023.

Winter Talks

Thursday 16th November, 19.30hrs Bob Smith NDB "Botany for beginners"

The National Diploma in Beekeeping is the highest beekeeping qualification recognised in the U. K. and its holders are generally well known figures within beekeeping education.

Bob has been keeping bees since the late 70's, currently managing 10 colonies in 14x12 WBC's in North Kent. He was a Seasonal Bee Inspector for 6 years, is a holder of the NDB and has served on several Government panels concerning bees and pollination. He has been involved in providing training opportunities for "Improver" beekeepers in Kent through both theoretical and practical handling courses.

Bob's scientific training as an analytical chemist impacts his whole approach to beekeeping; experimentation and record-keeping are fundamental to chemistry and beekeeping!

Thursday 8th February 2024 19.30hrs Pam Hunter "Pollination of Insects"

Pam has been keeping bees for over 25 years and is a Master Beekeeper. She is also a member of BIBBA and the Central Association of Bee-Keepers.

Pam's background is in biological sciences. She was employed in microbiological research in the pharmaceutical industry for 30 years before becoming a freelance consultant and writer. Until recently Pam was Chair of the BBKA Examinations Board and is currently Chair of Research, Technical and Environmental matters.

Pam is particularly interested in scientific aspects of bees and their interaction with the environment and plants. Also the neglected area of historical aspects of bees, the environment and beekeeping.

Thursday 9th March 2024 19.30hrs Keith Bartlem "Flying with bees"

Regional Bee Inspector - North East England

Keith used to be a captain for Thomas Cook Airlines working out of Newcastle.

He has been keeping bees for a number of years and runs 19 colonies, mostly 14 by 12's, just outside of Bedale in North Yorkshire. He is a Master Beekeeper and examiner for the BBKA.

S&DBK Association AGM 14.00 **Saturday 2nd December** , The Ship Inn, Redbridge.

S&DBK Association Christmas Supper and Skittles, **Friday 8th December 2023**

The Ship, Redbridge

HBA Winter Talks - 27th February 2024 - Zoom Talk. This winter talk at 19.00hrs with Andrew Durham on the Asian Hornet "Le Fretton Asiatique". Andrew will have plenty to say after this year. I'm sure this is one you will not wish to miss. More talks will be organised for the winter and details will be forwarded to secretaries.

HBA AGM 2024- Monday 11th March 2024 - Itchen Abbas Village Hall, SO21 1BQ. Now is the time to get your delegates together for the next AGM. Each association can have one delegate to every 20 members or part of 20.

BBKA Spring Convention 2024- 12th April 2024 - 14th April 2024 It's that time again so start booking your accommodation.

HBA Website Updates - Members Area- Check out the latest content using this link <https://hampshirebeekeepers.org.uk/members/>
Password : Snowdrop

Every member can read the minutes of all HBA meetings, Summaries and AGM Minutes. So, check it out and see what is talked about at HBA meetings.

HBA offers the use of its ZOOM account to all associations within Hampshire. If you want to book a place on the HBA Zoom. Please make contact at [HBA Zoom Bookings](#)

Asian Hornet

Alan Baxter the lead AH co-ordinator for Hampshire with practical experience in France and Jersey dealing with the AH gave a Zoom talk in October. The situation is worrying, 66 nests have been located and destroyed in 50 locations, across 10 counties: Devon, Dorset, East Sussex, East Riding of Yorkshire, Essex, Greater London, Hampshire, Kent, North Yorkshire, and Surrey. The UK is now climbing the exponential curve of their arrival. As I type, 4 more have been found.

There is discussion whether traps encourage the AH, and should only be employed after a sighting!!! and then should be visited daily.

It is suggested moving the hives closer together in an apiary gives the colonies more chance of resistance and in order to prevent the bees drifting to paint the hives different colours. Next year may see our work cut out controlling AH.

11th November 09.45-17.00 **HBA Asian Hornet Conference**, Itchen Abbas Village Hall. All Hampshire Assoc Chairs, AH leaders and Deputies, delegates from Surrey W.Sussex and Dorset. Registration required to attend, with more information HBA web-site.

Apiary autumn report:

The last swarm this year was reported and collected at the Warren Center on 10th August by Dave Norris, however a later one was reported in Queens Park near the old docks but no further action was taken.

Some beekeepers use a super from the summer harvest, which they then use in the autumn as a way to augment what the bees have collected themselves. One advantage of this is that the source of the honey is known. **Never feed honey from an unknown source**, due to the possibility of it bringing damaging spores, such as European Foulbrood.

A first-year colony is an unknown quantity, as is the coldness of our approaching winter. There are many arguments why you can or should not take honey from your bees in their first year even if they build strong reserves of honey.

So a simple rule – “**don’t take honey from your bees in their first year.**”

Perhaps the biggest challenge isn’t so much the external temperature but the effect of strong winds. In the winter, a strong wind can ensure the cold air finds every nook and cranny. So positioning your hive, hopefully in a position protected from strong winds, regardless of the season is essential.

The threat of moisture not rain can be a significant threat to bee’s survival chances in the winter. Condensation within the hive is caused by warm conditions created by the cluster and the low ambient temperature. In the worst situation, the cluster might be “rained on” when water condenses and then falls onto them.

With an open mesh floor the bees invariably propolise the roof vents to prevent allowing that chimney effect. The winter cluster does an amazing job of protecting the queen, including keeping her in a space that stays warm. Assuming they have sufficient honey reserves, bees can take care of themselves well, even in very low temperatures.

The winter flowering ivy (cover) looks a gloomy picture but that is maybe all our bees will have to forage on.

The priority when feeding is to add the fondant as close as possible to the cluster. You want the bees to have immediate access to it. You don’t want them to have to crawl half way across the hive, up through a hole in the crownboard and into that cold empty void under the roof. So place the fondant on top of the frame bars, **directly** over the cluster.– hefting the hive – requires a bit of experience and judgement.

Alternatively purchase (or build) a set of electronic hive scales that *automagically* communicate with an app on your smartphone to give you a real-time readout of the hive weight in kilograms. You can record the weight of a few thousand foragers leaving the hive in the morning, and see them return by nightfall together with the 1500 g of nectar they’ve collected.

S&DBKA Honey Show 23rd September 2023 at "THE SHIP"



Pictures by Lesley Murphy

Not every beekeeper is a keen enthusiast for honey shows and since the lock-down attitudes have changed so this year the association decided with success to make the event a relaxed social one and to have less showing categories and less formality.

Points are awarded for each class to count towards Show Cups.

points 1st= 3pts 2nd= 2pts 3rd= 1pt

Results: Tracey Hood... 25 Points Graham Watson...14 Points

Annette Douglas...10 Points

Ben Helm...7 Points Steve Turtle...5 Points Lesley Murphy...4 Points

Gerry McFadden...3 Points Christine Coulsting...3 Points

Liz Harris...2 Points Jo Murphy...2 Points

Cups awarded to:

THE LANCASTER CUP -Tracey Hood (highest number of points from all classes)

THE BARNES & BARNES CUP -Tracey Hood (highest number of points by a S&DBKA member)

THE CHAMPFLOWER TROPHY - Lesley Murphy (highest number of points in classes 14 to 15)

Christine Coulsting set a quiz and microscopy experience, the quiz won by Joe Murphy.

Did you know ...that one of the world's first coins had a bee symbol?

Did you know...that honey contains live enzymes?

Did you know...that in contact with a metal spoon, these enzymes die? The best way to eat honey is with a wooden spoon; if you can't find one, use a plastic spoon.

Did you know...that honey contains a substance that helps the brain work better? Probably why no two beekeeper can agree with one another.

Did you know...that propolis produced by bees is one of the most powerful natural antibiotics?

Did you know...that honey has no expiry date because it's already been digested?

Did you know...that the bodies of the world's greatest emperors were buried in gold coffins, then covered in honey to prevent putrefaction?

Did you know...that the term "Honeymoon" (honeymoon) comes from the fact that the bride and groom consumed honey for fertility after their marriage?

Here are just a few of the details of how bees survive the winter.

- Through the summer and into fall, the bees focus on building the essential honey reserves they will need for the winter
- In the fall, the workers kick drones out of the hive since they don't help in any meaningful way and simply consume resources
- The creation of brood is reduced, since every new bee is just another mouth to feed
- The bees that enter the winter are, reasonably enough, called winter bees (sometimes "fat bees") and have a different physiological makeup to summer bees
- The life span of surviving winter bees is measured in months, as compared to the 6 weeks or so for regular worker bees in the other seasons
- **The colony maintains the temperature of the queen by forming the winter cluster**

[Thornes at Stockbridge](#) – Open: Tuesday – Friday 09.00 – 17.00