



The Beehive

March 2017



Congratulations were in order for beekeepers who took their BBKA Basic Assessment in August. Results are as follows:

- Jane Hunt: Pass
- Samantha Walker: Pass
- Andrew Packer: Pass
- George Jackson: Pass with Credit
- Raymond Bowers: Pass with Credit

Also in August one member took their BBKA General Husbandry Assessment.

- Jane Nimmo: Pass

And in November Noel Parker took Module 3 and passed.

They were all awarded their certificates at the AGM in February. (photo above)

Announcing the new committee

A new committee was also announced: at February's AGM

President:: Diana Phillips

Vice President and Treasurer: Sharif Khan

Secretary: Sarah Hopkins

Show Secretary: Jan Willetts

Library: Sue Newbury

Education Co-ordinator: Noel Parker

Apiary Managers: John Madgwick (Highbury), Noel Parker (Winterbourne)

Webmaster (co-opted): Nathaniel Hateley

Membership secretary (co-opted): Jane Millard

Honey Show Manager (co-opted): Ray Bowers.

Key dates

March 31 7.30pm: Branch Meeting

Dame Elizabeth Hall Firbank Close, Bournville, B30 1UA

Ian Hands-The Ins and Outs of Indoor Beekeeping and Other Stories

April 1 10am: Highbury Spring Clean

April 2 10am: Winterbourne Spring Clean

April 19 12noon: Wednesday Lunch

The Village, Alcester Road, Moseley, B13 8JR

Bdbka.socsec@aol.com / 0121 444 4005

(more key dates overleaf)

From LASI Queen Bees:

As March has begun and beekeepers start to spring into action, we take a look at recognizing supersedure and double queen colonies.

<http://www.lasiqueenbees.com/how-to/how-to-recognize-queen-supersedure-double-queen-colonies?>

CONTACTS

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Honey Show Help!

Following our recent A.G.M. and my appointment as Honey Show manager, I am sure you will join me in thanking John Gale for his tremendous hard work over the years in making the show the success that it is today. John has been particularly helpful in preparing **myself for this new role, and I am sure I will be calling on John's** expertise in the very near future.

Now it is time for me to confess! I cannot make this year's honey show a success. It is only through you the members, your hard work, effort and support that this can be achieved.

I would like to reiterate what Sharif mentioned at the AGM, any ideas for helping the honey show to be even more successful are very welcome. It is your honey show, if there is something you would perhaps like to be part of the show or think could be improved, please feel free to get in touch.

Ray Bowers: raybowers@hotmail.co.uk

Testing colonies in winter, a novel idea!



Do you want to know if your colony is alive without using an infrared camera or a stethoscope? Try an instant-read hive thermometer. This idea comes from Ken Armes, a beekeeper in Canada.

The harsh temperatures of an Ontario winter require good insulation, but the thick layers block both heat and sound, making it hard to assess what is going on inside. But with a little experimentation, Ken discovered an inexpensive way to learn if his bees were alive. He wrote:

"Use an electronic cooking temperature device with a probe, insert the probe into the top entrance and check that the temperature is higher than the outside ambient temperature. You're not looking for a large difference, just an indication that something is generating heat inside. I was getting a temperature difference of two to four degrees Fahrenheit, so I kind thought the hive was okay. Now in Spring the girls have confirmed it."

On the Ball

A new study has shown that bees can be taught to play football. The experiments, carried out by Clint Perry and Olli Loukola of Queen Mary University of London, showed that bees can be trained to roll a ball into a goal by offering them a reward of sugar water when they succeed. The bees learned this extraordinary **trick by copying an 'artificial bee': a black and yellow striped ball** on a transparent stick.

"While mastering this unnatural task was impressive", Perry and Loukola write, "we were curious to know how the bees were actually learning to solve it."

They tested three new groups of bees, with each group learning in a different way: by copying a previously-trained bee; by watching the ball move in response to a hidden magnet; and by being left to solve the problem themselves. The bees watching their peers were most successful, implying that they can share knowledge well outside of their natural behaviour. Even more remarkable is that, even when the bees were given a choice of balls and were taught to roll the furthest into the goal, they often chose the nearest one; this implies that they could improve upon what they learned.

www.birminghambeekeepers.co.uk

Tesco feeds the bees

Bees struggling to get enough nectar to feed themselves are being given a sweetener thanks to a sugar collection scheme run by Tesco.

Sugar from split bags that is no longer fit for human consumption is **collected by the supermarket's stores in the Cornwall and Devon** area and sent to a local bee conservation charity.

Lucy Hughes, Tesco's Community Manager at Callington store in Cornwall said:

"Bees are not only central to the process of pollinating crops which later become our food but are an iconic part of the Great British countryside.

"I hope this small but important project will go some way to support our local bees and help them through the winter months."

Lucy came up with the scheme after a conversation with two local beekeeper friends and they were enthused about the idea.

The programme, which is run in partnership with the Bee Improvement Programme for Cornwall (BIPCo) currently involves nearly 10 stores in the West Country.

Coming soon to an apiary near you?



This little critter, found near Tetbury, last year created a search lasting 10 days until a nest was found and destroyed. This was the first time that *Vespa velutina* (Asian hornet) had been found in the UK although it had been in many regions of France since it was first discovered in 2004.

Tetbury is only 50+ miles away and is almost on our doorstep!

In spring, the queen, usually measuring up to 3 cm, will emerge and seek out an appropriate sugary food source in order to build up energy to commence building a small embryonic nest.

From July onwards, Asian hornet predation on honeybee colonies will begin and increase until the end of November and hornets can be seen hovering outside a hive entrance, waiting for returning foragers!!

As Spring is not far away we ALL need to be prepared

So, what are we going to do about it??

WLBKA is holding an ASIAN HORNET AWARENESS session

On Thursday March 16th at BBKA HQ at 19.30

Dave Bonner will discuss their habits, what to look out for, what we can do and what to do if you find one. Dave was involved in the hunt to find the nest, so has first hand experience of how we can all be on the lookout.

This will be followed by an Asian Hornet trap building demonstration. ALL BEEKEEPERS WELCOME

Any queries please contact Paul Kerr (kerrbees@gmail.com)

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