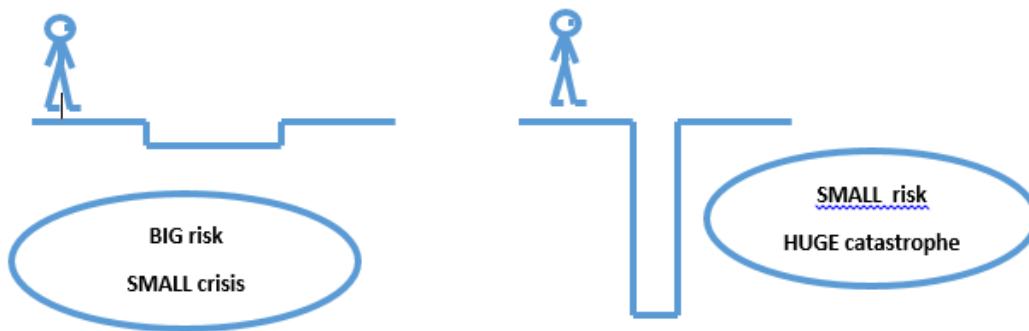




Asian hornet alert

At a recent Shipston Beekeepers meeting, the bee inspector Gordon Bull gave an alarming message to all beekeepers, flagging up the fact that the Asian Hornet threat is here to stay. We can no longer say, 'when the Asian hornet' arrives – it has happened. The rapid spread of the hornet overseas tells us that if we miss a single nest, they are likely to be permanent residents for the future. It reminds me of a doodle I once saw – we are on the brink of a massive beekeeping catastrophe:



Gordon pointed out that it is not only bees, and therefore crop pollination that will suffer. Asian hornets will eat other insects, including many that pollinate specific flowers – so it will be a serious blow to biodiversity as well – both in terms of rare insects and the flowers they pollinate. This has already been observed in France.

So although it now seems a small UK risk in terms of numbers of hornets sighted, letting one nest escape could be the start of a catastrophe.

- Whilst the leaves are off the trees, please look out for the huge nests which they build in the tops of trees – one (or several) could have arrived last year
- PLEASE make a monitoring trap and hang it close to where you can see it every day – not necessarily in your apiary. If you trap other insects, particularly European hornets, which are rare and do little damage, please release them.
- PLEASE download the app for your mobile phone – here are the links;

Ipad: <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/asian-hornet-watch/id1161238813?mt=8>

Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.ac.ceh.hornets>

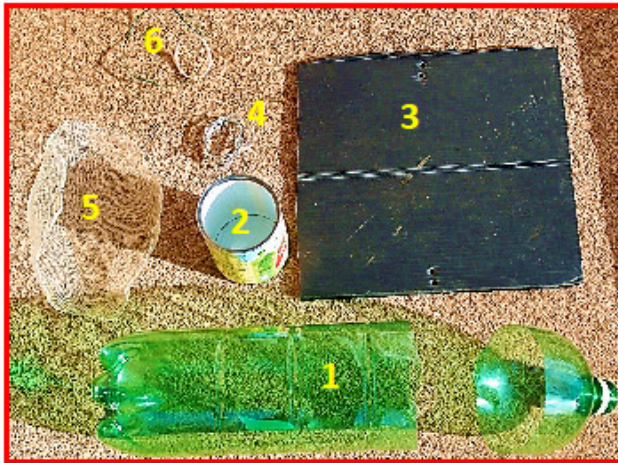
Look on the Warwick and Leamington website for a monitoring trap design <https://www.warleambees.org.uk/> which is easy to make, and **very easy to let other insects escape each day**. There are commercial attractants, or use something with a strong sweet smell – though not honey! E.g. beer, apple juice, blackcurrant....and in France they suggest cherry brandy.....

For people who want to know more:

- Overview: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/faqs/how-to-set-up-an-ahat> The actual links from here don't tell you how to set up an AHAT....but do give some advice on the role of Associations
- There are details of making a monitoring trap here: [file:///C:/Users/Liz/Downloads/AH Trap Mk2%20\(4\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Liz/Downloads/AH%20Trap%20Mk2%20(4).pdf) but I think these have been superseded by designs that are quicker and easier to charge and empty of other native species. I'll try and find details and circulate.
- Beebase has a load of information here: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=117>
- How do I catch an Asian hornet: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=371>
- Incursion map: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/asian-hornet-incursion-map>
- We need to get ourselves onto this map: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/asian-hornet-action-team-map>
- Really good site including life cycle: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Category/asian-hornet-faqs>
- Images of Asian hornets: <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/searchResults.cfm> - put 'Asian hornet' into the search box on the LHS
- Nice information sheet: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/downloadDocument.cfm?id=402>
- Really interesting and hard to find document on risk assessment: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/downloadDocument.cfm?id=643>

Hornet Trap

Copied from Warwick and Leamington website:- <https://www.warleambees.org.uk>



1. Straight-sided plastic bottle with top cut off
2. Small empty tin (sweetcorn, tomato etc.) for attractant (commercial or home-made)
3. Piece of corrugated plastic or similar waterproof material for 'roof'
4. Length of hanging wire –about 75cm – 1metre
5. Piece of fabric or fine wire mesh
6. Elastic band or garden wire to go round tin and hold on mesh



- A. Put mesh over tin and hold together with elastic or garden wire
- B. Poke ends of hanging wire through folded plastic to make roof
- C. Melt holes in sides of plastic bottle and poke ends of hanging wire through bottle and attach
- D. Fill tin with attractant liquid and put in bottom of bottle
- E. Upturn top of bottle and put in top of bottle
- F. Hang up where it can be easily seen

Have you made yours yet?

I made these 4 in less than a morning the only thing I would add to the above design is to put some gravel in the bottom of the bottle under the tin can it helps to keep the whole thing stable in windy weather, also I have found the ones have put out earlier have some rain in them even though the roof is there so I have drilled some holes on the base otherwise the gravel gets mouldy.

Roger



Working with Beeswax

Although honey is seen as the main product of beekeeping, beeswax is a hive product with many uses. Inevitably, as a beekeeper you will have some wax as a by-product and may wonder what to do with it other than exchange it for more foundation at Spring Convention.

As a branch we try to capture expertise and enthusiasm about beeswax around several activities:

- The branch will be offering a workshop on working with beeswax during the autumn. This will include some fundamentals such as cleaning and using wax safely. There will be an opportunity to discuss wicking and to try candle dipping and make moulded candle. The basics of making beeswax cosmetics, including labelling and selling regulations, will be covered. This will be a hands-on workshop with plenty of opportunity to handle hot beeswax.
- Arising from previous workshops the branch invested in a Wax Kit that includes some of the basic equipment such as saucepans, small melting pots, a candle dipping container, moulds and other bits and pieces needed to try out making beeswax products at home. You will need to provide the disposables like wax and wicks but the kit is designed to let you experiment before you buy for yourself.
- Also arising from previous workshops a small group of us get together occasionally to play with ideas, try new recipes for balms, creams and polishes and generally exchange ideas and enthusiasm. The branch generously gives this group a small budget for ingredients and disposables.

If you are interested in any of these activities or want to borrow the Wax Kit, please get in touch with Gill Grimshaw at gill@iamabeekeeper.com.

Who wants free Alpaca poo?

The owner of an Alpaca farm near Kenilworth kindly hosts bees with a members' apiary on her farm.

When free manure was offered I dipped into the internet and found out it is an ideal compost which can be put straight on the garden and does not host weeds.

It can be taken away using bags available or larger quantities can be loaded onto a trailer for allotment holders.

If you would like some please contact Kierti at kiertiv@hotmail.com

Kierti's delightful alpacas are available for experience events and will all have seen what a pleasure and how relaxing they are to be with when taken for a walk. Details are available at www.faerietalealpacas.co.uk.
Mike Townsend

A spoonful of honey helped the medicine go down

Thursday, March 28th was NHS Sustainability Day and, to mark this event, the Branch was requested to set up a small stand in the Clinical Science Building at Walsgrave Hospital. The Hospital takes its environmental responsibilities seriously, and the land surrounding the car parks is kept as a sanctuary for wildlife, with a wild flower meadow where a community apiary site will be developed in collaboration with our Branch. Good news for aspiring beekeepers who work at the Walsgrave!

Other organisations participating in the Sustainability Day included firms specialising in folding bicycles, photovoltaic panels, 3D printing, energy efficient driving and reusable plastics among others. Our display of a wooden mini-hive and frames of comb looked a little 'homespun' sat amidst the high-tech offerings on the other stands (complete with young, sharply dressed sales people) but the hospital staff were keen to question us to find out how they could help the honeybee. Chris Ball and I were kept busy dispensing leaflets and explaining the workings of the hive.

The 3D printer was amazing. A spool of plastic thread was heated to a precise temperature and deformed to build a small plastic dinosaur. The process seemed to me to be a bit like beeswax kept within the warmth of the hive and built into perfect hexagonal cells – just that the bees got there a couple of millennia before we did!

Jane Brown

It's Show Time

....and coming to a Pump Room Gardens near you on the 5th May is:- The Ecofest.

Billed as an event that celebrates healthy and environmentally-friendly lifestyles, including:

- 'Have a go' crafts;
- Music on the bandstand;
- Vegetarian and vegan food options;
- Ideas for eating healthily and helping the environment;
- Getting outside and exploring green spaces;
- Low-carbon transport;
- Reducing waste and plastic use.

...this is event aims to attract families from across Warwickshire for a fun and informative day out, with over 50 stalls from across a variety of sectors to browse so there is a certain synergy with our craft. In particular our candle rolling activity fits neatly with the 'Have- a -go" objective and Honey Tasting the vegetarian food one.

This will be the first time we have attended this event, so we want to do it justice and to do this we need some volunteers to man our stand. The event runs from 10.a.m. until 4.00 p.m. but we will need some help setting up and dismantling AND transporting the kit back to our store. We shall divide the day into two shifts – 10.00 a.m to 1.00p.m and 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. and you can sign up to these by pasting the following link into your browser or going to our website www.warleambees.org.uk where the link will also be posted.

Helping on our stand involves sharing our knowledge and enthusiasm with the public (playing teacher), making sales of honey and wax products (playing shop), demonstrating various pieces of beekeeping equipment (just playing) and answering queries (showing off) and is well within the capabilities of anyone who has been on our introductory course.

Oh! By the way, the Pump Room Gardens in question are those in Leamington in case any were unfamiliar with the locality.

Public Displays Team

May Taster Day

Places for this years' May Beekeeping Taster Day, being held at **Kings Hill Nursery**, on **Sunday 5th May**, are going fast so if you have friends, neighbours, relatives, work colleagues etc. who are interested, please encourage them to enrol soon. This couldn't be simpler. Just go to our website and follow the "Taster Day" link on the right hand side of the home page. The cost is for the Day is £30 per delegate and, with Easter in mind, we are also providing "Taster Day Gift Certificates" for those who would like to give an original and unusual present for that special person.

Aimed at helping delegates decide whether they would like to take up beekeeping, a very popular part of the day is the opportunity to get up close and personal with some live bees and to do this we are still looking for members to come along and open some hives. So, if you would like to volunteer to help with this demonstration and to interact with the delegates please contact Bernard Brown on bernardnbrown@outlook.com

Wanted

Large chest freezer in working order for our resource centre. Can arrange collection.

Contact bernardbrown@outlook.com, 01926 843416

For Sale

Used 27 litre Burco Boiler. Clean and in good working order. For Frame boiling or Tea! First **£40** secures - Contact Bernard Brown – bernardnbrown@outlook.com 01926 843416

Wanted – The Services of a Sherlock Holmes

I say Old Man! There has been some strange goings on at the Dalehouse Lane training apiary since it was vacated to make way for the modifications to the A46 which are baffling the Warwick and Leamington beekeepers and the local police. Here are the facts arising from three separate events.

Firstly, there was the theft of some hives undergoing acetic acid treatment. Acetic acid is a very nasty chemical capable of corroding metal and concrete and is used sparingly in beekeeping to sterilise hives and its components. A pad soaked in the acid is placed in a stack of hive boxes which are completely sealed in plastic to enable the fumes to permeate the woodwork and do their job. Its application and removal requires protective equipment including gloves and a face mask. Why or who would risk its Theft?

Then there was the theft of some 15 2ft x 2ft paving slabs each weighing about 45 Kg . These were located 60m from the gate but there was no evidence of the gate being tampered with. Did they know the padlock combination? Who would go to the effort of removing such items? How did they achieve it? and for what pu

And finally, the door to a shed was ripped off - hinges, padlock, hasp and staple - the lot. These thieves were quite discerning, as strangely, nothing was taken from inside the shed. Apparently, not even the lawn mowers were sufficiently attractive. Even more strangely, the shed door was nowhere to be found. Was the door the object of the theft?

Can you help solve these crimes? Theories please to Mick Smith

Dr Watson.

WLBK Member is a World Record Holder

Our March members' meeting featured a human interest story. The "human" was WLBK member Steve Sidaway and the "interest" angle was how Steve spent last Christmas! Not particularly inspiring some thought but they were wrong for Steve spent from 12th December to 23rd January in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean participating as one of "three men in a boat" plus one girl as crew in the Talisker Whiskey Atlantic Challenge, **rowing** from the Canary Islands to Antigua – a mere 3000 miles. They not only successfully completed this epic journey, coming 8th out of 28 starters, but set a new world record for a mixed crew!!

Known in the Branch as a skilled and entertaining speaker, Steve did not disappoint. The attending members were held spellbound as he regaled us with tales of "derring-do" – real Boy's Own stuff - of both pain and elation, of dehydration, sleep deprivation, self-administered surgery, encounters with whales and fifteen metre high waves, – all supported by stunning slides and videos both of the voyage itself and of the logistics in preparation for the event. Such was our fascination with Steve's adventures that we went almost two hours before we realised that we hadn't had cake!!!! A level of deprivation unheard of before in the annals of WLBK

As part of his motivation to succeed at this challenge, Steve, through sponsorship, is raising money for "Molly Olly", a charity which provides support for kids with terminal illnesses so we are especially pleased to report that, as a result of the generosity of the audience, a tad under £200 was raised which will, of course, be further enhanced with gift aid.

If you are involved with a group who would like to be spellbound for an evening, then Steve can be contacted at stephensidaway@yahoo.co.uk

Bernard Brown

Top Tip

Is your queen marked? If not are you going to mark her, if so now is the time to do it when the number of bees in the hive are at their lowest which makes it easier to find her and do the deed.

If she is last year's queen then the colour would be red, if you have no coloured marking pens tipex is always a good stand by.

Roger

SCHOOL SET A-BUZZIN'!

We could sense the anticipation the moment we entered the room.

Twenty-eight, year 4 pupils at Our Lady and Saint Teresa's Primary School in Cubbington had just finished a session of planting seeds in flower pots as part of British Science Week when our team from WLBK arrived to give its "Flower to the Jar" presentation. We had told the teacher that our presentation was inter-active" but little did we know just how inter-active it was to become.

As soon as we arrived, fifty-six little hands offered to help us carry our props from reception the length of the school to the classroom where WLBK members Maggie Curley, Jane Brown and Barry Meatyard donned bee suits and set about preparing to start. This included dressing a couple of the girls in our bee costumes (seen here being modelled by two adult beekeepers).



We chose girls rather than boys for the actual presentation as will be revealed later.

Once the kids had settled down, Jane opened the proceedings by telling the, by now, eager audience, about the life of the honey bee and the products of the hive. It wasn't long before the carefully prepared script was abandoned in the light of a barrage of questions, all of which were very incisive such as "why isn't there a king bee". Not knowing the extent to which the kids knew or should be told about "the birds and the bees", this had the team struggling, somewhat, to answer.

Order was eventually restored, and, after a video of the waggle dance, the two "worker bees" performed the dance - live, led extremely waggley by Maggie. Unfortunately, restrictions on photographing the kids means that we don't have a record of Maggie's amazingly realistic performance but perhaps we can persuade her to do an encore at the next members' meeting.

By now the enthusiasm of the kids had turned into excitement but they remained well bee-haved as the two little worker bees "flew" to the flowers we had provided (no mean achievement given the time of year). Armed with oxalic acid syringes, they sucked up nectar from a carefully secreted honey bucket containing a suspiciously yellow-coloured liquid. Purporting to be nectar, this didn't fool anybody let alone these very savvy kids but, politely, they went along with it.

Our two worker bees then returned to a WBC into which they squirted the said suspicious liquid and, perhaps, now, you will realise why we chose girls for this task as the squirters, given what little boys can do with squirty things!

With the nectar having been delivered, Barry explained how the bees converted this to honey, passing round a fully capped frame. He then went on to explain how we extract the honey using one of the branch's extractors but, by now, we had over-run our allotted time, so we skipped letting the kids operate the extractor and went straight on to opening the tap. From this, the suspicious yellow liquid was poured out into a honey jar.

Not having been sent to the naughty corner for taking up so much of the class's time, Barry rounded off the presentation with some of the amazing numerical facts about our girls.

To say that our talk was well received was putting it mildly and the presenters had a wow of a time as well.

With school budgets increasingly being stretched, they can ill-afford the travelling costs to take their charges to events at fixed venues so mobile presentations, such as this, play a vital part in getting our message across to the future generation of beekeepers.

Ivan A Perry

Another Top Tip

If you have some old blackened frames in the brood box that need replacing now is the time to replace some of them as the hive builds up the bees will draw out the new foundation, this helps to stop disease in the hive.

Roger

Skep making course

Although traditional skeps are no longer used as a permanent hive for keeping bees, they are a practical container for collecting a swarm or as a temporary home before hiving bees and were traditionally made by beekeepers.

The Branch skep making team run a one-day course keeping this craft skill alive with the opportunity for you to make your own.

You will have a most entertaining day being shown how, and going on to make your own skep

The cost of the one-day course is £32 and includes all the materials to make your skep as well as being given the special tools needed for you to keep.



The course is open to full and associate members, introductory course 2019 delegates and accompanied family members over sixteen years of age.

The course will be run in September but we need to have an indication now of the interest allowing us to decide if it is worthwhile running the course.

Please reply to Val Dillon, val.dillon@outlook.com by 15 April 2019 at the latest saying you are interested in this course.

Kind regards

Mary Pemberton. Val Dillon. Mike Townsend

Branch Skep making team

Hints and Tips



- Colony development is really increasing this month. Supers need to be added to prevent the hive becoming overcrowded. This is best done when the brood box is about three-quarters full of bees. As with many aspects of bee keeping there are divided opinions on how to add successive supers. However if they are added just above the queen excluder then the young bees will be able to occupy this space more readily and thus relieve the pressure in the brood box.

- Make hygiene a priority this year! Always take a bag or box with you during an inspection to put those odd bits of comb, lumps of wax

and propolis in.

The added benefit is that then you have a ready store of wax for that candle you are going to make for the

Honey Show on September 12th !

- If you are purchasing bees it is worth checking BeeBase to find out about the prevalence of disease in the area you are buying them from. The disease incidence and report page gives detailed and up to date information. If you are not registered with Beebase then make it your Easter mission..... and only then you can eat chocolate!



If you have any hints or tips that you would like to share, please send them to h.essex@virgin.net...

Thank you Helen Essex

Editor Roger Wilkes, email address is roger.wilkes@kenilworthhoney.co.uk or hard copy can be posted to him at: 12 Mercia Avenue, Kenilworth CV8 1EU. **Content to him for next month by April 28th latest.**

Please send in plain text, unformatted, using Microsoft Word or another common program.

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