



LUNE VALLEY COMMUNITY BEEKEEPERS

NEWSLETTER APRIL 2019

New members

We are delighted to welcome new members Thelma Aye, John Vendy, George Woods and Pamela Woods.

Membership renewal

Would members who have not yet renewed their membership, please note that their **membership and public liability insurance cover lapsed on 31st March 2019**. If you wish to renew either or both, please do so as soon as possible.

Alternative Beekeeping for Beginners



Day 1 of the course took place on Sunday, 10th March with 19 participants coming from as far away as Oldham and South Cheshire. Despite a rather chilly start, the course was enthusiastically received and generated some excellent feedback. In view of the numbers, we are considering dividing the group and running two practical days.

BeeTradex 2019



I attended this year's exhibition which was held, as usual, at Stoneleigh Park. One different feature this year was that the doors were kept firmly closed until the official opening time of 9-00am. This generated a surge of people, not unlike the traditional High Street Boxing Day Sales. Judging by the subsequent queues at both the pre-paid and pay-on-the-day entry points, attendance would appear to have increased.

In addition to the major retailers, there was a greater number of smaller suppliers and an increased number of overseas suppliers, mainly from Europe but including India and Australia! Whilst all the usual equipment was available, there were a number of new medications, hive types and honey extraction equipment on display. Although I did not have time to attend any of the free lectures, I felt the event was well worth visiting.

Last meeting



Our last meeting took place on 13th March when a well-attended meeting heard Pete Sutcliffe, a Master Beekeeper from South Cheshire with over 30 years experience, provided us with a fascinating talk entitled "The hive as a processing centre". This explained how, in order to survive in a healthy state, honey bees collect everything they need from the surrounding area in the form of relatively simple, readily available, natural products, which are then processed in sophisticated ways into such diverse items as building materials, miracle foods and antiseptic paints.

Next meeting

Our next meeting is the Spring Apiary Inspection which will take place on Sunday, 14th April, weather permitting, at the Club Apiary from 10-00am to 2-00pm. This is an opportunity for all members, especially new members, to experience a Spring inspection and assess how well the bees have over-wintered. Bee suits can be provided, **but please bring your own wellies.**

Bees and Scarecrows



We have been invited to have a stand at this year's famous Wray Scarecrow Festival. Whilst the scarecrows will be on display from 27th April until 6th May, the festival itself takes place on Monday, 6th May (Bank Holiday Monday). This year's theme is "Creatures extinct, existing or endangered". **We are still seeking volunteers to help erect and dismantle the stand, or help man it during the day.** Please let me know as soon as possible if you can help.

Apiary update

The recent storms have blown over a number of trees at the apiary. These have now been dropped and made safe but remain to be logged and cleared once we can get a chainsaw party together.



New Gazebo



We are delighted with our new gazebo which was generously funded by The Galbraith Trust. The gazebo measures 6m by 3m and can be erected by two people.

This now means that we have all the equipment etc needed to attend outside shows and exhibitions.

New Bee Suits

Thanks to a grant from the Ernest Cook Trust, we now have 20 children's bee suits and 20 adult bee suits which will enable us to take school parties and their teachers around the apiary and look into bee hives.

Out-apiary Site

If anyone is looking for an out-apiary site, we have another one on offer. This one is situated in a small community orchard, adjacent to both open fields and some allotments, and is near Wrea Green. If you are interested, give me a call.



Bee myths and customs



It is claimed that bees are not intelligent and do not learn as such!

However, it does not take most bees long to work out that stinging the lawn mower is a waste of time. Stinging the guy hanging off the back is a different matter!

Club Activities Programme 2019

14th Apr	Spring Apiary Inspection	Club Apiary	10-00am to 2-00pm
	An opportunity for all members, especially new members, to experience a Spring inspection and assess how well the bees have over-wintered.		
23rd June	Summer Apiary Inspection	Club Apiary	10-00am to 2-00pm
	An opportunity for all members, especially new members, to experience a Summer inspection and assess how well the bees have expanded and amassed stores during the Spring and early Summer.		
12th July	Working party	Club Apiary	10-00am to 3-00pm
	Working party to set up for Open Day. Details to follow.		
13th July	2019 OPEN DAY	Club Apiary	
	Details to follow.		
8th Sept	Autumn Apiary Inspection	Club Apiary	10-00am to 2-00pm
	An opportunity for all members, especially new members, to experience an Autumn inspection and assess how well the bees are prepared for winter.		
15th Sept	Meadow Mowing Day	Club Apiary	10-00am to 4-00pm
	Preparing the meadow for winter. Scythe, strim or just carry away the cuttings! But please do come, we need to complete this in one day.		
16th Oct	Speaker Meeting		Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm
	Topic: Bee Together Project		Speaker: Catherine Mercer
	Catherine is the Coordinator of the Bee Together project which aims to connect communities and landscapes to reverse the decline of wild pollinators, and in particular, wild bees. The project involves coordinating and delivering capital works and activity-based projects along the B-Line from Lancaster to Leeds, connecting communities to create pollinator super-highways.		
Wed	Speaker Meeting		Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm
13th Nov	Topic: Bees for Development		Speaker: Bob Spencer
	Bob is a Trustee of Bees for Development, an organisation that promotes sustainable beekeeping to combat poverty and to build sustainable, resilient livelihoods. It supports beekeepers to maintain environments that are good for bees, for biodiversity, and for people. Bees for Development works with local partners on community-based projects, and provides a wide-range of information services.		
Sun	Managing woodland for pollinators	Club Apiary	10-00am to 4-00pm
	A one day practical course, run by Catherine Mercer of Bee Together, which will include coppicing and other practical skills.		
Wed	Speaker Meeting		Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm
11th Dec	Topic:		Speaker: TBC

2020

Wed 15th Jan	Social Event – Wine and Cheese Evening Details to follow	Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm
Wed 12th Feb	Speaker Meeting Topic: The Woodland Trust Paul will explain the work of the Woodland Trust and provide advice on how we should manage the woodland at our Club apiary.	Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm Speaker: Paul Littlewood
Wed 11th Mar	Speaker Meeting Topic:	Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm Speaker: TBC

Other events of interest



12th–14th April 2019,

BBKA Spring Convention

Harper Adams University, Newport, Shropshire,
TF10 8NB

The annual BBKA Spring Convention provides an impressive range of workshops, courses and lectures spread over three days. A large trade show also takes place over the first two days. Admittance for non BBKA members for the full convention is £26 (booked in advance) or £30 on the day. Entry to the trade show on the Saturday is £5. The full programme can be downloaded from: www.bbka.org.uk/news_and_events/spring_convention.php



World Bee Day. 20th May 2019

The purpose of this international day is to acknowledge the role of bees and other pollinators for the ecosystem. World Bee Day is celebrated on the baptism day of Anton Janša, who was born in 1734 in what is now Slovenia.

In beekeeping he is noted for not only writing a number of impressive books on beekeeping but for advocating changing the size and shape of hives to a form where they can be stacked together like blocks. As a painter he also decorated the fronts of hives with paintings. Janša rejected the belief that the male bees are water carriers and assumed that the queen is fertilised mid-air. He advocated moving hives to pastures.

Northern Bee Auction

This year's event will be held at Houghton Village Hall, Cumbria, CA3 0NW, on Sunday, 19th May and offers a range of both bees and second-hand equipment. Further information can be obtained from: enquiries@beeauctions.co.uk

How long does a honey bee colony live?

I was recently asked this and it really got me thinking. My initial reaction was to say "indefinitely" as the colony simply goes on reproducing itself, but is this really the case? In a managed colony, with frequent interventions such as comb exchange, this might well be true, but is this the case with wild or feral bees?

As far as I can find, there is little research on this aspect. What there is, suggests that wild or feral colonies have a life span of around 4 to 7 years after which time the colony dies. This would seem to be supported by the number of observers who have commented that whilst "wild" bees have occupied the same site for many years, occasionally they go away.

It may well be that in a colony which rarely if ever has its brood nest disturbed, there is a build-up of parasites etc which eventually overwhelms it. Other creatures, such as wax moth, then move in and clean up the site, which then gets re-occupied a season or so later.

Whilst this cycle will have little if any, impact on conventional beekeepers, those using less interventionist approaches might just have to recognise and accept this as a natural aspect of their approach.

I would be very interested to hear of other people's views and experiences on this.

The World's largest bee

The world's biggest bee has been found after it was thought that the species had become extinct as there has not been a sighting since 1981. Known as Wallace's giant bee - which is as long as an adult's thumb - the creature was found on a little-explored Indonesian island. Wildlife experts found the single live female living inside a termites' nest in a tree, more than two metres off the ground. The goliath is four times bigger than a European honey bee and unlike its cousin, the solitary creature does not live in a nest with hundreds of other bees.



Clay Bolt, a wildlife photographer, was the first to see the insect, which is named after the British naturalist and explorer Alfred Russel Wallace. Wallace first discovered it in 1858 and described the female bee as "a large, black wasp-like insect, with immense jaws like a stag beetle. It was absolutely breathtaking to see this 'flying bulldog' of an insect that we weren't sure existed any more, to have real proof right there in front of us in the wild," said Mr Bolt. "To actually see how beautiful and big the species is in life, to hear the sound of its giant wings thrumming as it flew past my head, was just incredible."

War dance of the honey bee

Honey bees are famous for their waggle dances—figure-eight boogies that foragers use to inform nestmates about the locations of food or water. But entomologists were unclear about whether the dances could also be used to help ensure colony safety. Ayumi Fujiwara, a graduate student at the University of Tokyo, and colleagues simulated wasp attacks on hives of the Japanese honey bee (*Apis cerana japonica*) to test the bees' response to danger. "Giant wasps attack the nests of honey bees to feed their brood in autumn. As a result, wasps may sometimes annihilate a whole honey bee colony," she says.



The researchers found that the bees did use a waggle dance as a warning signal, but only in response to sightings of one wasp species, *Vespa mandarinia japonica*. "The hive entrance dance informs bees' nestmates of a specific emergency and of the urgent necessity to collect odorous plant materials as a counterattack strategy," Fujiwara says. The bees collect stinky plant materials, such as leaves from Nepalese smartweed (*Persicaria nepalensis*), and smear them at the hive entrance to deter the wasps.

The information coded in this new waggle dance is not yet completely clear, notes Margaret Couvillon, a biologist and honey bee specialist at Virginia Tech. "What would be interesting to see is if there are any differences in the conveying of directional information in this defensive context versus the regular foraging context," she says. "Nature tends to be parsimonious in finding solutions, so we might expect that the bees use a similar mechanism in these different situations."

How do honey bees smell?

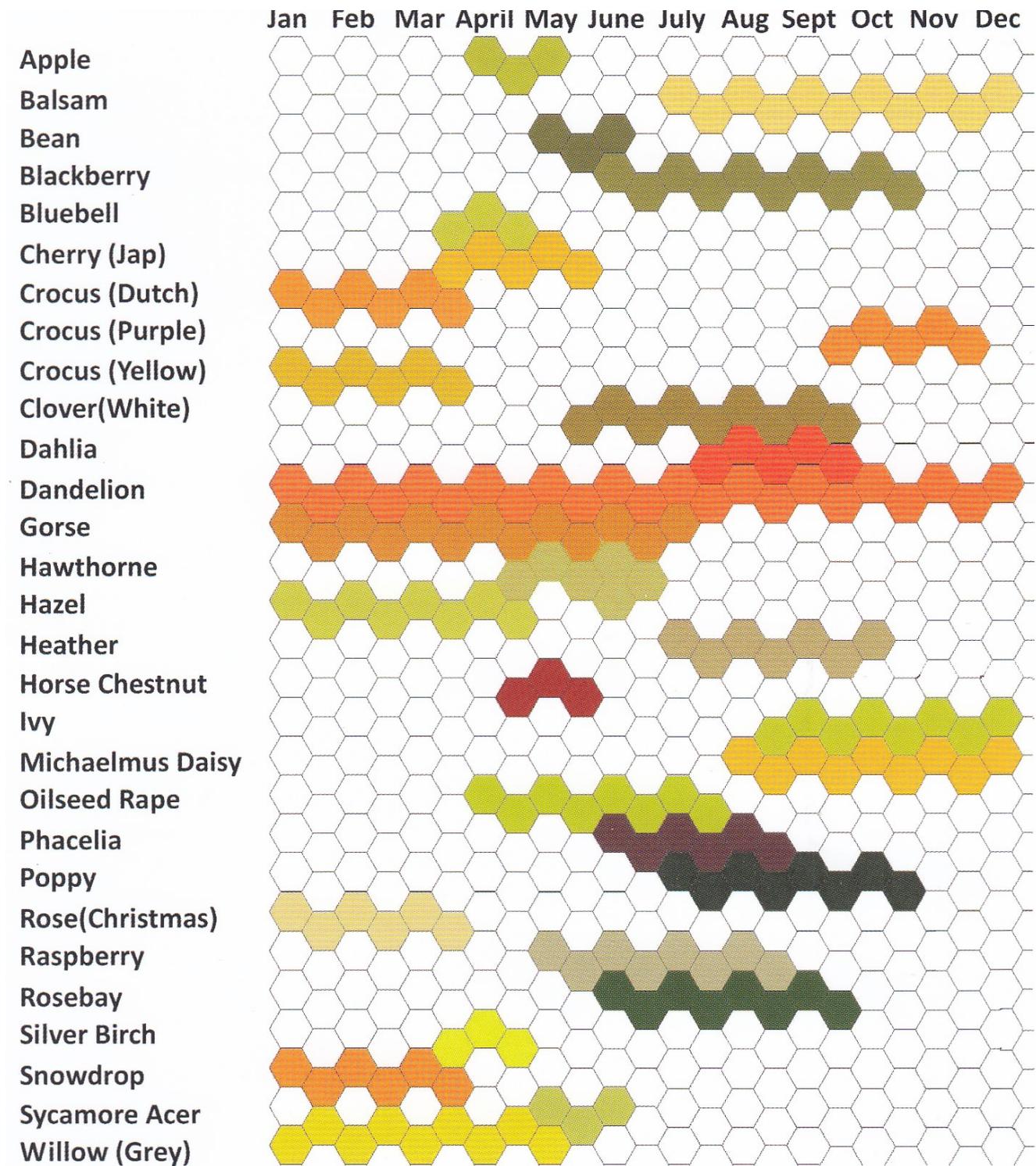
John Eaden - Manchester BKA - via ebees

How do honey bees detect scents? Honey bees have been around on this planet for over 34 million years and during that time have evolved some remarkable adaptations. The honey bee has no nose! Instead, it has a pair of moveable antennae on its head, which it uses for a range of functions. The antennae on female bees have 12 segments while the males have 13. Each antenna has an elbow-like joint, which allows it to move in many directions. Specialised sensing cells on the antennae allow the bee to smell, taste, hear sounds, feel by touch, sense airspeed during flight and detect temperature, humidity and carbon dioxide levels. Some of the smell sensors are specialised for detecting the mating hormones secreted by virgin queens – not surprisingly, only drones possess these sensors. The honey bee spends most of its time in the dark inside the hive and its sense of smell is a very important way for it to know what is happening around it. Each nest has a distinct smell signature that comes from the specific mix of pheromones secreted both by workers and most importantly by the queen. The bees can tell friend from stranger by their scent as well as knowing whether the queen is present, healthy and laying well. The Nasonov pheromone has seven distinct components, which the bees can detect, and the queen secretes a complex cocktail of pheromones. The rich and complex odour environment of the nest guides the behaviour of the colony. Once the foraging bee leaves the nest, it uses its sense of smell to locate and distinguish between different forage plants which each give off a unique blend of odour chemicals.

When a beekeeper opens up a colony and removes hive components, for example by lifting out frames to inspect them, it is bound to disturb the balance of smells within the hive. It can take up to 48 hours for the colony to re-establish its scent equilibrium. Perhaps we beekeepers need to be aware of this when we decide whether it is necessary to open up our hives?

Pollen chart

At this time of year our bees will be bringing in pollen of all different colours. Whilst more experienced members will be familiar with what plant produces which coloured pollen, our newer members may find this chart of interest.



Charles Butler – “The Father of English Beekeeping”

CHARLES BUTLER was born in Wycombe in 1560. In 1579 he became a student at Magdalen Hall, Oxford, where he took a degree in arts in 1587. After this he was a bible clerk at Magdalen College. Here he wrote his first book “The Logic of Ramus”. The book expounded the theories of the then controversial Pierre de la Ramé whose thoughts were at odds with the conventionally held views of Aristotle, and for this Butler was known as the “English Ramus”. In 1609 Butler published the first ever comprehensive book on beekeeping “The Feminine Monarchie”. The title itself is interesting, as the conventional view held for many centuries was that the honey bee colony was headed by a king bee, not a queen. The book was used by beekeepers for generations. Butler published revised editions in 1623 and 1634, and it was translated into Latin 1678 after his death. It is due to the significance of this book that Butler is known as “the Father of English Beekeeping”.

However, his interests were not confined to beekeeping and logic. In 1633 he published “The English Grammar”, written in a new phonetic alphabet he had invented for the English language. Dr. Johnson wrote of Butler in the preface to his *Dictionary* as “a man who did not want an understanding which might have qualified him for better employment.”

The 1634 edition of “The Feminine Monarchie” was published using the new phonetic alphabet. This extract (right) describes how to protect yourself against stings.

Bet pensoëver you hav' occasion to
trubble ðeir patienc', or to coom among
ðem beeing trubled, it is better to stand
upon your gard, ðan to trust to ðeir
gentlenes. For ðe safgard of your fac',
piŋ ðey hav' most mind' unto, provid' a
pursehood, mad' of coorse boultering,
to bee drawn and knit about your
collar, piŋ for mor' safty is to bee lined
gainst ð' eminent parts wit woollen clot.

Butler died in 1647. He had three sons and two daughters, one of whom died aged nine months, but the other daughter, Elizabeth, married the Reverend Richard White, and their great grandson was Gilbert White, the naturalist, known in the beekeeping world for his description of a drone congregation area. Of Butler's life as a clergyman, little is known, apart from a quote from Thomas Fuller that he was “a pious man, a painful preacher and a solid divine”.



In 1952 the Charles Butler Memorial Fund was opened to provide a stained glass window to commemorate Butler and this was installed in the north aisle of Wootton St. Lawrence Church. At the dedication service on 14th November 1954, a choir from Worcester and Somerville Colleges performed Butler's own composition of bee-music “The Melissomelos”, a four part madrigal which can be found in the third edition of “The Feminine Monarchie”. In the left pane of the window a figure of Butler in priestly robes is shown under the Latin inscription “Solertia et labore”, (wit and industry), a term he used to describe the bees, and which aptly sums up his own life.

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LUNE VALLEY COMMUNITY BEEKEEPERS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM – 2019-2020		
Title:	Name:	
2019-202 Subscriptions		Amount
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Public Liability Insurance (delete if not wanted)		10.00
Donation		
Total due		
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Bank details for BACS payment <i>Please quote your name as the payment reference to help us identify the payments.</i>	Lune Valley Community Beekeepers Account number – 29993268 Sort code 77-26-17	
I consent to the holding of my membership records on computer and consent/do not consent to disclosure to other members of the Charity and BeeBase.		
Signed:	Date:	
Gift Aid declaration (for tax payers only)– past, present & future donations		
Please treat my subscription as a Gift Aid donation. I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for the current tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for the current tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I have given.		
Lune Valley Community Beekeepers – HMRC Charities Reference XT22947		
Signed:	Date:	

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An innovative but simple long hive



Only £295

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Essential features:

- Designed by bee-centric beekeepers for bee-centric beekeepers
- Comfortably houses one colony of bees without the need for additional supers or brood boxes
- Has a hinged roof to avoid the need for heavy lifting
- Can be managed by a person in a wheelchair
- Can be used with 14 x 12 frames (recommended), standard brood frames or top bars
- Has a removable floor tray which can act as a biological sump or a debris board for varroa counts
- Has 2" thick wooden walls which provide five times more insulation than a standard hive
- Roof space is ventilated and has space for a jumbo feeder
- Has a metal roof
- Is manufactured locally, especially for LVCB
- Is constructed from pine wood to reduce the cost but will need an external preservative or coat of paint
- Despite its high specification, it is economically priced whilst offering exceptional value for money.