



# LUNE VALLEY COMMUNITY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER JULY 2019

## New members

We welcome new members, Neil Fleet and Claire Forsyth.

## Bee Inspector's visit

On 28<sup>th</sup> May the Club's apiary was inspected by our local Bee Inspector, Julia Hoggard, accompanied by Caroline Coughlin, the newly appointed season Bee Inspector for Manchester area. The inspection lasted just over two hours, all five colonies were inspected and nothing untoward was found.

## RotaKids Conference



We were invited to provide a contribution to Carnforth Rotary Club's 2019 RotaKids Conference, held on 14<sup>th</sup> June at the Lancaster campus of the University of Cumbria. Over 130 young children from schools all over Lancashire attended. We delivered nine sessions based around an observation hive, a long hive and

making bug hotels, which seemed to be well received by most of the youngsters.

Many thanks to David Wareing and Jane York for helping me out with this.



## Nazareth House Nursery



On the afternoon of the same day I was invited to bring the observation hive into the Nazareth House Nursery and talk to around 20, 3 to 4 year olds, about bees. Many of them had walked past the apiary and seen us dressed in strange attire, so there was a lot of curiosity and questions. They also felt a strong need to touch and stroke the pictures of bees that I showed to them! It



was nice to get a lot of thank-you hugs at the end!

## Summer apiary inspection



We had a warm and sunny day for this year's summer apiary inspection and a good turnout, especially from our newer members. All the hives were inspected and quite a lot of sealed honey taken off. As all of the honey was in natural comb, and some cut from non-standard frames, the process of extraction by pressing was explained and discussed in some detail.



## Open Day



On Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> July we are having a working party to prepare the site for our annual Open Day which takes place on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> July.

**There is a range of tasks to be completed and we would welcome as much help as possible.**

We shall be on site from 10-00am until around 4-00pm and would be delighted to see you, even if it is only for a couple of hours. Tea and coffee will be available all day!

## Pollinators in action!

Ron Wawoczny sent these pictures of bumble bees working hard in his garden.



## National Meadows Day

In 2012, HRH The Prince of Wales called for the creation of new wild flower meadows, at least one in every county, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Coronation. The first to be created in Lancashire was at Bell Sykes Farm, Slaidburn.



We have been invited again to take part in the National Meadows Day celebrations at Bell Sykes Farm, on 6<sup>th</sup> July. This popular, annual event, which runs from 10-00am to 4-00pm includes seeing fields of flowers, traditional crafts including beekeeping, hay making demonstrations, guided walks, bee walks and children's activities.



**We need a small number of volunteers to help out on the day. Please give me a call if you can help.**

## Club activities programme 2019-2020

<b>12<sup>th</sup> July</b>	<b>Working party</b> Working party to set up for Open Day. Details to follow.	<b>Club Apiary</b>	<b>10-00am to 3-00pm</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> July</b>	<b>2019 OPEN DAY</b>	<b>Club Apiary</b>	<b>11-00am to 4-00pm</b>
<b>8<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>	<b>Autumn Apiary Inspection</b> An opportunity for all members, especially new members, to experience an Autumn inspection and assess how well the bees are prepared for winter.	<b>Club Apiary</b>	<b>10-00am to 2-00pm</b>
<b>15<sup>th</sup> Sept</b>	<b>Meadow Mowing Day</b> Preparing the meadow for winter. Scythe, strim or just take away the cuttings! But please do come, we need to complete this in one day.	<b>Club Apiary</b>	<b>10-00am to 4-00pm</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> Oct</b>	<b>Speaker Meeting</b> <b>Topic: Bee Together Project</b> 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.		<b>Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm</b> <b>Speaker: Catherine Mercer</b>
<b>Wed</b> <b>13<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	<b>Speaker Meeting</b> <b>Topic: Bees for Development</b> 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.		<b>Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm</b> <b>Speaker: Bob Spencer</b>
<b>Sun</b> <b>17<sup>th</sup> Nov</b>	<b>Managing woodland for pollinators</b> A one day practical course, run by Catherine Mercer of Bee Together, which will include coppicing and other practical skills.	<b>Club Apiary</b>	<b>10-00am to 4-00pm</b>
<b>Wed</b> <b>11<sup>th</sup> Dec</b>	<b>Speaker Meeting</b> <b>Topic: The two frame nucleus</b> An introduction to this approach for those interested in increasing their colonies or wish to participate in a club project next season.		<b>Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm</b> <b>Speaker: Fred Ayres</b>
<b>2020</b>			
<b>Wed</b> <b>8<sup>th</sup> Jan</b>	<b>Social Event – Wine and Cheese Evening</b> <b>Details to follow</b>		<b>Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm</b>
<b>Wed</b> <b>12<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	<b>Speaker Meeting</b> <b>Topic: The Woodland Trust</b> Paul will explain the work of the Woodland Trust and provide advice on how we should manage the woodland at our Club apiary.		<b>Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm</b> <b>Speaker: Paul Littlewood</b>
<b>Wed</b> <b>11<sup>th</sup> Mar</b>	<b>Speaker Meeting</b> <b>Topic: Thermoregulation in the hive</b> Keith is an airline pilot, and experienced beekeeper. His talk will help to improve our understanding of how, why, and when bees monitor and alter the hive temperature and is particularly relevant in our usage of insulated hives.		<b>Scarthwaite Hotel, 7-30pm</b> <b>Speaker: Keith Bartlem</b>

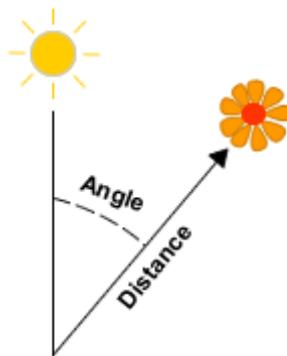
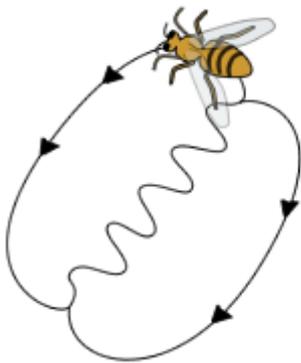
## Other events of interest

### Learning from the bees



The second *Learning from the Bees* workshop and conference will take place in Berlin from 29<sup>th</sup> August to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019. For details visit [www.learningfromthebeesberlin.com](http://www.learningfromthebeesberlin.com)

### Decode the Honey bee Waggle Dance Workshop Sunday 6th October 2019



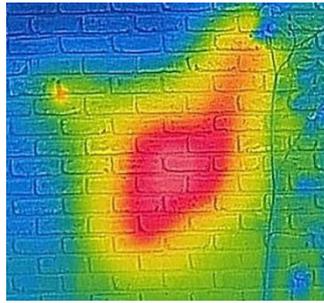
Honey bees have sophisticated communication systems which they use to coordinate colony activities. The best known is the "waggle dance". Foragers who have located profitable flower patches make waggle dances back in the hive. These communicate the direction and distance of the flower patch to nestmate bees who follow the dance. In 1973 Karl von Frisch received a Nobel Prize for discovering the

waggle dance. The waggle dance is one of the few scientific discoveries awarded a Nobel Prize that can be seen with the naked eye. The honey bee is the only animal that "tells you where it has been". This can be used in many ways by scientists. It can be used, for example, to investigate how flying insects measure distance. It can also be used to learn where honey bees are collecting food, and to study their foraging patterns and how they vary with time. The workshop is targeted at anyone interested in science, as well as people with particular interests in honey bees, plants, and conservation. It will be taught by Professor Francis Ratnieks, Dr. Karin Alton and other bee researchers from the Laboratory of Apiculture & Social Insects (LASI) at the University of Sussex. LASI is using dance decoding to understand honey bee foraging as part of the Sussex Plan for Honey Bee Health & Well Being.



For more information visit <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/lasi/newsandevents/events/decodedances>

## Bees in a wall



When the owner of this building saw honey bees flying in and out of a small crack in the wall, he did not think too much about it. He decided to use a thermal imager to plot the exact location of the bees' nest within the wall cavity. The results were surprising. As the width of the cavity was only 5 inches, the bees had built one enormous comb.

## Massive colony losses in the USA

Beekeepers across the United States lost 40.7% of their honey bee colonies from April 2018 to April 2019, according to preliminary results of the latest annual nationwide survey conducted by the University of Maryland-led non-profit Bee Informed Partnership. The survey results indicate winter losses of 37.7%, which is the highest winter loss reported since the survey began 13 years ago and 8.9 percentage points higher than the survey average. Honey bees pollinate \$15 billion worth of food crops in the United States each year, so their health is critical to food production and supply.

"These results are very concerning, as high winter losses hit an industry already suffering from a decade of high winter losses," says Dennis van Engelsdorp, Associate Professor of Entomology at the University of Maryland and president for the Bee Informed Partnership.

During the 2018 summer season, beekeepers lost 20.5% of their colonies, which is slightly above the previous year's summer loss rate of 17.1%, but about equal to the average loss rate since the summer of 2011. Overall, the annual loss of 40.7% this last year represents a slight increase over the annual average of 38.7%.

## Bee myths and customs



In 1762, Charles Trefellon, a country gentleman living in Hampshire wrote:

*There is not one peasant, I believe, in the village, man or woman, who would sell you a swarm of bees. To be guilty of selling bees is a grievous omen indeed, than which nothing can be more dreadful. To barter bees is quite a different matter. If you want a hive, you may easily obtain it in lieu of a small pig or some other equivalent. There may seem little difference in the eyes of an enlightened person*

*between selling and bartering, but the superstitious beekeeper sees a great distinction and it is not his fault if you do not see it too!*

## Planting for bees

At this time of year many of us are thinking about how to plan our gardens to provide more forage for our bees. The following guidelines might be helpful.

### Quantity, quality and variety

Plentiful supplies of varied, nectar-producing forage are essential to keep bees healthy. In a single foraging trip, a honey bee may visit around 100 flowers and make around 10 to 15 trips per day.

### Four-season planting

Although March to September are the key months for bees, they will fly whenever the temperature is above 10C, even in winter. So early and late flowering plants are especially valuable. Ideally, plant sequentially so that there is always something in flower.



### Mow less and love weeds

Many so called "weeds" provide valuable forage. Mow lawns, but less often, and leave some areas to grow wild. This encourages useful species to grow, such as daisies, trefoil, clover, and especially dandelions, which are an important early season nectar source.



### Bees see blue



The photoreceptors in honey bees' eyes see from yellow, blue and green right up into the ultraviolet light scale. This makes blue, violet, purple and white flowers especially attractive to them. They can also distinguish orange blooms, but the colour red looks black to a bee, making red flowers unappealing. Some flowers exploit ultraviolet to alert bees. The outer edges of the petals reflect ultraviolet light, while the nectar-rich centres absorb it to present a dark patch, signalling the perfect landing pad.

### Flower fidelity

Honey bees tend to only visit one type of flower in any one foraging trip. This is called "flower fidelity" and is what makes them such effective pollinators. By planting large clumps or "drifts" of single species you can save the bees' energy and optimise each of their trips.



### **Native and non-native**

Honey bees have evolved alongside certain flower species in every region. The flowers, too, are also perfectly attuned to that region. For these reasons, some people favour only having native plants in their gardens. However, many non-native species provide valuable additions to our pollinator forage, often at different times to native species, and are widely accepted by honey bees as part of their forage.



### **Think bushes and trees**

Honey bees are natural tree dwellers and feeders so, if space allows, bee friendly planting should always start with a framework of durable, perennial forage from bushes and trees. A single, mature lime tree in flower produces the same amount of forage as 3000sq metres of wildflower meadow!



### **Keep it simple**

With shorter tongues than bumble bees or butterflies, honey bees often cannot feed from complex flower structures. Highly bred ornamental flowers often give little or no nectar, so generally stay close to the original wild or simple forms of flower where nectar and pollen are easily accessible.

### **Water**



Bees do not store water in the hive so forage for it as it is needed. If you do not have a pond, a bowl of pebbles full of rainwater provides a useful alternative. Bees do not seem to like fresh tap water.

### **Garden organically**

Read up on organic gardening techniques. There are many wildlife friendly alternatives to using chemicals. As far as possible, source your seeds, plants, bulbs and compost from organic nurseries which should ensure that they have not been treated with insecticides.

## **Alternative hive**

As most of you will be aware, I have an interest in alternative forms of beekeeping but this is a bit too far even for me!



The designer of this hive claims that there is something very therapeutic about sleeping close to a colony of bees so he has designed a fairly standard long hive in the top, which lifts up to provide space for someone to sleep underneath. I haven't tried this yet!

## How to become a bee priestess (blokes as well!)

A little while ago I spent a few days in Glastonbury – no, not at the Festival, and came across this beekeeping course. It is run over six weekends by the “Guardian of the Avalon Apiary” (King Arthur is allegedly buried in the ruins of the nearby Glastonbury Abbey) and based at the foot of the Tor in Glastonbury – a place to observe and commune with the bees.

The practical course costs £600 and you have to complete an on-line course before you attend. Accommodation for the six weekends is not included. Here is the syllabus.

<p><b>Hexagonal 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring the way of the Hive.</li> <li>• Bee Priestess breath, work and song.</li> <li>• Crafting shamanic bee keeping tools.</li> <li>• Myths and history of the Bee Goddess.</li> <li>• Hive sounds &amp; Meditations.</li> <li>• Journey to the Hive.</li> <li>• Bee Keeping Year in your local area.</li> <li>• Mantra of the Bee Goddess.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Hexagonal 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colony collapse.</li> <li>• Queenless states.</li> <li>• Hive consciousness.</li> <li>• Decline of the Bee.</li> <li>• Ceremony of Protection &amp; Healing.</li> <li>• The Bee Star Cluster.</li> <li>• Bee energy vibrations, oracling and wisdom.</li> <li>• Hive Consciousness.</li> <li>• The forgotten Hive – community and family.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hexagonal 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of fire/smoke.</li> <li>• Focusing techniques using fire, experience, deep cleansing and purification, ceremony, sacred intentions and prayers.</li> <li>• Spark of creation.</li> <li>• Bee types, jobs and division of work.</li> <li>• Hive Consciousness.</li> <li>• Hive Art – history and images used.</li> <li>• Meditation to inspire our own hive art.</li> <li>• Painting/drawing Hive art.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Hexagonal 4</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drones – through their eyes, the seen and unseen, the virgin queen, mated Queen, mothers &amp; daughters.</li> <li>• Relationships returning to the Sacred.</li> <li>• Pheromones – the magical use of scent to communicate by the Bees.</li> <li>• Swarming – The song of increase.</li> <li>• The Sting – act of love.</li> <li>• Make your own Bee Priestess anointing oil.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Hexagonal 5</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gifts of the hive, propolis, honey, beeswax.</li> <li>• Communication – waggle dance, group ceremony honouring abundance &amp; gifts.</li> <li>• Attitude to work, fertility, abundance.</li> <li>• Communion – scent, sound, protection, defence.</li> <li>• Queen Bee – co-created ceremony of Queening.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Hexagonal 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grounding ourselves, our Bee wisdom, &amp; Unity Consciousness.</li> <li>• Crafting a Bee Priestess Medicine Bag.</li> <li>• Awakening fully to Bee Unity Consciousness.</li> </ul>

“This course, if completed successfully, leads to a powerful dedication ceremony in the last weekend, to serve Goddess and our communities as a Bee Priestess.”

Makes our courses seem quite ordinary!

## Loukoumades

Anybody who has visited any part of Greece or its islands in summer will have come across one of the many honey festivals which are part of the local culture, and tasted the delicious loukoumades.

Loukoumades are little bite-sized fluffy sweet honey puffs (the Greek version of doughnuts), which are deep fried to golden and crispy perfection. They are traditionally served soaked in hot honey syrup, sprinkled with cinnamon and garnished with chopped walnuts or toasted sesame seeds.

They are also fairly easy to make!

You will need the following ingredients:

- 1 cup of lukewarm water (240g /8.5 oz.)
- 1 cup of lukewarm milk (240g/ 8.5 oz.)
- 15 g active dry yeast (0.5 oz.)
- 3 and 1/4 of a cup flour (450g /16 oz.)
- 2 tbsps sugar
- 1 flat tsp salt
- 4 tbsps olive oil
- oil for frying
- 3/4 cup honey (350g/ 13 oz.)
- cinnamon powder
- chopped walnuts



The method is:

- Add the water and yeast to a bowl and stir with a fork. Wait for 5 minutes, until the yeast dissolves completely.
- Add the rest of the ingredients for the dough and whisk at high speed for about 2 minutes until the mixture becomes a smooth batter.
- Cover the bowl with some plastic wrap and let the dough rest in a warm place for at least 1 hour to rise.
- Into a medium sized frying pan pour enough vegetable oil to deep fry the loukoumades. Heat the oil to high heat until it begins to bubble. Test if the oil is hot enough by dipping in some of the dough. If it sizzles the oil is ready.
- Dip a tablespoon in some water and spoon out some of the dough into the hot oil. Repeat this procedure until the surface of the pan is comfortably filled. You should dip the spoon in the water every time, so that the batter doesn't stick on it.
- Whilst the loukoumades are frying, use a slotted spoon to push them into the oil and turn them on all sides, until golden brown.
- Place the loukoumades on some kitchen paper to drain. Repeat with the rest of the dough.
- When done, place the loukoumades on a large platter, drizzle with the heated honey and sprinkle with cinnamon and chopped walnuts. Delicious!

When we first tried these, on the island of Kalymnos, the waitress describing them pronounced them "horny balls"! We just about managed not to burst into laughter until after she had left.

We have made them on several occasions since, but they will always be "horny balls" to us!

## Moths matter

By Helena Horton

When many think of moths, their minds go regretfully to the holes in their favourite cashmere. However, a butterfly charity has urged Britain to rethink their perception of the bug and argued that it is unfairly maligned. Their reputation comes despite the fact that only two of the more than 2,500 UK species of moth in the UK are known to feed on fabrics.



A YouGov poll for the wildlife charity Butterfly Conservation, found 74% of people linked moths to negative things, including 64% who thought of them as eating clothes and a third who associated them with being pests. Perhaps partly due to their reputation, two thirds of common moth species have declined in the last 40 years. Since 1914 there have been 56 moth extinctions, and just six of these have since recolonised or been re-found. The abundance of the UK's larger moths has also crashed during the past 40 years with three species becoming extinct since 2000. This is a problem, as the creatures are important pollinators and a vital fixture of our gardens and parks. The wildlife charity is therefore launching a new campaign, called Moths Matter, which will reveal how the insects are a key food source for many creatures, from bats to small mammals, and play an important role in pollinating wildflowers including orchids, and garden plants.



A survey suggests almost three quarters of people have some negative views of moths. Research has indicated that a decrease in the abundance of bats over farmland is related to the decline in the moths that they depend on. Cuckoos may also have been affected. Far from being the irritating creatures found in our wardrobes, many species of moth are so beautiful they could be mistaken for butterflies. The campaign is highlighting some of the more unusual moths found in the UK, including the death's-head hawk-moth which can squeak like a mouse, the Mother Shipton which has a witch's face on its wings and the caterpillar of the puss moth, which can shoot acid out of its chest.

British people will be asked to look out for caterpillars and plant moth-friendly gardens with plants including lavender and honeysuckle. Another way to protect moth species is to stop working so hard in the garden as moths and their caterpillars need fallen leaves, old stems and other plant debris to help them hide from predators.

Leading moth scientist Dr Phil Sterling said the experts were not surprised by the findings. "People may think of a few times a large moth has startled them and then write them off as annoying or unnecessary; that is wholly unfair," he said. "Think of the humming-bird hawk-moth you might see hovering around lavender in summer. It is a thing of beauty and of wonder as it feeds so precisely in each flower. "Each of the 2,500 species tells a different story about the natural world of moths around us. "Most of them get on with their lives at night and we don't see them, but they are important to us, they pollinate many plants and they tell us about how the world is changing around us.

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**LUNE VALLEY COMMUNITY BEEKEEPERS**

# **OPEN DAY**

**Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

**11-00am to 4-00pm**



**Honey bees in an observation hive**

**Demonstration long hive**

**Information about honey bees**



**Local honey**



**Beeswax candles and polishes**

**Knitted bees**

**Tea, coffee and home-made cakes**



**Wildflower meadow**



**The Apiary, Nazareth House  
Ashton Road, Lancaster LA1 5AQ**



**[www.lunevalleybeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.lunevalleybeekeepers.co.uk)**

**Charity No: 1167725**

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## An innovative but simple long hive



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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
- External measurements: L 86cm, H 77cm, W 52cm
- Despite its high specification, it is economically priced whilst offering exceptional value for money.