



LUNE VALLEY COMMUNITY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2020



Thought for 2020

70 percent of the world's agriculture depends on bees, yet we have managed to let this insect's population decline so dramatically that bees are now considered an endangered species.

Chairman's message



A happy, prosperous and successful beekeeping year to everyone. I have never been one for making New Year resolutions as such, but I do like to spend some time in the first few days of the New Year making plans for what I would like to achieve during the year. These plans include specific outcomes, methods for achieving them and lists of the resources I am likely to need.

I approach my beekeeping in a similar manner and like to have all the resources I am likely to need firmly in place, or ordered, by no later than the end of March, which is usually still before the bees are out in force in our part of the world. This approach also enables me to identify areas that could cause issues, such as the unavailability of nucs or swarms, a shortage of hives, or a poor mating season, reasonably well in advance, and work out different plans. To those of you planning to take up beekeeping this season, or to keep your bees differently with less interventions, I would strongly recommend that this is the time to start planning.

Newsletter

The Club's newsletter is sent out each month to all members and a small number of other organisations such as Nazareth House and the local press. It is usually structured into two parts, the first being focused on Club activities and the second on issues that might be of interest to holistic beekeepers. But is this what you, the members want? Is there too much? What else would you like to see? Are you bothered whether or not we have a newsletter? Please give this some thought and, as part of your New Year resolutions, give us some feedback?

Out apiary sites

The excellent out apiary site near Tatham in the Lune Valley is still available. If anyone is interested, please give me a call.

December meeting

Unfortunately, our December meeting had to be cancelled due to the venue not being open. However, as the topic was of particular interest to those planning to acquire bees for the first time next Spring, this meeting has been re-scheduled for February 2020.

Changing of meeting venue

For the last few years we have held our indoor meetings at The Scarthwaite Country House Hotel at Crook O'Lune. The Hotel have now informed us that as of December 24th, the hotel will cease to operate as a business. Future meetings will now be held in the Village Hall, Aughton, LA2 8LU, which is almost directly opposite the Church. Give me a call if you need directions.

January meeting **Please note change of venue**



Our January meeting on Wednesday, 8th January 2020 **will take place in Aughton Village Hall**, starting at 7-30pm. The evening will start with wine and cheese followed by another opportunity to see "*More than Honey*", a remarkable documentary film made in 2013 by the Swiss filmmaker Marcus Imhoof, which looks into the fascinating world of bees, and showing small family beekeepers and industrialised honey farms. "*More than*

Honey" is a film on the relationship between mankind and honey bees, about nature and about our future. It is well worth watching again and again. **Please make the effort to come if you can.**

e-bees

Throughout last year we were members of e-bees, an initiative organised by Northern Bee Books which enables Bee Clubs to exchange copies of their newsletters with the understanding that other Clubs might reproduce articles in their own newsletters provided the original source is quoted. It is difficult to assess how many Clubs participate in the scheme as many do not seem to produce monthly newsletters or newsletters at regular intervals, but it is noticeable that almost all the newsletters circulated are from conventional beekeeping groups.

Bees for Development

Those attending the November 2019 meeting heard a fascinating talk by Bob Spencer about the Trust's work, especially in Ethiopia's Lake Tana region. In response to Bob's generosity in speaking to us at no cost, we have sent a donation to the Trust's "Give life this Christmas" appeal. We have just learned that their appeal raised £86,074.

Additional Trustees wanted

As some of you will know, our Club is legally an ICO (incorporated charitable body). It is governed by a written constitution administered by a small team of trustees. Currently there are three trustees, Fred and Glenis Ayres and Chris Carr. We should like to increase the team by appointing two more trustees and invite expressions of interest from existing members. Whilst you would need to be interested in the Club and its activities, you do not have to be experienced in beekeeping. As the Trustees only meet formally once a year, in late March or early April, and informally as and when the need arises, the commitment is not great. If you are interested, for an informal chat, give me a call.

Lancaster Youth Challenge 2020



The first working party of the Woodland Management Challenge takes place on Saturday, 1st February 2020 at the Apiary starting at 12 noon. If you would like to help with this, please give me a call.

Programme

Here is the programme for the rest of the Club year 2019-2020.

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF VENUE

2020

Wed 12th Feb **Speaker Meeting** **Aughton Village Hall, 7-30pm**
Topic: Obtaining bees and splitting colonies **Speaker: Fred Ayres**
Fred will explain the various ways of obtaining bees, together with their advantages and disadvantages, and then explain several techniques for increasing your number of colonies. We shall also discuss the possibility of a Club initiative to breed bees on a collective basis for those who wish to take part.

This meeting should be of particular interest to newer members planning to obtain their first bees or begin expanding their colonies.

Wed 11th Mar **Speaker Meeting** **Aughton Village Hall, 7-30pm**
Topic: Thermoregulation in the hive **Speaker: Keith Bartlem**
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.

Sun 15th Mar **Open Course - An introduction to Alternative Beekeeping – Part 1**
Aughton Village Hall, 9-30am to 4-00pm
If you have ever thought of owning a colony of honey bees but have been deterred by not knowing exactly what is involved, or how much time it might take, then this course is for you! This popular, one day, inter-active workshop, focuses on responsible, low intervention, bee-centric approaches to beekeeping and covers all you need to know and consider before you start keeping bees.

The programme for 2020-2021 is in the process of being planned.

If there is anything you would like including, please let me know and we shall do our best to include it.

Other events of interest



Saturday, 14th March 2020, Beetradex 9-00am to 4-30pm
Hall H3, Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG

This is the largest, independent trade exhibition of beekeeping equipment in the UK and attracts over 2500 beekeepers. A diverse range of free lectures run from 10-00am to 3-00pm.

Admittance is £6 if booked in advance, or £7 on the day.
www.beetradex.co.uk/registration/

I shall be attending, so if there is any equipment you need and would like me to collect it for you, just let me know.



**3rd -5th April 2020,
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. For more details visit [www.bbka.org.uk/news and events/spring_convention.php](http://www.bbka.org.uk/news_and_events/spring_convention.php)



Wednesday, 20th May 2020, World Bee Day

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 is usually held at Houghton Village Hall, Cumbria, CA3 0NW, on a Sunday in May and offers a range of both bees and second-hand equipment. Further information can be obtained from: enquiries@beeauctions.co.uk

The Lune Valley Long Hive

An innovative but simple long hive



Only £325

Only obtainable from Lune Valley Community Beekeepers

Delivery can be arranged.

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.

Medicinal honey

Summary of a talk at the NHS by Shona Blair.

With the over use of antibiotics has come the rise of antibiotic resistant superbugs, for example MRSA. As the use of antibiotics continue, the number of superbug cases is set to rise dramatically. Honey has had known medicinal properties for thousands of years so the effect of honey on MRSA was studied by Shona Blair.

Average honey contains glucose oxidase, which when combined with water produces hydrogen peroxide. Hydrogen peroxide is toxic to microbes in a similar way to bleach, but unlike bleach the hydrogen peroxide is not a high enough concentration to damage tissue, just microbes. This hydrogen peroxide effect can be seen when adding honey to a petri dish with MRSA. The hydrogen peroxide produce inhibits the growth of the MRSA.

However, some honeys have an additional defence, such as Manuka honey. These floral components introduce extra anti-microbial properties to the honey which continue to inhibit the growth of the MRSA even when a catalase is introduced to reverse the hydrogen peroxide effect, showing that they independently impact the growth of the bacteria.

It has been shown that Manuka honey can kill MRSA even when diluted down to 5%. Honey dressings have been shown to have a strongly positive effect on wounds and infections in real life. The moist, mildly acidic environment promotes healthy regrowth of tissue and inhibits infection. It has been shown to reduce healing time and scarring in a large number of injury and infection types. These positive health outcomes could also mean fewer follow up treatments, making it cheaper for health services which would outweigh the higher cost of honey dressings.

Courtesy of Reigate Beekeepers via e-bees

MEPs block move to weaken EU rules on bee-harming



Bee populations have collapsed around the world, with pesticide use said to be the main cause.

The European parliament has vetoed a move by 16 member states and the European commission to weaken EU rules protecting bee colonies from toxic pesticides. MEPs blocked revised legislation that was said to ignore the risk to bee larvae from long-term exposure to chemicals, known as chronic toxicity.

The MEPs instead argued that a guidance document produced by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in 2013 should be fully implemented. The guidance seeks both to protect bees from adverse effects from a single exposure or multiple exposures over a short period of time, known as acute toxicity, and also long-term exposure.

Sixteen member states, which have not been publicly named, lobbied against the full implementation of the guidance before the new rules are brought to a vote in the European parliament.

Berlin's bumbling beekeepers leave swarms without homes

Adapted from an article by Kate Connolly of The Guardian.



Humans are not the only ones in Berlin struggling to find accommodation. A beekeeping boom has led to swarms of bees forming novel new hives using anything from motorbikes to balconies in the German capital. Germany's beekeeping association has been forced to dispatch a growing band of swarm-catchers, or *schwärmfänger* reachable via telephone hotlines, to deal with a deluge of incidents in which thousands of bees cluster round objects while scout bees go in search of suitable homes, such as a tree hollow, more often than not in vain. "Many people are concerned

about climate change and the dying bee populations and want to do something about it, which is great," said Benedikt Polaczek, the chair of the Berlin Beekeepers' Association. But he cautioned that the rise in the city's bee population meant there was now a lack of adequate habitats and food. He said: "We now have around 10,000 bee colonies in Berlin alone."

Nationwide the German Beekeepers' Association has grown by a quarter in the past six years from 92,000 members in 2013 to more than 120,000 today. The number of Berlin beekeeping enthusiasts has increased, while offices and hotels are among those putting beehives on their rooftops, and beekeeper courses are oversubscribed. But the accusation levelled at often inexperienced hobbyists is that they do not always understand how to care for the bees.

The Berlin association now has over 50 *schwärmfänger* volunteers who offer a round-the-clock service to capture the several thousand bees in each swarm that are typically found enveloping everything from car roofs and bicycle frames to traffic lights and balconies.

Artificial Pollination Technology

Edete Precision Technologies for Agriculture, an Israeli agricultural organisation, has successfully completed field trials in almond orchards in Israel using its unique mechanical pollen harvesting and pollination system. The trials resulted in a substantially increased yield in Israel. Additionally, Edete has recently tested its technology in Australia and proved its ability to produce high-quality viable pollen.

Edete's system is based on the mechanical collection of flowers and extracting pure pollen out of them. The company's proprietary method enables the maintaining of good germinability rates of pollen stored for over one year. The pollen is applied on the trees using the company's unique robotic pollination system which utilizes a combination of technologies to disperse an optimal dosage of pollen on the target flowers to achieve effective pollination. The application units can work during day or night and independent of ambient temperature.

The Company plans further field trials this year in the USA, the world's largest producer of almond nuts, and believes its system will work equally well with apples, cherries, pears, blueberries, plums, cotton, rapeseed, and sunflowers.

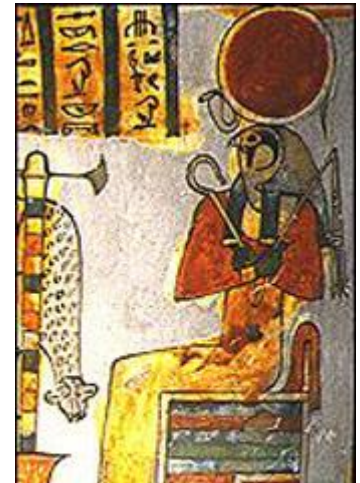
BEE MYTHS AND CUSTOMS



Ancient Egyptians venerated bees and their mythology contains countless references to the Bee, including the belief that bees were formed through the tears of the god Ra. To put this into perspective, we are informed that the most important god in the Egyptian pantheon had bees for tears. The ancient writings of Am-Tuat (the Otherworld) explains: *"This god cries out to their souls after he hath entered the city of the gods who are on their sand, and there are heard the voices of those who are shut in this circle which are like the hum of many bees of honey when their souls cry out to Ra."*

And similarly, the Salt Magical Papyrus states: *"When Ra weeps again the water which flows from his eyes upon the ground turns into working bees. They work in flowers and trees of every kind and wax and honey come into being."*

Sophisticated Apiculture, or the organized craft of beekeeping, was practiced in Egypt for thousands of years. The agricultural, nutritional, medicinal *and ritualistic* value of the bee and its honey was important in Egypt from pre-dynastic times onwards, as demonstrated by the fact that King Menes, founder of the First Egyptian Dynasty, was called "the Beekeeper"; a title ascribed to all subsequent Pharaohs. Additionally, the Kings administration had a special office called the 'Sealer of the Honey', and Kings of Upper and Lower Egypt bore the title "he who belongs to the sedge and the bee". An image of the bee was even positioned next to the King's cartouche.



The Egyptian God RA, who cried Bees for tears



The Bee, next to the signature of Hatshepsut, the 5th Pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty

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**Please copy the following poster and
distribute it as widely as possible.**

Ever thought of keeping bees?



If you have ever thought of owning a colony of honey bees but have been deterred by not knowing exactly what is involved, or how much time it might take, then this course is for you! This popular, one day, inter-active workshop, organised by **Lune Valley Community Beekeepers**, focuses on responsible, low intervention, bee-centric approaches to beekeeping and covers all you need to know and consider before you start keeping bees.

Sunday, 15th March, 2020

9-30am to 4-00pm

The Village Hall, Aughton, Lancaster LA2 8LU



For further details or to book a place visit www.lunevalleybeekeepers.co.uk or telephone **01525 811978**