



LUNE VALLEY COMMUNITY BEEKEEPERS NEWSLETTER MAY 2022



World Bee Day, 20 May 2022, 13:00–14:30 CEST *Bee Engaged* *Celebrating the diversity of bees and beekeeping systems*

Beekeeping is a widespread and global activity, with millions of beekeepers depending on bees for their livelihoods and well-being. Bees provide humans with valuable hive products (such as honey, wax, propolis, pollen and royal jelly) and ecosystem services, including pollination, apitherapy and apitourism. They also can play important economic, cultural and social roles. Together with wild pollinators, bees play a major role in maintaining biodiversity, ensuring the survival and reproduction of many plants, supporting forest regeneration, promoting sustainability and adaptation to climate change, improving the quantity and quality of agricultural productions.

On 20 May 2022, FAO will celebrate World Bee Day through a virtual event, featuring bee and pollinator experts and practitioners from across the world. The event will raise awareness on the importance of the wide variety of bees and sustainable beekeeping systems, the threats and challenges they face and their contribution to livelihoods and food systems. Now is a time to re-think how we can support bees and the livelihoods and systems they, in turn, support.

Register [here](#) for this virtual event



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New Members

Welcome to new members Annette Hutchinson and Ruth Langley.

Chairman's message

I carried out my Spring inspections last month, with some trepidations. The weather so far this year has been greatly variable and I had rarely seen large numbers of bees flying out. Fortunately, all turned out to be well. The swarms that I collected last year and over-wintered in poly nucs, had developed exceptionally well and were almost too heavy to lift, being filled with eggs, sealed brood and honey. Interestingly there were no drones or drone brood to be seen. These swarms are now safely re-housed in LVLHs where they have plenty of space to expand.



OBITUARY



It is with great sadness that we report on the passing of member Dennis Atkinson, at the age of 93. Dennis was a beekeeper with many decades of experience. He was passionate about showing his honey and won many awards at national and local shows. Dennis went on to become well known throughout the UK beekeeping world as a National Honey Show Judge and over the years judged at most of the major UK honey shows.

He also served for a number of years as a member of the Committee of the Lancashire and North West Beekeepers' Association and was one of the first members of our Club. Our sincere condolences go to Hazel, his wife, and the other members of his family.

Dennis's funeral service will take place at Garstang United Reform Church on Wednesday 4 May at 10:30am and all members who knew him are more than welcome to attend.

Club video

Earlier this year I was asked by BIBBA to give a talk to their members introducing our club, its history and what we hope to achieve. The talk was recorded and put on YouTube and has since been watched over 3000 times.

The recording is now on our web site. To watch it, go the web site, click on the "About us" tab, scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the start arrow.



Spring inspection

The Spring inspection was planned for Sunday, 10th April, but with the weather forecast predicting a breezy day with temperatures not exceeding 8 degrees C, it was decided to postpone the inspection to a later, and hopefully warmer, day. However, Glenis, Jane and myself did turn out to complete the work on the breeding apiary, and also to welcome Owen Pengelly, an experienced beekeeper from Sutton and North Birmingham BKA, who was in the area and had asked if he could visit our apiary.

The Spring Inspection was re-scheduled for Sunday, 24th April, which after a sunny but rather chilly start, turned out to be quite warm! Nineteen members turned out to help. In the morning we split into two groups, one led by Sam Walton and the other by myself, to inspect the bees in the Breeding Apiary. All the nucs were introduced in mid-July last year and all had established well with plenty of mainly sealed brood. All were of good temperament. Interestingly, all the hives in the Breeding Apiary are aligned north-south. When the nucs were introduced, their frames were placed in the centre of the hive. Whilst all had drawn out new comb, it was all on the southern side of the hive.

In the afternoon we inspected the colonies in the Training Apiary. Those in the Lune Valley Long Hives had all wintered well and were expanding nicely. However, the two colonies in the Zest Hive had not survived and the hives were devoid of bees and stores.

Feedback from those attending was that the day had been both instructive and enjoyable.



Unexplained behaviour

In summer of 2020 one of our members purchased a nuc through the Club and installed it into a Lune Valley Long Hive. It over-wintered well. One morning in Spring 2021 she visited the hive and found 200-300 dead and dying bees on the ground outside the hive, under the entrance. The Bee Inspector visited the hive the same day to try to establish what might have happened. An inspection of the colony found eggs, sealed and un-sealed brood and plenty of house bees. There were no signs of varroa or other parasites or diseases. A sample of bees sent off for testing showed that the bees were older bees but revealed no traces of poisoning or anything else amiss. The colony continued to develop in a normal manner.

Recently another member has had a virtually identical experience!

Having now spoken to a number of experienced beekeepers in various parts of the country, it appears that this situation has happened to other beekeepers, mainly in the more northern counties, but not, so far as I can yet trace, in the warmer, southern, counties. The speculation, and I stress that this is only speculation, is that when the temperature warms up quickly as we transit from winter to spring, the colony ejects most of the over-wintered bees in one mass. In warmer conditions, this process happens gradually and therefore is less noticeable.



Caton Gala 2022



We have been invited to take a stand at this year's Caton Gala which is to be held on Saturday, 21st May, the day after World Bee Day. This is a good opportunity to promote what we do to the wider public. If you have any free time available on that day and would like to help with setting up the stand (0830 to 1100), manning the stand for a hour or two during the gala (1100 to 1700) or dismantling everything afterwards (1700 onwards), we would be delighted to hear from you.

Volunteers for Open Day



We are seeking two or more volunteers who would be prepared to run our fund-raising barbecue at Open Day. Please give me a call if you could help out.



Food Safety for Beekeepers

Beekeeping is unusual in that what is seen by most as just a hobby, is also the production of food that may be sold to the public! This is an aspect of the hobby which is rarely covered in any depth by either conventional or alternative approaches. Yet the moment you start to sell food, honey in this case, you become an FBO (Food Business Operator) and subject to a complex raft of legislation. Whilst much of this law is still based on European Law, since Brexit there have been some changes and separate but similar laws now operate in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Andy Pedley, a retired Environmental Health Officer and a beekeeper of 30 years, has produced this book which provides excellent but easily readable guidance through the complexity of a myriad of legislation. If you sell any honey, this book is a must-read book. It is available from Northern Bee Books.



Breeding apiary update

Our breeding apiary is now complete apart from the introduction of bees to one hive. These are expected to be introduced in early June. The plan for this year is to grow the colonies on as quickly as circumstances permit and then make some splits. If anyone wishes to have a go at using populated but unwanted queen cells to create mini-colonies, please get in touch.



Collecting swarms

In our part of the country, May is often the busiest time of year for collecting swarms. However, swarm collection is not without its risks. These notes are intended to guide your attention to things you should consider before attempting to collect a swarm and, perhaps, curb your enthusiasm!

- **Access to property**

You have no legal right to enter someone else's property to remove a swarm. The swarm actually belongs to the land owner so you could be committing theft as well as trespass! Obtain the land owner's permission beforehand, if possible, although sometimes this is not readily possible, such as in public parks. However, entering someone's garden to remove a swarm that is not causing any harm to anyone, carries a risk!

- **Difficulty in accessing a swarm due to obstacles or vegetation**

Whilst some swarms are very considerate in choosing where to settle, many do not think about the difficulties the swarm catcher will have in collecting them and settle in some pretty challenging places! It is, therefore, important to assess the risks involved in gaining sufficient access to the swarm to collect it. Often this will involve pruning vegetation and branches or removing equipment or furniture. Thought should be given as to how this might be done safely and with minimum damage. Again, seek the owner's permission first. They might prefer to keep their prize shrub unpruned rather than see you collect a swarm!

- **Difficulty in accessing swarm due to height**

Sometimes swarming bees settle quite high up in trees and the temptation to shin up the tree after them or find a long ladder to help you get to them can be difficult to resist. However, as I know from personal experience, balancing on a high ladder with a swarm box in one hand and brush or secateurs in the other, is not the safest of situations. Remember that your beekeeping insurance only covers public liability for your beekeeping activities below 3 metres and there is no personal accident cover. The safest strategy is often to simply leave the swarm to its own devices.



Not recommended!

- **Safe working areas**

Whilst many swarm collectors will be working alone or with a partner, it is important to establish a safe working area and ensure that it is clear of hazards and people. Remember the unfortunate beekeeper who fell off a ladder whilst attempting to collect a swarm near the apex of a garage roof. Not only did he break his leg, he also dropped the swarm resulting in a number of bystanders being severely stung. The ladder, which was not being steadied by a colleague, fell onto an expensive car parked in the drive causing extensive damage. No, it was not me!

- **Harm to bystanders**

The sight of a figure dressed up a strange looking suit and poking around in the bushes with a large box, arouses the curiosity of many passers-by who, totally unaware of any potential danger, will gather closely around to see what is going on. Although this rarely results in any harm to anyone, on occasions things go wrong. Before collecting a swarm in a public place you should ensure that you either have a colleague to warn bystanders or erect some notices to warn them of the possible risks.

These notes are not a comprehensive risk assessment but are intended to draw your attention to some of the challenges of swarm collection.

Club diary for 2022

Saturday, 21st May 2022

Exhibition stand at Caton Gala, Caton, 11-00 am to 5-00pm

Volunteers required for setting up, manning and dismantling our stand.

Sunday, 12th June 2022

Bee Club Open Day–The Apiary, 10-00am to 4-00pm

Over the winter I have given talks to a number of beekeeping clubs and some have expressed an interest in seeing our approach to beekeeping in practice. This will be an opportunity to meet and talk to other beekeepers and show them around our apiary.

Friday, 17th June 2022, 8th RotaKids Conference 2022, University of Cumbria, Lancaster

Sunday, 19th June 2022,

Summer Apiary Inspection, The Apiary, 11-00am to 3-00pm

This will be the summer inspection of both the Training and Breeding apiaries this year and will provide new beekeepers with an insight into how the colonies develop.

Friday, 8th July, 2022

Working Party to prepare for Open Day, The Apiary, 10-00am to 4-00pm

Saturday, 9th July, 2022

OPEN DAY, The Apiary, 10-00am to 4-00pm

Sunday, 10th July, 2022

Working Party to clear up after Open Day, The Apiary, 09-30am to 1-00pm

Sunday, 21st August, 2022

Club BBQ, The Apiary, 2-00pm to 5-00pm

Come along, relax and reflect with other members about your beekeeping season and anything else that you want to chat about.

Sunday, 4th September, 2022

Autumn Meadow Mowing, The Apiary, 10-00am to 4-00pm

With a dry day and sufficient helpers, we should be able to mow and rake off the meadow, get the strimmings into the compost bays and then mow the meadow in preparation for winter.

Sunday, 18th September, 2022

Autumn Apiary Inspection, The Apiary, 11-00am to 2-00pm

This will be the last planned inspection of both the Training and Breeding apiaries this year and will provide new beekeepers with an insight into the hive before winter.

Wednesday, 12th October, 2022, Speaker Meeting @ 7-30pm

Speaker, topic and venue to be confirmed.

Wednesday, 9th November, 2022, Speaker Meeting @ 7-30pm

Speaker, topic and venue to be confirmed.

Wednesday, 14th December, 2022, Speaker Meeting @ 7-30pm

Speaker, topic and venue to be confirmed.

LUNE VALLEY COMMUNITY BEEKEEPERS

OPEN DAY

Saturday, 9th July

11-00am to 4-00pm



See honey bees in an observation hive

Walk through our wildflower meadow

See inside a Lune Valley Long Hive

Observe our training and breeding apiaries

Information about honey bees and pollination

Local honey

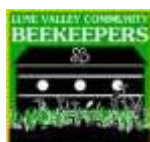
Craft stalls, Beeswax candles and polishes

Tea, coffee and cakes, Barbecue

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

www.lunevalleybeekeepers.co.uk

Charity No: 1167725



Bee Trade War?

At the beginning of April 2022, the BeeTradex 2023 web site displayed the following notice:



Introducing the British Beekeeping Show

Following the success of BeeTradex, we have made the decision to re-brand our established annual show. The British Beekeeping Show will be a step forward for BeeTradex, keeping the trade show feel with strong supplier backing and expanding into new pollination and beekeeping areas.

Over 2000 of you attended BeeTradex this year to browse new suppliers which is the biggest turn out we have ever had firmly establishing our show as the biggest national beekeeping show. Thank you for attending free talks and lectures, meeting fellow beekeepers and making the first physical show since 2020 even

better than we could have imagined!

The event is planned to take place of Saturday, 4th February 2023, at the National Agricultural Education Centre at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire.

A BIBBA newsletter issued in early April directs readers to the following web site:



New National Event on the UK Beekeeping Calendar.

The Beekeeping Show is a brand-new, independent one-day trade show on the UK beekeeping calendar, established and organised by a team drawn from across the industry.

Our aim is to stage a first-class not-to-be-missed annual event for visitors and exhibitors alike, specifically to:

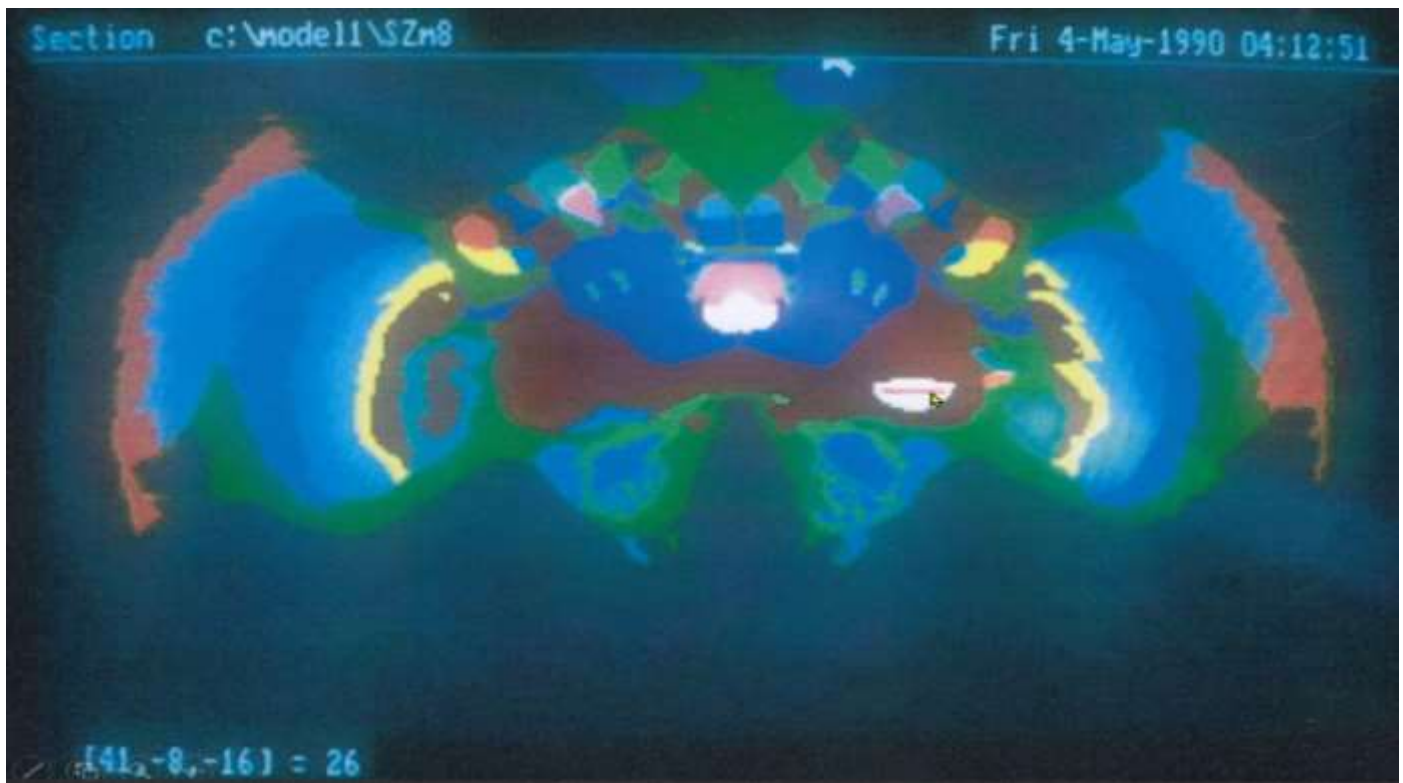
- interest beekeepers of all types, scales and experience
- attract comprehensive representation of the UK manufacturers and suppliers
- welcome the return of European suppliers to events here in the UK
- develop the show into an internationally recognised trade event with exhibitors drawn from around the globe.

The inaugural show will take place on Saturday 25 February 2023 at the Telford International Centre, Shropshire.

This purpose-constructed exhibition centre provides high-standard space and facilities, quality catering, plentiful on-site parking (free to show visitors) and several hotels providing accommodation for all budgets.

The venue's central location is easily accessible from all parts of the UK. By vehicle, it is just a couple of minutes off the national motorway network. A nearby rail link offers a sustainable public transport option. For those travelling by air from further afield, the venue is in easy reach of Birmingham International Airport.

The Bee Brain Atlas



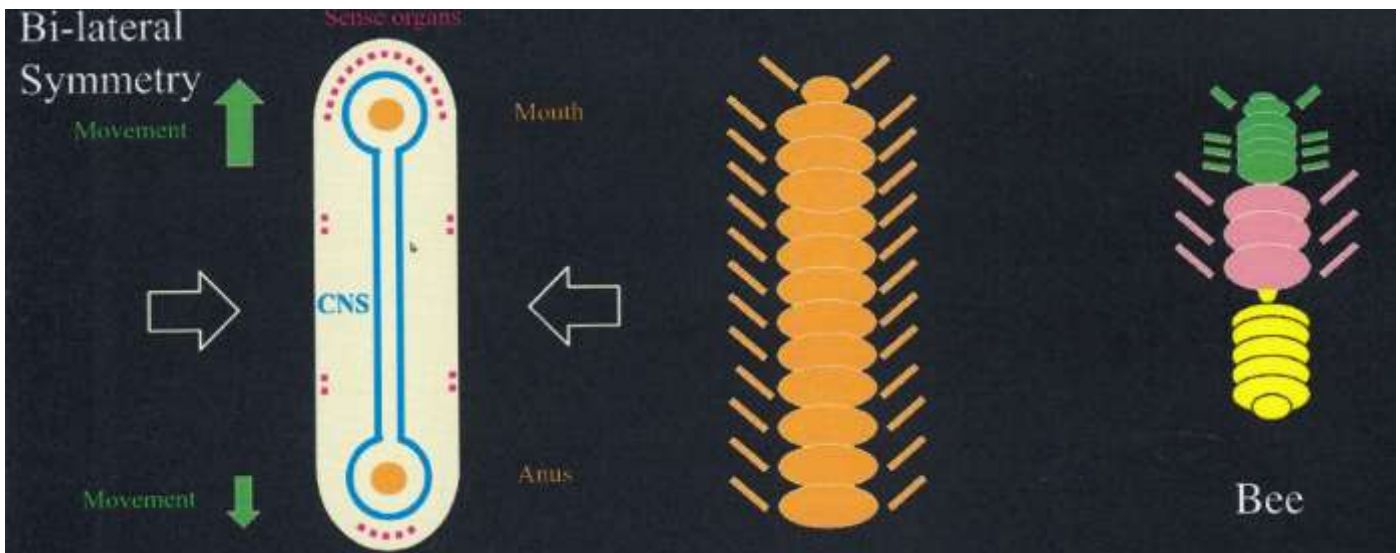
In March 2022 Professor Robert Pickard gave an open talk to Cambridgeshire Beekeepers Association entitled "Brains in Honey Bees and Humans". Katerina Prokopiou, Editor of the Warwickshire Beekeeper, attended the talk and summarised it in the following article which is reproduced from the Warwickshire Beekeeper via ebees.



"This was an open talk, kindly organised by the Cambridgeshire Beekeepers Association, in which Professor Robert Pickard was invited to share his knowledge on how the brain of the honey bee works, and to explore any similarities and differences between theirs and that of humans. Here, I will attempt to share with you all the fascinating details he had shared with us, but please bear with me as I am not an expert.

For those not already familiar with neuroscience and the evolution of the brain, he gave a very simple overview on how brains have evolved in all creatures in relation to the evolution of their bodies. Original forms, such as that of the jellyfish, have all key functions (ingesting and expelling) concentrated in a radial centre and so all control is also localised in the centre. With evolution, lateral growth emerges, and organisms such as worms start to appear. This means that the mouth (entry) and anus (exit) of the animal require control to be split between these ends.

In modular organisms, where bees and humans happen to belong, we observe metamerism, meaning the somatites (sense organs and their localised "brains") are concentrated in various sections, each specialised in different functions. For example, in the diagram on the next page, you can see the three sections of the bee: (a) 1st segment specialised on ingestion (mouth and antennae) (b) 2nd segment specialised in movement (legs) and (c) 3rd segment, specialised in excretion (abdomen, anus). In spite of the similarities in our modular construction, it is worth noting that the earliest specimen of a developed bee was dated at 26 million years ago, while the earliest specimen of a still developing human was dated at only 7 million years ago. We have several more years before we can understand or even remotely exhibit the characteristics of these superorganisms!



Organisms with bi-lateral symmetry have most sense organs concentrated at the two ends. The two diagrams on the right indicate the differences between bi-lateral and modular organisms. Note in the bee, the antennae are modified legs.

A very interesting example of a sensory organ that bees have are their gravity hair. These hairs are free to move with the pull of gravity and so, depending on their orientation relative to the bee's body, a honey bee is able to know if it is descending (or falling) or ascending while flying. These sensors are essential for bees to "activate" and actually use their wings. Professor Pickard was once asked by NASA what he thought would happen if they sent bees into space, to which he replied "They will not move a (wing) muscle". Lo and behold, when bees were taken to zero gravity, even when tossed in space, their wings were firmly stuck to their sides.



Detecting the orientation of the gravity hairs can tell a bee if it is falling.

A major difference between bees and humans is their altruistic behaviour that is engrained in their brains in a way we humans do not yet possess. Take for example, the bees fanning at the entrance of the hive. These bees are returning foragers that had been frustrated trying to get back and so will spread the Nasonov pheromone by fanning, to alleviate other bees from the same frustration. Even more fascinating is that the strength of the pheromone is proportional to the level of frustration these bees experienced when they were returning.

Professor Pickard also touched upon the very entertaining waggle dance. Apart from humans, bees are the only other creatures with the ability to offer directions symbolically. However, they have the incredible ability of being aware of true bearings. What does this mean? When a bee finds a rich source of nectar and shares its location with the others, it does not share direction, but a geographical point.

And so, it does not matter what route she has taken, or what route the other bees will take, they will still be able to reach the exact same location. In a light-hearted joke, he also emphasised how important the control of language is in such a developed society. In humans, females may not be able to read a map as well as males, but they have certainly shown greater mastery in controlling and using language. Could this be a sign for the future?

What makes honey bees so extraordinarily advanced, compared to other organisms and especially humans, is their ability to manipulate their genes, simply through food. A perfect example of this is their ability to extend the life span of a worker bee from 7 weeks to several months for winter. Similarly, a female selected to become a Queen will have a life span of even longer, in the order of several years, simply by having a different diet during her larval phase. Imagine what humans could do if to extend life by double or more, was simply a matter of what foods we ate!

In conclusion, through Professor Pickard's scientific career, he has found an incredible level of similarity between bees and humans, with only one noticeable difference: bees do not change their behaviour with knowledge of their future mortality, while humans do."



A bee before and after its head is shaved, in preparation for drilling and adding micro-electrodes that will monitor brain activity.

Beekeepers arrested in protest as Chile megadrought hits honey production

Beekeepers have been detained in Chile after protesting for more government support as a megadrought continues to damage honey production. Demonstrators took beehives to the presidential palace as they called for more help, saying the current climate was killing the bees on which they rely. Four were detained after staging a protest in Santiago on Monday, which saw 60 beehives containing an estimated 100,000 bees, placed in front of the Chile's presidential palace. Seven police officers were stung.



Chile has been hit by prolonged drought conditions over the past decade, which has hurt honey production in Chile, and has led to beekeepers calls for subsidies for honey producers or reforms to improve prices to help them through the dry climate.

The megadrought which has plagued Chile for a decade has been linked to a warm ocean "blob" in the Pacific Ocean, believed to have grown in size at least partly due to rising temperatures. The "blob" radiates hot air which gets transported by wind currents to Chile. This impacts pressure trends, which affects rainfall.

Wanted: Wax Moths



Do you have a good infestation of wax moths in your kit when you come to look at it to use? Before you burn the lot, there is a fellow looking for wax moths to try and get them "Reprocessing" plastic bags, which apparently, they have been discovered to do. Contact Nathaniel Byrne, via: nat1.618@gmx.co.uk



The Scottish Government recently published the results of its 2022 Honey Bee Health Strategy survey.

660 responses were received with 84% describing themselves as “hobbyists”. Other descriptors such as “craft”, “natural”, “commercial” and “don’t have bees but just interested” each received 4% of the responses.

54% of respondents were aged between 41 and 64 and 38% were 65 and over.

77% said that they kept bees because they found it to be an enjoyable hobby with 18% saying it was to help the environment.

Only 21% of respondents had had contact with the Scottish Government’s Bee Health Team in the last 24 months, mainly through visits by their local Bee Inspector and of these 65% were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience.

87% of respondents confirmed that they were registered on BeeBase.

When asked what improvements they would like to see included in the new strategy to help improve the health of Scotland’s honey bees, the following, in order of those in favour, were mentioned:

- improved education through local associations, on-line courses and Bee Health Training Days
- more education for the public especially at schools about bees
- a complete ban on imports
- more focus on encouraging beekeepers to breed and keep native bees.
- a ban or restrictions placed on the use of pesticides/ insecticides in agriculture and in local communities which are harmful to honey bees and other pollinators
- government funding to cover areas such as financial support for new beekeepers for equipment/bees and training, courses for starting up, funded mentorship schemes for new beekeepers and funding for the repopulating of lost colonies at a subsidised rate
- financial support for local associations to help new beekeepers
- the funding of more research into areas such as treatment free beekeeping and natural beekeeping.

72% of respondents thought that registration on BeeBase should be mandatory and that a mandatory system for tracing the movement of bees by beekeepers should be introduced.

Finally, when asked what level of training support they would like, 16% said beginner level, 60% said intermediate level and 24% said advanced level.

This information will now be used by the Scottish Government Bee Health Team along with the Bee Health Improvement Partnership, to develop a new 10-year Honey Bee Health Strategy for Scotland.

Asian Hornet

On 29th April the National Bee Unit issued the following bulletin confirmed finding of a single Asian hornet in Felixstowe, Suffolk:

*“The National Bee Unit is carrying out enhanced monitoring and awareness raising together with local beekeepers after a single insect, confirmed to be *Vespa velutina* was killed at a sentinel apiary, reported by a beekeeper.”*

An Introduction to Beekeeping

This on-line course

will introduce you to the craft of beekeeping and raise your awareness of all the matters you should consider *before* acquiring any bees!

The course comprises of a brief introduction and the following 16 sections, which can be viewed separately and in any order. Total running time 135 minutes.



- 1) Why keep bees?
- 2) Brief history of beekeeping
- 3) Types of beekeepers
- 4) The beekeeping year
- 5) Life history of the honey bee
- 6) Hive inspections
- 7) Collecting swarms
- 8) Hive products
- 9) Bees, wasps and hornets
- 10) Hives and equipment
- 11) Creating an apiary
- 12) Acquiring bees
- 13) Bee stings
- 14) Bees, the Law & Insurance
- 15) Bureaucracy
- 16) The next step



To book this course, please visit
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and complete the booking form.

60% of all the food crops we grow are dependent on bees for pollination



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- Designed by a bee-centric beekeeper 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
- Comes with 14 x 12 frames (flat), but can be used with top bars
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- Comes with a jumbo feeder
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- External measurements: L 86cm, H 77cm, W 52cm
- Despite its high specification, it is economically priced whilst offering exceptional value for money.

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