



A Summer Update

A very brief newsletter this month. With so little going on at County Association level there is very little to share.

However, inside you will find the latest *'Positive Thinking'* Newsletter from the BBKA president, Margaret Wilson; the offer of a des res for honey bees in the South Downs National Park and, of course, an update from our chairman. Melvyn writes of his own beekeeping experiences during lock-down and provides an update on the not so active Asian Hornet Action Team!

The weather remains perfect for our beekeeping activities. Although the flow has significantly slowed in the last few days the bees continue to forage on what is available and the queen is continuing to expand her colony.

Enjoy and Stay Safe



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WSBKA Asian Hornet (Action) Team Update

Fortunately, there have been no positive sightings of the Asian hornet so far — famous last words! There have been plenty of sightings of the European hornet on Facebook.

Please use monitoring bait stations rather than traps, I dread to think how many insects were killed in traps last year alone.

The BBKA AHAT or AHT (they have taken out the 'Action' apparently) map has been updated now and individual divisions' membership secretaries can add and remove team members.

If anyone would like to help with any sightings etc. please contact your division's AHAT coordinator to go on the WhatsApp AHAT group.



Melvyn

West Sussex BKA AHAT Coordinator

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BBKA 'Positive Thinking' Newsletter



We are still all in the grip of this dreadful disease but hopefully on the way out of the worst of it, God willing.

Our next committee meetings will be held using IT technology. I have already been involved in such meetings within branches and businesses, it is an option, but not as good as sitting face-to-face with discussions flowing freely, however, it keeps the wheels turning.

One item I have been asked to highlight is about swarming. A member wrote to the office asking for us to make people aware that in the current situation, it is very important that we keep swarming under control. Weekly inspections must be maintained and we must all keep our eyes open for the early signs that the bees are getting ready; this means more drones in the hive and perhaps more than a couple of play cups, over-crowding, where the pheromones are not getting into all corners and where there is no room for the queen to lay her eggs. Even a failing queen, where there are not as many eggs being laid as you would expect at this time of year. As a beekeeper we should all be able to identify these signs and then act upon them by any of the methods available for swarm control, (we have a special issue on this subject if needed, orders are still being dispatched from the office staff).

It means taking that extra time during your inspection, making sure that the bees are not hiding a queen cell in a corner, or on the edge of the frame.

The lock-down came at a really bad time as far as we beekeepers are concerned. My own branch had

quite a few people signed up for its Beginners' Course which should have been held in April. We did not want to let them down, as I am sure no other branch does, so I thought I would share our solution with you.

Thankfully, we have a member on our committee who is well versed in anything which involves computers. He organised a 'Hang Out meeting' for our beginners and we provided a full day's learning for those able to take it. We had 18 new beekeepers and 5 committee members on the session, so we were able to answer questions in the breaks from any of the new beekeepers. Our education manager had provided a fully comprehensive PowerPoint presentation, offered in four units with breaks in between and it worked very well. The questionnaire at the end of the session was very complimentary.

We cannot of course, currently offer practical sessions but will do so as soon as possible and each new beekeeper is provided with a mentor so they always have someone to contact and to help setting up their hives when they do get bees.

It was very successful, and the system used was free, so no reason for others not to take advantage. We are also using a similar system to have the BBKA meetings. We have successfully managed the Standing Orders and Governance, Communication, Education and Husbandry committees, before the EC next week, with of course, others to follow. I will give you an update on anything new in the next letter.

I have been asked to remind everyone about the BBKA Forum as a useful place for discussing beekeeping <https://bbkaforum.co.uk/> the popularity of this medium for information is very popular among beekeepers.

Meanwhile, the sun is shining, my own bees are loving it and it is a pleasure to see them so active. Hopefully, they have done a good job on my orchard and I will have a bumper harvest, yet again.

Please take care of yourselves, I know that quite a large proportion of 'us beekeepers' are in the vulnerable bracket, so stay safe and look after yourself, as well as your bees of course.

Margaret Wilson

BBKA President

Des Res for Honey Bees

A landowner in the South Downs National Park at Woodmancote is offering space for a number of honey bee colonies. The site comprises an 8 acre field with forage including wild flora, vegetables and fruit trees.

Access is via a farm gate or through the owner's garden.

If you are interested in the site please contact me in the first instance.



Graham

secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Melvyn's Missive



Chairman, Melvyn Essen continues to write for the County News.

The way of life may have changed at the moment but our own personal beekeeping carries on the same. As for our own divisions, well that's very different. Regarding Central Sussex, three members are caring for the bees, including myself, it's very strange to be at the apiary on my own as we try to run meetings as friendly and social gatherings.

Early on in the 'Lock-down' I decided to host a 'Zoom' meeting to see if other members wanted to join in. It has been very successful and is a weekly feature, also I advertised a new WhatsApp group and now have 40 members—something we should have done before. It's good to share advice and it makes communication easier regarding swarms, equipment loan and available queens.

As for my own beekeeping, I feel I have been lucky. I like to put it down to experience really but I have offered virgin queens on our WhatsApp group. On two occasions, when calculating when queens will hatch I have almost been caught out with them hatching when reducing queen cells to one. I think the worst scenario is to find a queen cell with a flap open, and others still sealed. I do now have some cages ready, just in case! I have had feedback on a batch of three virgin queens, all successfully accepted in made-up nucs.

I now have one colony that hasn't prepared to swarm, so when/if they make preparations the rest of the season will be a walk in the park, socially distanced of course!

Melvyn

chairman@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

Around the Divisions

Divisions are continuing to support members during these difficult times. Please speak to your Division if you need help.

Central Sussex Division

Details from: Debbie Rowland, chairman@centralsussexbka.org.uk or the Division's website: www.centralsussexbka.org.uk

Chichester Division

Details from: Ray Green, secretary@chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk or the Division's website: www.chichesterbeekeepers.co.uk

Wisborough Green Division

Details from : Martina Hendry, secretary@wgbka.org.uk or website: www.wgbka.org.uk.
The Division's Newsletter may be viewed or downloaded here: www.wgbka.org.uk/Newsletters.html

Worthing Division

Details from: Debra Edwards, dmcd.edwards@gmail.com or website: www.worthingbeekeepers.org.uk

We're on the web:
www.westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk

MEMBERS' COUNTY NEWSLETTER

Thanks to all this month's contributors. If you don't have access to the internet and want further details of anything in this newsletter, please contact the Editor & County Secretary. Likewise, if you would like to contribute to future newsletters please send articles and photographs to:

Graham Elliott, Editor & County Secretary, no later than the 20th of the preceding month.
secretary@westsussexbeekeepers.org.uk



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Previous newsletters from the last 12 months are available
on the website.

