



BUZZWORD

First prize, National Honey Show

The Newsletter of the
Norfolk Beekeepers' Association

February 2021

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Next issue in April

All articles, events and things of interest to the beekeeping world should be sent to the Editor by **15th March 2021** at:

buzzwordnbka@gmail.com

Chairman's Buzzwords

Trevor Nash



As we enter this New Year, I hope that it will eventually bring us all a better one than we had in 2020. Unfortunately, I think we will still have a few challenges ahead for the foreseeable few months.

The events advertised in the 2021 Year Book will be subject to change and we will inform you of the events as soon as they are confirmed. We will be putting on some more talks via Zoom and I hope you will be able to join us. We are not expecting that the AGM in March will be arranged in the usual way. This will also be presented by Zoom along with the Padmore lecture. Details of this will be sent out in due course.

Some of you may be aware that the Royal Norfolk Show has been cancelled again this year. It is understandable but very disappointing that it will be another year before we can take part in this event.

There is, however, light at the end of the tunnel. As we move towards the better weather and the progress of the vaccinations, hopefully we will begin to see some sort of normality.

We have made some progress with our new apiary. We have sourced a Portakabin and a container. These should be delivered to the site this month. Hopefully, we will be setting the apiary up with some colonies in the spring. We will give more updates on this as the work progresses. After my previous request for offers of help with the new apiary, I was pleased to have had some response from members but it would be good to have a few more. We will need help to run the apiary so, if you feel you could offer some of your time for this, I would be pleased to hear from you.

You should have all now received your annual renewal forms. I would encourage as many of you as possible to help with the swarm collection again this year. Even if you can only collect one swarm, it is a great help and is much appreciated. Please tick the box on your renewal form if you are able to help. This includes those who regularly collect swarms as we have to do this each year to conform with the data protection regulations.

I would be pleased to hear from anyone who has any ideas we could consider introducing this year while keeping to the current Covid guidelines. Also, if anyone has a particular skill they feel might be helpful for the association please let me know.

I wish you all the best for the coming year and hope that we will be able to meet up at some time as the year progresses. Trevor (chairnbka@gmail.com)

Colours: a reminder

Most members will know that the colour used to mark the queen changes from year to year. As a helpful reminder, this year is white and that's the colour that we have used on the mast-head this year (the top, as in the previous 2 years). It should save some ink too, if you're printing!

Padmore Lecture 2020: The Honey Bee and Man

Peter Beckley, MBE, FRES

Peter Beckley gave the 2020 Padmore Lecture just before the first lockdown. In this look back on that talk, I can't possibly do justice to Peter's inimitable style but I hope that you will get a small flavour of the wide-ranging depth of his knowledge, which gave us a history starting from Neolithic times.

Fellow criminals! So began Peter Beckley's discursive and entertaining talk on the relationship between the honey bee and man, by way of Shaw, Plath, Virgil, Aristotle, Shakespeare, Kipling, Brook and Sackville-West, to mention a few. Most of them not known for their beekeeping skills but all had something to say on the subject, nevertheless.

Beekeepers are a funny lot and have to be certifiable to take up beekeeping in the first place, he suggested. Since we murder, kidnap and forcibly take large sections of a community and imprison them, then we go on to rapaciously plunder the savings of that community and generally behave in a Machiavellian way. We bend the will of nature for our own pecuniary advantage. Things don't look too good for the lowly beekeeper from the bees' perspective.

Thrift and savings

But how has mankind looked at the bees over a period of time. *Go to the bee then poet, consider her ways and be wise* (George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*). During the development of the relationship between man and the honey bee, the honey bee and its lifestyle have been held up as an example, sometimes holding god-like status; the example of thrift and providing for the future has been evident throughout this relationship. A feature often seen over the main entrance to a building is a skep, almost certainly a bank or a building society demonstrating their allegiance to saving for a rainy day.

The honey bee reached its state of development long before man appeared on the planet and it's worth mentioning that man had a more intimate relationship with the flea and the bed bug until the invention of the vacuum cleaner, which got rid of the eggs.

Man's first association with bees was as a plunderer, evidenced by cave paintings of Palaeolithic and Neolithic man stealing the honey comb. Ancient Egyptians were some of the first people to keep bees in clay pipes and probably the first people

to practice migratory beekeeping, following the seasons of the Nile.

Ancient Greeks were prolific beekeepers, and our knowledge of their relationship with bees is found in Aristotle's natural history written between 344 and 342 BCE. Often he relates to their own style of governance in city states, such as Athens and Sparta, to that of the honey bee, even taking it as far as swarming. When the city state became too large, "colonists" taken from the whole spectrum of society would leave the city and set up a new city elsewhere, mainly along the north coast of Africa where they would not be a rival for resources or trade. The word propolis comes from the Greek and means "before the city"; they thought that the colony was headed by a king.



"Nothing the beekeeper does is for the benefit of the bee",
Peter Beckley

Virgil in his *Aeneid*, writing in c19 BCE made very accurate observations:

Such is their toil, and such their busy pains,

As exercise the bees in flow'ry plains,

*When winter past, and summer scarce begun,
Invites them forth to labour in the sun;*

*Some lead their youth abroad, while some condense
Their liquid store, and some in cells dispense;
Some at the gate stand ready to receive
The golden burthen, and their friends relieve.*

In the symbiotic relationship between bees and flowers, flowers made themselves attractive. Vita Sackville-West in her book-length poem, *The Land*, describes:

*And then pell-mell his harvest follows swift,
Blossom and borage, lime and balm and clover,
On Downs the thyme, on cliffs the scantling thrift,
Everywhere bees go racing with the hours,
For every bee becomes a drunken lover,
Standing upon his head to sup the flowers.*

Skep to Langstroth

Throughout the centuries, not much has changed in the method of keeping bees. Skeps remained the basic home for bees and could be made from any malleable material. The Scots used heather and the English made them from wattle and daub until long-stemmed straw became available.

In Elizabethan times Shakespeare, who had clearly listened to the bees making wax trying to build the comb, wrote in *Henry V* of "singing masons":

*...for so work the honeybees,
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.*

*They have a king and officers of sorts,
Where some like magistrates correct at home,
Others like merchants venture trade abroad,
Others like soldiers armèd in their stings
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,
Which pillage they with merry march bring home
To the tent royal of their emperor
Who, busied in his majesty, surveys
The singing masons building roofs of gold ...*

In 1609, the Rev. Charles Butler produced *The Feminine Monarchie*. Although he was not the first to put forward the idea that the king was actually a queen, he was probably the most respected. From then the observation, research and beekeeping practice accelerated.

In 1851 a revolution followed the development of the moveable frame hive (Rev. Langstroth); the ancient Greeks did it before him and we can reasonably say that whenever we come up with a new idea, the Greeks did it first. The Langstroth hive became the international standard and opened up beekeeping to a wide range of people through the late 19th and into the early 20th century.

Winds of change

Then we come to a great period of change, particularly in Europe, with the advent of two world wars and the sentiment of "never again" and the whole population seeking a simpler way of life. Homes fit for heroes. Returning soldiers were able to take up small holdings/farms made possible by the Land Settlements Act (1919) and beekeeping, along with pig-keeping and chicken farming, took its place in this small economy.

Two writers influenced this movement and feeling that was around: Maurice Maeterlinck was a Belgian writer who wrote *The Life of the Bee* in 1901, and Georg Rendl, an Austrian, who wrote *The Way of the Bee* in 1933. Both presented a romantic view of the natural history and both eulogised the mating of the queen, which was to stand for a long time, and despite all that is known still persists in the minds of some non-beekeepers

So we have this creature, standing for peace, order and stability, that has influenced so many people. So many examples of how the bees speak to man as the relationship between mankind and the bee has developed, through Brooke, Yeats and Kipling, who took up beekeeping fairly late and was president of the Kent Beekeepers association. He wrote:

*There's a whisper down the field where the year
has shot her yield,
And the ricks stand grey to the sun,
Singing: 'Over then, come over, for the bee has quit
the clover,
And your English summer's done.*

And yet, through all this the bee remains as she was before man inhabited the earth.

Beekeeping in ancient Egypt as depicted on the tomb of Pabasa, the chief steward of the God's Wife of Amun Nitocris I (655 BCE to 585 BCE).



Questions from the audience:

Q. Is there a future for the honey bee?

A. The question really should be "Is there a future for mankind!". Albert Einstein is attributed with saying if honeybees became extinct, human society would follow in 4 years. Rubbish! There is no evidence that Einstein said anything of the sort. Don't ever go quoting that (see *Buzzword* Sept 2020 p5).

I want to quote Dave Goulson, Professor of Biological Sciences at University of Sussex and the founder of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. He says "There is no record of when or where Einstein said it; he was not prone to making statements on subjects on which he had no expertise. The statement is almost certainly incorrect. If the word honey was removed from this quote it would be a little more plausible but in the UK honey bees contribute at most 1/3 of all insect pollination."

If we were to lose all our bees, and I would add to this flies and beetles, then our diet would be much poorer but most of us would survive. The statement itself is questionable. A more apposite observation comes from eminent biologist E O Wilson who said: "If mankind were to disappear the world would regenerate back to the rich state of equilibrium that existed 10,000 years ago; if insects were to vanish the environment would collapse back into chaos". We are nothing. The world is important. We're the top of the chain and we are the most vulnerable. The one saving grace is that this could be reversed.

Q. What do you think is the best hive and do you think there is a future for the black European bee.

A. The best hive is the one you're comfortable with! Fred Richards had lived through the Isle of Wight disease and had seen the results of when all the bees in the UK were wiped out. The Board of Agriculture imported the European bee mainly from Holland despite people suggesting that in some very remote location in Scotland there were still colonies of the old British bee. Having spoken to all the people who knew about this bee, they said that the last thing you want is to bring it back because it is a terrible thing.

Useful resource:

Several online beekeeping events are available (some charge, others are free) to keep you entertained through the snow and beyond: <http://bit.ly/3a43XPH>.

All EARS for bees

The Eastern Associations Research Studentship (EARS) funds original research into things of interest for beekeepers. At the moment NBKA gives £250 a year to the organisation and they are very keen that you should know what they do.

Wally Thrale, the EARS Funding Coordinator says that “the EARS concept has been very successful, having helped to fund three PhD projects since its inception. Individual associations do not have the funds to support a project but joining together as we have done has allowed valuable research on honeybees. It has also meant we have trained students in honeybee research which is an important outcome. There are so many issues facing our bees and research is the way to find solutions.”

Most recently, EARS has funded Theodora Comman-deur, a PhD student at Newcastle University, to study chronic bee paralysis virus (CBPV) and more specifically focus on transmission of the virus and how the susceptibility of honey bees might vary to this disease. For a talk given in January by Theodora, please see: <https://bit.ly/3rwT5iX>.

Clearly this year has been difficult, largely because of the pandemic closing the university at which she was working. Luckily she has been able to continue with some work and made a start on two hypotheses: how the susceptibility to CBPV may vary by age of the bee at time of exposure, and by the condition of the bee’s gut microbiota.

While she could not go out and collect data herself, she did have access to some other CBPV transmission data collected over the past 2 years, enabling her to look at a range of possible transmission pathways, including environmental contamination, faecal contamination and via trophallaxis only, on both summer and winter bees. In preliminary results she found that seeding the gut microbiome did not seem to improve bee survival.

Next summer she is planning a range of experiments on the gut microbiome and to delve into the impact of nutrition on the susceptibility of honey bees to CBPV.

Also Theodora has asked beekeepers to complete a short survey on feeding nutrients to their bees. There are only a few questions so it won’t take long to complete. Here is a link to the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.de/r/HHBB2T9>

Wally is looking for someone to take up the role of EARS funding coordinator when he gives up the role later this year, having done it for 12 years. If you would like more information please contact Wally on: w.thrale@ntlworld.com

Underfloor entrance

George Male

Wasps are a perennial problem for beekeepers but after watching Laurence Edwards of Black Mountain Honey making his “Under Floor Entrance”, I thought, well that’s a good idea.

So, I got the computer out and drew this, which is a version of his hybrid floor.

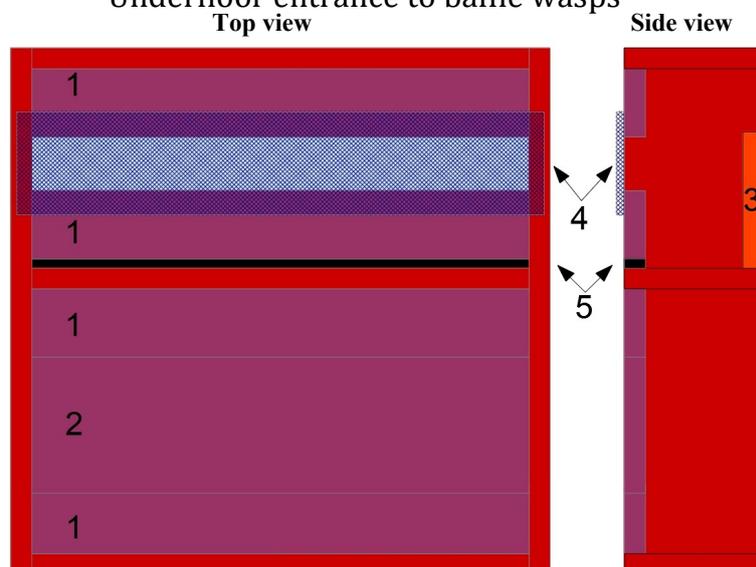


When the weather is better and allows me to go into the shed, I’ll have a go at making them. Please see Lawrence’s video on making an underfloor entrance, the hybrid one (that I have drawn) is shown at around 16 minutes:

<https://bit.ly/3tCTlyQ>.

I have used floorboards, as they’re a standard width and thickness but as Lawrence says, you can use almost any wood, just compensate for the width on your lengths.

Underfloor entrance to baffle wasps



I have used floorboards 119mm x 18mm thick

1 = Floorboard cut in half to 59mm x 424mm (cut in half for ease of joining and flat joining edges)

2 = Floorboard 119mm x 424mm

3 = Landing board (underneath) 119mm x 424mm

4 = Open mesh floor, 450mm x 90mm

5 = 8mm Gap

BIBBA events for all

The Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA) team have several events online open to all beekeepers, including prospective ones:

Spring 2021 webinars: These webinars are free to attend and their purpose is to offer beekeeping education and training to all beekeepers. For information on their 40+ Spring 2021 webinars go to <http://bit.ly/2N6Mw7H>

Prospective Beekeepers: On March 13th there is an all-day offering based on a successful event that has run for 15 years. A small charge of £15 is requested for this individual event. Tickets are on sale via Eventbrite (<http://bit.ly/2YQGIHG>).

The Secretary Matters

Garry Bowler

Does anyone else feel like this winter is starting to drag a little? Still a while to go before we can get back to playing with our bees but it is nice to see signs that spring won't be too long in arriving — snowdrops, buds on trees, birdsong more evident when out for walks etc.

The main thing to update you on this time is the recent BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM), which, as you will have seen in BBKA News, was held via Zoom this year. Usually our delegate (maybe with sidekick) would need to drive the 3 hours to somewhere near Coventry, attend a 6-hour meeting (as long as it runs to schedule) and then drive back. I have to admit to not being a great fan of this type of meeting, although the past couple of years they have improved. I reckon a Zoom meeting, with no travel, was a plus.

Capitation punishment

There are currently 73 associations, 68 attended the ADM. The meeting was held on Zoom with the voting system running in parallel — so, Zoom on the laptop, voting on my smartphone. As you would expect, plenty of opportunity for technical issues and there were a few but that is something we need to accept just now. Overall, I thought it went pretty well. Some things to improve on next time but I do hope there is a next time and that they do decide Zoom is the way forward.

Back to the propositions on which the delegates had to vote. Many were concerned with procedure but the ones perhaps of more interest were concerned with BBKA Capitation, rules/guidance for the admission of new associations and the voting system to be used at the ADM.

BBKA capitation hasn't changed since 2015 and as the

Apiary sites offered

John from Colby (Aylsham area), has a large garden with an orchard that he is planning to extend and wonders whether any beekeeper might like to place a hive or hives on his land. Members should contact John for more details:

john.turner5989@hotmail.co.uk.

Ruth would like to investigate accommodating a beehive at the bottom of her garden, which she says is "not used and quite overgrown, good for garden birds which I welcome and feed regularly. The bees would have access to many gardens as mine backs onto the gardens of the road behind me too". Ruth lives in Norwich in the NR5 area. All enquiries to the Secretary in the first instance: secretarynbka@gmail.com.

Edward is the Rector of East with West Raynham and has access to a field of 4 acres in East Raynham. He asks if this land would be of interest to a beekeeper as the tenancy may be coming up.

All enquiries to elbundock@aol.com.



BBKA budget predicts a deficit from 2022 (something not allowed under Charity Commission rules) then BBKA proposed a £2 per head increase. After some discussion this proposal was passed and so will come into effect from 2022. The NBKA Committee had expected that this would be the result and we had already considered proposing a £2 reduction in our own subscriptions, meaning that members will see no change in their annual subscription. This proposal will be put to a vote at our AGM on 6th March so that it also comes into effect from 2022.

The issue of guidelines for admission of new associations to BBKA has been a contentious one for some time. Lots of debate has taken place. What should the minimum membership be? Can it be financially sustainable? Are they setting up for the right reasons? Can they provide swarm collection?

Confused? You won't be...

Allowing the formation of more associations (with a lower average membership) is linked to the voting system currently used at the ADM. Initially votes take place as one vote per delegate. Associations have a wide range of membership — there are some with 50 or fewer and there are some with 800 or more. One vote per delegate weights the vote to the smaller associations. When there is a result the larger associations don't like they can call a Membership vote where each delegate then has the number of votes equal to the membership (which is making the assumption that the delegate view reflects the view of 100% of their members on the issue in question — which seems unlikely). This then favours the larger associations and is often used tactically. BBKA proposed changing to a single, weighted average, voting system which would, effectively, be somewhere between the two current methods.

To my mind, a single system would be an improvement — Norfolk has a mid-range number of members so we have a similar influence for all voting methods. On a delegate vote the proposal to change would have been passed (just) but after a membership vote was called it was narrowly defeated. Need I say more?

That was a brief summary of my 6 hours or so on Zoom on 16th January. Quite a long day but as I said, better than adding on a 6-hour drive, and I wasn't on video so could get up and walk round the room when I wanted and as for how I was dressed...

Poly hives talk

David King is going to talk on the use of poly hives on Saturday 13th February at 2pm via Zoom.

The Secretary has sent a link by email to all members and you will need to register your interest.

Once you have registered you will receive an email with details on how to join.

Things 'For Sale' and 'Wanted'

Clare has inherited four beehives from the previous owner of her house. They are all in good condition and offered free to any beekeeper who can collect them from Norwich. We don't yet know what type they are and don't have a picture so please contact Clare on claremck55@hotmail.com.

Maggie is a new bee keeper and asks if any of the beekeepers have a hive they no longer use or could share plans on how to build one (we have already put Maggie in touch with Clare above but just in case anyone else is feeling generous...). We also plan to publish some plans of a hive in the next issue. Please contact Maggie on BeeNorfolk@yahoo.com.

John would like to sell his two brand new top-bar hives for only the cost of the materials (see photo of one). He has a genuine reason for selling. The 48" one is in Douglas fir (very heavy) from Sandringham sawmill and the nuc hive is all in pine. Enquiries and offers to John on wendy_john_dixon@hotmail.com or 07847231882; he lives near Gaywood, Kings Lynn.



New Honey Services

The pandemic has caused such a downturn in activity at Norwich Airport that one air traffic controller has decided to go part time and indulge in his passion for beekeeping. As a result of a socially distanced discussion over a pint, Alex has now set up Anglia Honey Services to offer beekeepers what Alex "hopes that no-one else offers in the field", an extraction, bottling and labelling service as well as other hands-on services to the beekeeper.

Alex has dedicated one room to extraction and another to general beekeeping, hive construction and storage. Alex says "the customer brings me supers and I extract the honey, either into food-grade plastic tubs or to be 'jarred' up. If the customer has their own labels, I can then apply them too".

Alex also offers year-round apiary management and a 'hive installation' service, where he supplies the hive and bees to the customer's gardens for a monthly fee and they receive the honey, support the bees and the environment. "Several of my customers like to borrow a suit and come and watch over my shoulder. It's a great way to introduce people to beekeeping."

He travels all over eastern and southern Norfolk in his van, which is a 1961 Austin A55 'bread' van, known as 'Herbert'. Please contact:

Alex at Anglia Honey Services
Hill House, Framingham Earl Road,
Yelverton, Norfolk NR14 7PD

Tel 01508 491115 or 07711 517896
angliahoneyservices@yahoo.co.uk



Looking for candles

Sarah bought some candles from the Norfolk Beekeepers stand at the Royal Norfolk Show in 2018. She came back in 2019 but she couldn't find anything like the ones she had bought before.

She says "I would love some more if anybody can make them. There were dark green ones that were lovely too. So many online are a more yellow colour and not the lovely shape of this one. The candle doesn't have to be tiered like this one or this size. What ever can be done will be perfect"



Please can you help if you make them yourself or can make them to this style or you know where Sarah can buy them from. Please get in touch with Sarah at sarah53@btinternet.com.

Local suppliers listing

Please bear in mind the advice of Public Health England for social distancing and essential journeys for everyone in the UK when buying or picking up supplies.

Applebee Apiary, Rockland St Mary

John Everett, Master Beekeeper

Large range of beekeeping equipment from Thornes and other suppliers. We breed and sell honey bees. 01508 538231 everettapplebee@hotmail.co.uk <http://applebeeorchard.co.uk/>

Closed Sundays

Don Cooper, Roughton NR11 8QP; 01263 761517

5/6-Frame BS nucs available from £160;

Other sizes of nuc available to suit customer;

30lb Buckets of honey;

Advice on "all things bees"

Glebelands Apiary, Rocklands St Mary NR14 7BX

Peter Beckley, Thornes agent (reportedly the longest serving in the UK). 01508 480262; orns@btconnect.com

Forthcoming Events

All future events are being held online until further notice because of COVID-19.