



Registered Charity No. 1121231

January 2021

## Newsletter

Editors Gwyn Marsh and Dorothe Jones

### Main Meeting

Brian Durk from Bees Abroad

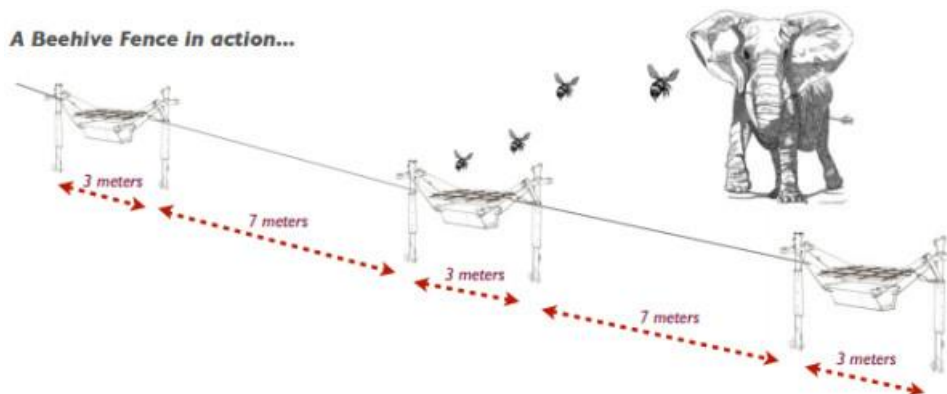
### Bees and Elephants

Brian works with 'Bees Abroad' setting up beekeeping projects in rural areas. These projects give beekeepers a modest, sustainable income enabling a route out of poverty.

In some areas there is conflict between elephants and farmers. An adult elephant can eat 200 tonnes of food a day, crops can be devastated by a hungry herd. In conjunction with the 'Save the Elephants' project a novel way was devised for protection of crops.

Who knew such enormous, majestic beasts were frightened of bees!!

The solution was to build 'beehive' fences. Traditional African top bar hives are strung between poles and connected by ropes, around agricultural land. If elephants try to enter the land, they touch the ropes connecting the beehives disturbing them. Agitated bees come out and sting the elephants, chasing them away. The bees sting sensitive parts of the elephant, like the ears, trunk and the mouth.



So, crops are protected and hive products additional income.

More information: <https://elephantsandbees.com/how-beehive-fences-help-reduce-human-elephant-conflict-in-sagalla/>

## The Changing Taste of Honey

Those of you who read the Telegraph will probably have seen this article. For the others, there is some interesting research being conducted in the National Botanic Garden of Wales. Apparently, the taste of honey is changing as a result of the loss of meadow, hedgerow and tree flowers. Honey bees access food sources as they are available. As the structure of fields and domestic gardens is changing, so is the quantity and availability of forage, resulting in the apparent change in the taste of honey.

The Botanic Garden of Wales has been working for several years on forming a DNA data base for pollen. This is the information they are using to analyse honey samples, enabling them to accurately define pollen sources visited during foraging.

One answer to this might be that, as beekeepers, we plant as many pollinator appropriate plants in our gardens and apiaries as is feasible. Many other pollinators are flora species specific so, the bigger picture is more problematic for them.

As I don't subscribe to the Telegraph, I found accessing this article a bit difficult, but did find the whole article on this website.

[www.pressreader.com/uk/the-daily-telegraph/20210115/281547998536456](http://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-daily-telegraph/20210115/281547998536456)

A further article can be found here;

<https://phys.org/news/2021-01-honeybees-reveal-floral-landscape-years.amp>

## Importing Bees and the New Rules

Whilst searching for something else on the BBKA website I came across an article relating to the changes in the rules for importing live bees now that the UK is not covered by EU regulations. Basically, it looks like the rules might be different. It seems that it will not be much of a problem immediately but is something that might need to be considered in the longer term.

[www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=977](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=977)

## Another Brexit Change

Since we have left the EU, we are no longer subject to the same rules and one aspect of this applies to agricultural chemicals. All the research identifying neonicotinoids as being injurious to pollinators and honey bees in particular, resulting in the ban of their use in agriculture, are no longer relevant. This is not as catastrophic as it might appear. Farmers are aware of the dangers these chemicals present to pollinators and at the moment it is mainly the sugar beet producers who want to use it to protect their crops from debilitating, yield reducing pests. Protecting beet crops from aphid attack, one of the main causes of decreased yield, can apparently be achieved by coating the seed rather than spraying the crop, therefore less problematic for pollinators. The question is, if the neonicotinoids on seeds enter the growing plant, deterring aphid attack, how much, if any, is also apparent in nectar and pollen?

From the committee:

### Neonic Derogation

Some of you will have read as above about plans for the UK government to allow the use of neonicotinoid pesticides to treat sugar beet crops in certain circumstances. There are a number of online petitions circulating about this and some quite emotive headlines in the media. Clearly as beekeepers this is a concern for us.

The committee have decided that it is not our place as a club to support particular issues in this way, but instead to encourage members to get educated about all the relevant facts before making up their own minds.

The BBKA have issued a statement which can be found here:

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/news/bbka-very-disappointed-by-neonic-derogation>

It contains information and links to a draft action plan. They will be emailing all members shortly.

Details of petitions currently open can be found easily online and of course you are perfectly free to sign.

## The 25th Annual Spring Seminar Hosted by Bucks County Beekeepers

Price - £5

Date - Saturday, 13th February 2021

Zoom meeting opens - 09:45

Meeting starts - 10:00



Graham Royal  
Skyscraper Beekeeping



Shona Blair  
The Medicinal Effects of Honey



Sarah Wyndham Lewis  
Planting for Honey Bees

For tickets and itinerary for the event:

<https://www.buckscountybeekeepers.co.uk/bcbka-spring-seminar/>

**Honey Labels**

Recently I was asked for some honey by a local shopkeeper. This made me revisit the BBKA regulations for honey labels. Labels for friend and family are one thing, but retail is a different matter. I realised that mine didn't comply with the waterproof and indelible rules. I don't have the equipment to make sure they do.

Going through the options on all the bee equipment websites, I didn't find anything I thought was suitable. One site offers to print labels with your own art work, but there is no indication of how they are printed.

Gillian used a local firm for a recent project, so I thought I would give them a go.

They are significantly more expensive than the normal suppliers, but they are local. Thrilled with the result, the speed (24hr turn round) and the customer service. They are happy to do small runs.

Check them out at: [www.met1.co.uk](http://www.met1.co.uk)

## Practical Beekeeping Course

Sean Stephenson is hoping to run a Practical Beekeeping Course this year Covid permitting.

Dates are 5/6 June and 26/27 June.

12 Attendees per weekend.

Requirements for attendees are:

Must have attained their Basic Certificate.

Kept bees for four (4) years.

Must not have done this course before.

Cost - £50 to include a queen cell and an apidea.

Full details and application form:

<https://www.buckscountybeekeepers.co.uk/practical-skills-21/>

## This month in the Apiary

Now is a good time to check all your kit and ensure that it is all clean and undamaged, including your suit (especially zips and seams).

Take time to re-read your records from last season so you have a clear picture as to what you want to achieve this next year.

Trips to your apiary and observation of your hive entrances will help give some indication as to the health of colonies whilst also ensuring that all your hives are safe from wind and animal damage.

With forage in short supply perhaps consider planting such things as crocus, winter flowering honeysuckle or viburnum tynus this year to give your colonies some much needed food.

## Do you have surplus honey?

If any members have jars of honey that they would be prepared to give away, we thought that you might consider local food banks at this difficult time. BBKA magazine reports that some clubs are already doing this.

To find the location and contact details of your nearest Chiltern or adjacent food bank here:

<https://chiltern.foodbank.org.uk/>

They can normally arrange collection if you are unable to leave your home.

## From the Committee

Although this is a quiet time for our bees, I'm sure we are all thoroughly fed up with being in lockdown again! We have yet to find out what the future holds, but looking forward from now towards spring, we understand that some members may find it difficult to get out to their bees in our apiaries. Or maybe you have trouble accessing supplies or equipment if you are unable to leave your home?

If this is the case, then please be assured that if you contact either your mentor, if you have one, or any member of the committee, we can arrange help with this.

Even if you just want to chat with someone about bees, ask a question, need advice, or anything else; someone can give you a call. Please do not stay silent.

Contact details are at the end of this newsletter or on the Meet the Committee page of the website.

We are hoping to try and organise some more online 'social' events, so watch this space.

## BIBBA Spring 2021 webinars

These webinars are free to attend. They are in the same format as the very popular ones we held towards the end of 2020. Their purpose is to offer beekeeping education and training to all beekeepers in these days of restricted movements and meetings. For information on our 40+ Spring 2021 webinars: <https://bibba.com/webinars-four/>

### Prospective Beekeepers 30<sup>th</sup> January/13<sup>th</sup> March

Whilst we all support our members as best we can, we can also cater for prospective new members. A couple of the webinars in the Spring programme are very much for those people thinking of keeping bees.

The 30th January event is around about an hour in duration and is free to attend.

The second event (March 13th) 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.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/introduction-to-beekeeping-tickets-133065172513?aff=erelexpmlt> for more details.

We encourage new beekeepers to join their local BKA in the webinar. Please publicise this widely, especially to those who have contacted you about starting beekeeping.

## Future Club Meetings

These will continue to be via Zoom for the time being. Links will be sent out the week before the meeting. All meetings scheduled to start at 7.30.

### February 23<sup>rd</sup>

Stewart Spinks Norfolk Honey Co. Managing an Aggressive Hive

### March 23<sup>rd</sup>

David Evans aka The Apiarist Bait Hives for Pleasure and Profit

(David is currently writing the Readers' Questions Answered in BBKA magazine).

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