



February 2019

Here is the February 2019 newsletter. Any contributions or ideas for future editions please email to: newsletter@gwentbeekeepers.co.uk

Things to Think About

This Month's Meeting

February Lecture

Stings and Allergies

Presented Dr Aled Phillips

*Thursday February 14th - 7.30pm
Goytre Village Hall*



Illustration by Sarah Barber

Also as part of our commitment to Manage and contain the Asian Hornet Matt Williams our Association liaison will also be demonstrating how to make the National Bee Unit Monitoring Trap for Asian Hornet

Any suspected Asian Hornets should be photographed and the pictures sent to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Please remember the Hall is being used prior to our evening session so Members are respectfully asked to arrive from 7.15pm onwards when we will have access to the hall.

We look forward to seeing you there and sharing refreshments afterwards.



Message from our Ann Rowberry

Ann Rowberry is our BBKA Link Trustee and came to talk to us on 10th January on the subject of "Spring and Swarm Management ". Just before the meeting Ann wrote to the association to wish us a happy 2019 in the letter she wrote the following:

I expect 2019 will be a year extra vigilance as we get our monitoring traps out in the Spring and keep watch for the Asian Hornet. I hope you have your team ready to help the Bee Inspectors if necessary, and all of you can help identify or discount insects discovered by members of the public. Please try to publicise the main features to watch out for, especially the Yellow legs.

The winter So far seems to be very mild and my bees were flying quite freely yesterday, the only downside is they are eating all the stores very quickly but least they are enjoying the Christmas present of a bag of fondant.

I am taking time to read some of my books, and it is amazing to read what management strategies the old Beemasters used and see how the wheel is often being reinvented.

My New Year resolution is to take time to watch my bees and when going to them and ask myself 'what do I really need to do?'

I hope 2019 will be a really good year for you and all your bees.

Library Books Reminder

A New Year reminder from Carol Jobling to members who borrowed books from the library last season.

If you no longer wish to read the books borrowed, could you please return them to be checked in.

There are a number of books outstanding that have been requested by members, which unfortunately are not available for them to borrow.

GBK summary grant report from John Bromley

As you are aware we are seeking grants in support of our new apiary and education centre. Here is a summary of the current grant applications and the grants we have received.

So far we have received offers from 5 grant providers (Monmouthshire BS, Tesco, National grid, Prince of Wales Trust and Western Power). This amounts to cash of £16.5k with Tesco yet to decide their contribution. This excludes the Waitrose donation of £12k, private donation of £80k plus £20k gift aid and GBKA own excess funds of £20k.

We have 8 grant claims outstanding for adjudication, 4 of them are re applications (Welsh Assembly, Heritage lottery, National Small Lottery and Dwr Cymru) and 4 new applications (Wax Chandlers, Waterloo Foundation, Garfield Weston Trust and Bernard Sunley Foundation). Most of them should decide by the end of March 2019.

If we hope to progress with our plan 'A' then the Welsh Assembly application for £421k will decide if we can progress or not. The alternative plan 'B' for a smaller building should be possible dependent on other grant success. If you have any ideas for alternative sources of funds, then please contact any committee member and let them know.

This Month's Short Article's

JUNE JAMES TROPHY

The June Jones Trophy was presented at the AGM to Brinley Watkins. Some of you might be wondering what it is all about.

The June James Trophy was given to the Association in 1989 by Ivyn James in memory of his wife June. Since then it has been presented annually to a Gwent BKA member whose efforts to promote the craft of beekeeping are considered to deserve special recognition.

Ivyn subsequently made clear that he did not want to place any restrictions on what might qualify for the award of the Trophy. Some of the possibilities he suggested were: Helping with the upkeep of the Association apiary; Providing assistance to other beekeepers; Coming up with an innovative idea; Contributing as a non-committee member to our activities; Recruiting new members; Recognition of a retiring committee member's longstanding contribution; Young member's contribution to the craft, even if only for their own benefit.

The Trophy has been engraved each year.

So far, the trophy has been awarded as follows:

1990 George Kinman

1991 Janet Bromley & Barry Leighton

1992 Doug Rattue

1993 Dick Sadler

1994 Jill Chirside

1995 Kath Harris
1996 Peter Hayward
1997 Tom Heaton
1998 Dick Sadler
1999 Nicola Bradbear
2000 Eric Long
2001 Bridget Woodhead
2002 Pam Gregory
2003 John Holden
2004 Eric Long
2005 Gerald Cole
2006 Les Chirside
2007 Ken Key
2008 David Johns
2009 Dianne Jenkins
2010 Stuart Woodhead
2011 Calwyn and Susie
Glastonbury
2012 Russ Flynn
2013 Kath Harris
2014 Russ Flynn
2015 Glynis Williams
2016 Miriam Knight
2017 Richard Linnell
2018 Brinley Watkins



Brinley being presented with the award at this year's AGM

Honey Bee Parasites Feed on Fatty Organs, Not Blood

For decades, researchers have assumed that varroa mites feed on blood (hemolymph), like many of their mite and tick cousins. But new University of Maryland-led research suggests that varroa mites instead have a voracious appetite for a honey bee organ called the fat body, which serves many of the same vital functions carried out by the human liver, while also storing food and contributing to bees' immune systems. The research, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences on January 14, 2019, could transform our understanding of the varroa threat to honey bees while pointing the way toward more effective mite treatments in the future.

Losing fat body tissue impairs a bee's ability to detoxify pesticides and robs them of vital food stores. The fat body is absolutely essential to honey bee survival." In addition to breaking down toxins and storing nutrients, honey bee fat bodies produce antioxidants and help to manage the immune system. The fatty organs also play an important role in the process of metamorphosis, regulating the timing and activity of key hormones. Fat bodies also produce the wax that covers parts of bees' exoskeletons, keeping water in and diseases out.

The researchers noted several observations that led them to question whether varroa mites were feeding on something other than hemolymph. First, insect hemolymph is very low in nutrients. To grow and reproduce at the rates they do, varroa mites would need to consume far more hemolymph than they would be able to acquire from a single bee. Second, varroa mites' excrement is very dry—contrary to what one would expect from an entirely liquid blood diet. Lastly, varroa mites' mouthparts appear to be adapted for digesting soft tissues with enzymes then consuming the resulting mush. By contrast, blood-feeding mites have very different mouthparts, specifically adapted for piercing membranes and sucking fluid.



[This microscopic image shows a varroa mite that has consumed honey bee fat body tissue tagged with Nile red, a fat-soluble fluorescent dye. Observing this red fluorescence in the mites' digestive systems helped researchers determine that varroa mites feed on honey bee fat body tissue—not blood, as previously assumed. Image credit: UMD/USDA/PNAS](#)

The researchers performed a number of experiments to verify their theory including observing where the mites were feeding on the bee's body and observing the mites digesting fat body cells. They also used water soluble dyes which showed conclusively that it was indeed the fat and not the blood that the varroa mites were digesting.

“These results have the potential to

revolutionize our understanding of the damage done to bees by mites,” said Dennis vanEngelsdorp, a professor of entomology at UMD . “Fat bodies serve so many crucial functions for bees. It makes so much more sense now to see how the harm to individual bees plays out in the ways that we already know varroa does damage to honey bee colonies. Importantly, it also opens up so many new opportunities for more effective treatments and targeted approaches to control mites.”

The research paper, “Varroa destructor feeds primarily on honey bee fat body tissue and not hemolymph,” Samuel Ramsey, Ronald Ochoa, Gary Bauchan, Connor Gulbranson, Joseph Mowery, Allen Cohen, David Lim, Judith Joklik, Joseph Cicero, James Ellis, David Hawthorne and Dennis vanEngelsdorp, was published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences on January 14, 2019.

The above is a summary of a longer article published by the University of Maryland on 14th January 2019 <https://cmns.umd.edu/news-events/features/4314>

Events for Your Calendar

The following is a list of the Gwent Beekeepers programme for 2019:

Gwent Beekeepers Programme of Events 2019			
Month	Date	Speaker /Activity	Topic
February	14th	Dr Aled Phillips	Stings and Allergies
March	14th	Marin Anastasov	Comb Change and Wax Recovery
April	11th	Sue Lang	Showing Honey, Beeswax and Other Beekeeping Items
May	12th	Apiary	
June	16th	Apiary	
July	14th	Apiary	
August	11th	Apiary	
September	12th	Ingo Scholler	Honeybee Feeding - Time for a Rethink?
October	TBC	Association Dinner	
November	16th AGM	TBC	
December	12th	Social	

Other Events

Sustainable Bees & Queens BIBBA (bee improvement and bee breeders association)

CHEPSTOW The Drill Hall. 24th March (Sunday) 10 -4pm £11 inc tea/coffee

FOR EVERYONE USING LOW-COST, SIMPLE METHODS

There is growing concern amongst beekeepers of all abilities and experience about the ever-increasing importation of bees and queens. This is on several grounds, including the possibilities of introducing pests, diseases and pathogens, aggression in subsequent generations and the unsuitability to our fickle climate.

Defra has recently conducted a Queen Replacement Survey that shows the majority of beekeepers prefer home-reared queens but need help to produce them. In addition, many BKAs are unable to produce enough bees for their beginners and queens to head them.

In response to the obvious need the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association (BIBBA) are staging a series of one day regional events during the 2018/19 winter. These are to help and encourage everyone from the small-scale beekeeper upwards and BKAs to produce bees and queens from local stock, by using simple techniques that may be little more than a variation of what many beekeepers already do and at little or no cost.

Topics include:-

Why raise queens?

Addressing perceived problems in producing queens in the U.K.

Overwintering bees and queens.

Demystifying queen rearing.

Simple queen rearing methods.

Simple and efficient ways to produce nuclei.

Suggested methods for BKAs to supply bees and queens to members/beginners.

Methods for small and larger quantities.

Benefits of teaching apiaries.

Queen rearing facility in teaching apiaries.

Queen rearing as a collective exercise.

Producing bees and queens, yet still getting a good honey crop.

Including queen rearing and bee improvement in BKA teaching programmes.

Reducing winter losses.

Other events that provide relevant tuition.

It will be helpful to beekeepers of all abilities from beginners to the most experienced, as well as BKA officials, beekeeping teachers, apiary managers, and demonstrators.

The all-day event (10.00am-4.00pm) costs £11/head (around 30% of the price of one queen and 5-10% of a nuc!). Refreshments will be provided, but please provide your own lunch.

Booking must be made in advance via bibba.com

Beetradex

9th March 2019

Stoneleigh Park

Warwickshire

WBKA

Spring Convention

30th March 2019

Royal Welsh Showground,

Builth Wells

BBKA

Spring Convention

12-14 April 2019

Harper Adams University



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Talk to us today
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