



Gwent Beekeepers

Gwent Beekeepers CIO

THE ENCOURAGEMENT, IMPROVEMENT AND ADVANCEMENT OF THE CRAFT OF BEEKEEPING FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT.

JUNE 2020

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Things to Think About.

The following is an extract from a letter we have received from Margret Wilson, BBKA.

Positive Thinking - June 2020

What a heat wave we have all had in the past few of weeks. After all the cold and windy days, it was lovely to have sunshine wall to wall, although it was getting rather too hot for me in the end. However, my bees seemed to enjoy every minute and certainly the supers are very heavy, so a good crop of honey, I hope.



Our Chair, Anne Rowberry, suggested a 'question page' on our web site; this is to raise awareness of various issues and we hope that you will be able to benefit from it. The first of these is about whether the wax moth was a problem last year. So please log on to: <https://www.bbbk.org.uk/questions-for-beekeepers>

We will add questions each month and would welcome your comments and/or experiences.

Thankfully, here in the North West, we do not have much wax moth, but you never know what each new year will bring, so it is good to be prepared.

Can I remind everyone again about the BBKA Forum as a useful place for discussing beekeeping <https://bbkaforum.co.uk/>

The use of this medium for information is proving to be very popular among beekeepers.

It will be so good to get back to normal with our education programmes but of course we have to be sure that everything can be done safely.

Stay safe, look after yourselves, with the easing of the lock down it would be so easy to forget some of the safety precautions that we still need to do to keep this disease at bay.

Take care,
Margaret Wilson.

Any contributions or ideas for future editions:

please email to: newsletter@gwentbeekeepers.co.uk



In the News

New Apiary & Study Centre

These are exciting times and Phase 1 of the new apiary building project is now complete. We have an erected, roofed, insulated, plaster-boarded, glazed and secured timber building comprising a hall, kitchen/extraction room, toilets and store. Huge thanks to all who have helped in getting us this far in difficult circumstances. Please see the attached photos.



Just so that those of you who have not been able to visit the site, here is a map of the site showing the location of the new building and apiary so that you can get a better idea of the new facilities.

As the government restrictions are eased, we are beginning to ramp up the Phase 2 work (which includes the plastering, wiring, plumbing, flooring, decoration, fitting, finishing and landscaping) and so we now we desperately need your help. The Building Project Group had a meeting at the new apiary and there is a long list of things to do. Thanks for all those who have volunteered so far but there is always another job waiting to be done so, whatever skills you can bring would be welcome.

If you can help, please let us know!

Please [email treasurer@gwentbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@gwentbeekeepers.co.uk)



COVID-19 and Beekeeping - Defra Advice



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

As beekeepers, please be aware of the following guidance when looking after your honeybees. Updates to this guidance will be provided where necessary. You should keep up to date with the latest guidance issued by the Government as it is subject to regular change.

Defra, Scottish Government and the Welsh Government ask you as beekeepers to be responsible and to ensure that you continue good beekeeping practices, effective stock management and health checks whilst observing the Government's guidance on COVID-19.

You should follow Public Health guidance on social distancing. Everyone, including beekeepers, should avoid gatherings of more than two people and this includes at your apiary. You should maintain a distance of 2 metres between yourself and others to limit the spread of COVID-19.

General advice for beekeepers is as follows:

- You should continue to work and care for your animals in the normal manner, as far as possible. You should not take measures that compromise the welfare of the animals in your care.
- You should maintain good biosecurity at your apiary.
- You should not share beekeeping equipment with other beekeepers, particularly hive tools and other handheld devices and protective clothing.
- In line with the general advice on COVID-19, you should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and hot water before and after you come into contact with any animal. Use hand sanitiser if that's all you have access to.
- There are currently no restrictions on the movements of bee colonies – for example, moving bees to fulfil pollination contracts. However, you should observe the public health guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when carrying out these activities, including the guidance on social distancing.
- If you are required to visit premises other than your own, you should familiarise yourself with the public health guidance on infection prevention and control and take measures to minimise the risks from contaminated surfaces.
- If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, however mild, you should be self-isolating at home and should not be visiting other premises. Ideally, another beekeeper should take on this duty wherever possible. We are suggesting that local associations consider how they can support those confined or unable to attend their bees at this difficult time for us all.
- If your bees are due an inspection by a government inspector, you should be aware that this may be subject to a delay depending on available resources within the inspectorate.

Cont.

- If your bees are due an inspection by a government inspector, and you are in a high-risk group, or are showing symptoms of COVID-19, you must let your inspector know ahead of the inspection. Arrangements will be made that will limit the chance of COVID-19 being spread. This may include the inspection proceeding without the beekeeper being present or delaying the inspection.
- For all inspections, 2 metre social distancing will be considered the minimum and so the beekeeper will not be able to stand at the hive side with the inspector while the inspection takes place.
- Imports of bees are still permitted. There is no evidence to support restrictions to international movement or trade in bees, and the UK has no additional rules for bee imports with respect to COVID-19.
- You should report any suspicion of notifiable diseases or pests to the authorities in the usual way – please see the bee health page on gov.uk for further information.
- You should use husbandry techniques to minimise swarming. If you have to respond to collect a swarm you need to ensure that you use the guidelines on social distancing when collecting the swarm. If that is not possible, then the swarm then should not be collected. Therefore, trying to prevent swarms is the best approach.

In the News

Possible Asian Hornet Siting in Caldecott

Following the publicity on the BBC , the National Bee Unit have had details submitted to them of an Asian Hornet nest that was destroyed by the householder less than a week ago near Caldicot. However, a photograph was taken which has been classed as **plausible (although not confirmed)**:

Whilst similar insects have not been seen since, we must now be on **high alert** as this lead cannot be verified as the evidence has been destroyed.

Please now put up monitoring traps around your apiary. Details of how these can be made are available here: [fact sheet](#) or [YouTube](#).



All potential sightings should be reported through the app and quote reference ID:13968139.

Hornets are likely to be hungry and attracted to baits and if safe to do so, a photograph to aid triage may be taken if a hornet is calmly feeding.

If anyone needs any help, please contact Matt Williams (07917 413063) or Brinley Watkins (07767 611111).

This Month's Article:

Chalk brood (*ascophaera apis*) – management options ?

This month's article is by Di Webb of Forest Dean Beekeepers.

On my first Lydney apiary visit I carried out the first inspection of hive 18. I could see there was activity from the outside with pollen being brought in but it was not as busy as the hive I'd already checked so I was expecting it not to be as strong. It was still only early April.

What I found

Pepper pot brood pattern on all 4 frames of brood. Lots of stores.



Multiple shrivelled down larvae with shrunken head end, like Camembert cheese. Jagged edges of capping where bees have uncapped the larvae (the change in smell emitted from capped cell will alert bees that there is something wrong)



Multiple small and larger perforations . I opened some of them to find chalk brood , no signs of any real nasties like EFB or AFB



Lots of chalk brood 'mummies' on floor of hive , grey and white.



A significant amount of brood was being affected leading to a reduction in bee numbers, ability to remove the chalk brood, forage etc and likely demise of colony. Chalk brood is also highly infectious and can spread through an apiary quickly through the usual channels. Small amounts are common, and a strong colony will have no problems, but this was not the case. I decided some action needed to be taken and considered the following options.

	Questions ?	
Carry out a shook swarm	We're there enough bees to cope with this ?	Yes
	We're there enough bees to draw comb ?	NO
	Did the apiary have sterilised drawn comb ?	YES lots !
Re queen using a queen from disease resistant stock (well that's what the books say !) either with or without a shook swarm .	Were there any queens available ?	NO
	If there were , why waste a good queen ?	Mmmmm
	Unless you have lots of them ?	
Merge with a stronger colony	Isn't chalk brood highly infectious ?	Yes it is, so a definite NO
Cull the colony	Is the apiary short of colonies ?	NO
	Can any of the above be tried first ?	YES
	Am I being too hasty and cruel ?	NO, the colony is suffering

Options ?

I decided the following week to carry out a shook swarm into a nuc box with a couple of modifications to give the colony a better chance.

Preparation – X4 frames of drawn sterilised comb, I also took X1 frame of sealed brood (no adhering bees) from a strong disease free colony that also had a good amount of pollen on, thinking that this would boost bee numbers, quickly strengthening the smaller colony and pollen for the protein and fats necessary for brood food etc.as they had a reduced foraging force. Chalk brood also affects larvae aged 3-5 days so I knew these would not become Infected as they were sealed brood.

Method - The bees were brushed into the nuc including the queen using a feather. I did not shake the bees in, as risk of chalk brood also being shaken in. I felt the bees were unlikely to abscond (this can happen in a shook swarm if no brood to hold them & a Queen excluder is usually used to prevent this) with drawn comb for quick laying of queen, frame of sealed brood and a small colony. So, I took a chance and didn't use a Queen excluder. This could also have knocked off any useful pollen off the foraging bees. They were fed syrup and left until the next inspection.

Outcome - after three weeks and steady feeding, the colony had 4 frames of brood and was put into a hive with some more drawn comb. I check a colony with chalk brood last to reduce the risk of cross contamination to other colonies. Excess sealed brood from other disease-free colonies can also still be added to boost bee numbers etc. Yes, there is some chalk brood but much less than previous with a larger and better brood pattern. Only time will tell if this colony will continue to expand and overwinter successfully but at least it's had another chance over this season. The NBU has lots of information on chalkbrood, shook swarm and sterilising comb.

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Events for Your Calendar

Once the Covid-19 situation rules are clarified we hope to restart our program of events but until then we will just have to wait and see.

We are looking for Volunteers to assist with the interior painting of the New Apiary Centre; before the flooring is laid; therefore we are asking for your assistance.

We are looking for help, between 04th July and 12th July; which day can you help on? Looking to have a max of 3-4 volunteers at a time to allow social distancing.

2020 JULY						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
29	30	01	02	03	04 Painting work Party	05
06	07	08	09	10	11 Painting work Party	12

Please can you use the following form to let us know when you can help.

Please click [HERE](#)

Also if you know of a business that would be willing to donate the paint, please make contact

Many thanks

Peter—Secretary GBK



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