



Image above: Visitors to our GoWild! stand at Pontypool, June 2024

June 2024 - Gwent Beekeepers Monthly Newsletter



Gwent Beekeepers CIO

Monthly Newsletter | June/July 2024

The Holden Apiary & Study Centre, Llanover Road, Llanfair Kilgeddin, NP7 9DY

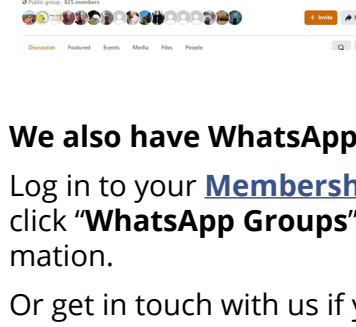
www.gwentbeekeepers.co.uk | newsletter@gwentbeekeepers.co.uk

In this month's newsletter...

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Don't forget to join our Facebook Group!

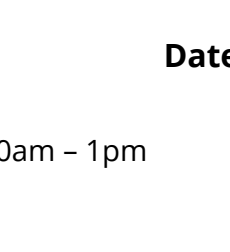
Share stories, ask questions, and find some beekeeping kit bargains.



We also have WhatsApp Groups

Log in to your [Membership Portal](#) and click "WhatsApp Groups" for more information.

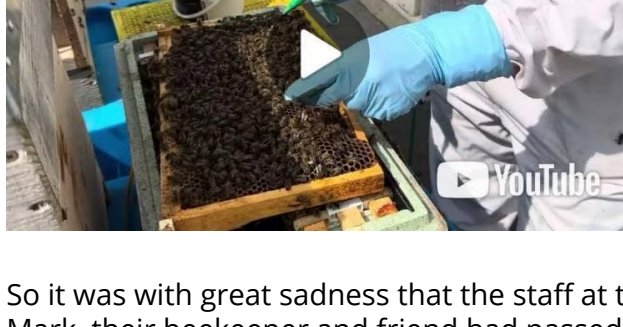
Or get in touch with us if you need help joining.



Dates for your Diary

- 20th July** | 10.30am – 1pm **Taster Session** | Holden Apiary | Book here: <https://bit.ly/GBKBEEEDAYS>
- 3rd August** | 9.30am – 5pm **Show:** Llanthony Valley Show
- 17th August** | 10.30am – 1pm **Taster Session** | Holden Apiary | Book here: <https://bit.ly/GBKBEEEDAYS>
- 18th August** | 9am – 5pm **Show:** Monmouth Show
- 14th September** | 9am – 5pm **Show:** Usk Farmer's Show

Mark's Bees



Mark, a new beekeeper of some two years had set up an apiary on the roof of the old ICI Fibres Site in Mamilad with the help of Tony Davies from Bloronge Bees.

He, a joiner by trade, had lovingly made all his own kit, checking size and spacing and bee needs with Tony as he built.

So it was with great sadness that the staff at the Johnsey Estate received the news that Mark, their beekeeper and friend had passed away. Mark's bees needed some care and plans were being considered. Then, as always happens, a colony swarmed! Miriam Knight came to the rescue of the 4 hives and sorted them quickly. The swarm was re-housed, the colonies will now be cared for and bees will continue to forage at ICI. Many thanks to Miriam from his friends, family and colleagues.

Please watch an interesting video of the inspection here: <https://youtu.be/NCPmsQfPrRU>

Swarm Questionnaire

How many swarms have you collected?! At the end of the swarm season this year, we'll be releasing a quick little questionnaire for members to fill out – we really want to know!

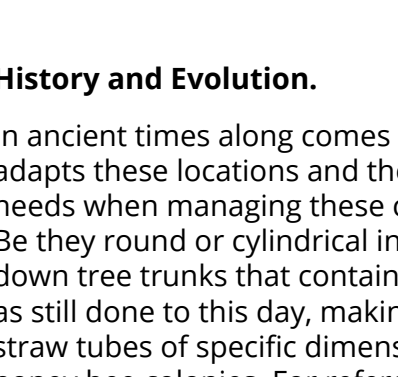
We want to know:

- The first half of your postcode
- How many swarms you've collected this year
- How many enquiries you received that turned out to be false reports

Near the end of the year, we'll be compiling this data to see which areas seem to have the most swarms!

Out of the Box? Background to Beekeeping

By Martin Howells, Lieutenant Commander Royal Navy, GBKCIO Beekeeper for 20 years.



This is a perspective reconstruction of how the apiary might have looked during operation. Note how the flying holes face away from the workers, who are busy extracting honeycombs; this would have minimised the danger of getting stung when the bees left the hives. Drawing by A. Yaman.

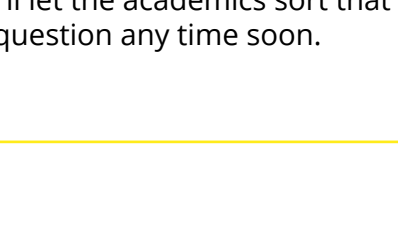
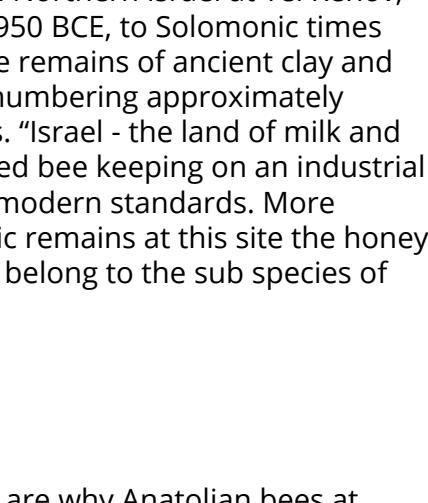
As most Bee Keepers, old or new, realise that keeping bees involves some sort of container with suitable space for the bees to live in. This space must allow the bees sufficient room for the colony to expand and grow as the beekeeping year progresses.

It must have room to store its excess food sources and must have protection from the elements, and its enemies. In ancient and modern times, and left to the honey bees natural ways and means, the honey bee could be found nesting in trees, protected hollows in trees and walls or rock-faces and caves.

But why a Box?

History and Evolution.

In ancient times along come mankind and copies and adapts these locations and their properties to suit his needs when managing these colonies of honeybees. Be they round or cylindrical in shape, like chopped down tree trunks that contain a suitable nest, or as still done to this day, making cylindrical clay and straw tubes of specific dimensions to accommodate honey bee colonies. For reference check out ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics scenes carved and painted in various archaeological sites throughout the ancient civilisations, as is still made in middle eastern countries to this day.



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An archaeological site in Northern Israel at Tel Rehov, dating back to 1,100 to 950 BCE, to Solomonic times in the bible, contains the remains of ancient clay and straw cylindrical hives, numbering approximately 200 individual clay hives. "Israel - the land of milk and honey". This is considered bee keeping on an industrial scale by any ancient or modern standards. More surprisingly from organic remains at this site the honey bees housed at this site belong to the sub species of *Apis mellifera anatoliana*.

Questions being asked in academia, from these findings, are why Anatolian bees at this site? Why not the local sub species for this part of the middle east, *Apis mellifera syriaca*?

I'll let the academics sort that question out. Don't hold your breath for an answer to that question any time soon.

The Piping Queen

It's true - Queen Honeybees make wonderful musicians! When a Queen bee emerges from her queen cell, one of the first things she will do is release pheromones, and emit a high pitch piping noise as a warning to her rival sister queens. This beautiful noise reverberates throughout the hive, ensuring all within the hive can hear it loud and clear.

Have a listen to a piping queen here: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/eQziOshhNq>

Regional Bee Inspector Details

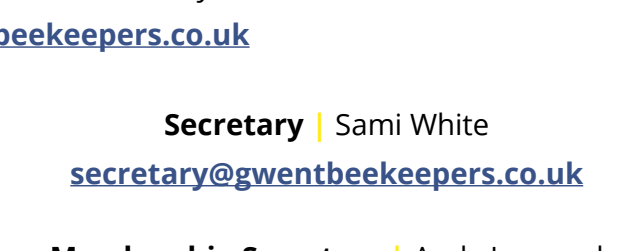
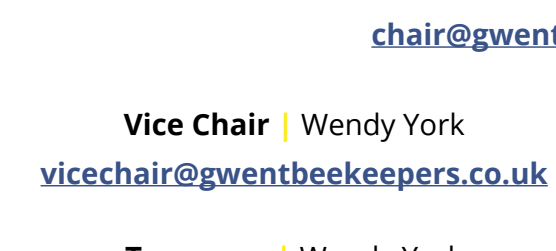
Important note about our Swarm Collectors

Big thanks to all of our members who are out there collecting swarms! We know how wonderful the process of swarm collections can be, but if you've had any issues recently while out collecting, please be sure to get in touch with the committee.

Asian Hornet Update

As of 24th of June 2024: Twenty-three Asian Hornets have been reported in the UK, with one nest being destroyed. None of these have been in Wales, and most have been in Kent and East Sussex.

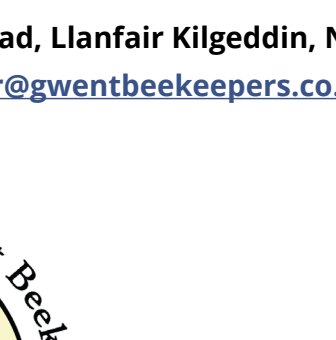
The full report can be found here: <https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/about-us/beekeeping-news/asian-hornet-2024-rolling-update/>



Meet the Team

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Supported with thanks by



Gwent Beekeepers is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), and is an active group of around 270 members, ranging from hobbyists to bee farmers, covering the areas of Monmouthshire, Newport, Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly.

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