



# The Ipswich & East Suffolk Beekeepers' Association

First Founded 1880; Registered Charity 1158794

## Newsletter for April – June 2018

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**The colour for this year's queens is red.**

*Opinions expressed in this Newsletter are not necessarily either those of the Editor nor of the Association*

The Suffolk Beekeepers' Association is an Area Association of The British Beekeepers' Association. <http://www.bbka.org.uk/>

**Hello!** And welcome to the April-June edition of the I&ESBKA newsletter. As you will see, the newsletter has a new editor. I helped Jeremy for the last couple of editions, and he asked if I'd like to take it over from him. What an honour, and surprise! I hope I can do it justice. Jeremy will be a hard act to follow.

For those that don't know me I started beekeeping in my early 20's and had a couple of hives. I then lapsed until about 6 years ago and got a hive. The last couple of years have gone a bit bonkers and now have 27 colonies. I'm a bit of a geek and love gathering stats about bees – hence the surveys I've been doing recently.



Selection of pollen coming into a hive

Anyway, I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter. If you've got any suggestions of what might be added to improve it, please let me know – [barry.crabtree@gmail.com](mailto:barry.crabtree@gmail.com) works well.

### Winter is over. Let the inspections begin!

Regular inspections will be starting soon so here's a reminder of the key things to check for, and if necessary deal with, at each inspection – Hooper's Five – as it's known:

1. Space: Have the bees enough space to expand as the colony grows? – that's both for the brood, and for stores.
2. Laying queen: Can you see fresh eggs? Then you know the queen was laying in the last few days. No eggs, no brood mean problems.

3. Build up & queen cells: Early season: Is the colony building up compared to others in the apiary. Later: Are there queen cells & if so what type.
4. Disease: Look out for any indicators of disease and deal with appropriately.
5. Stores: Are there enough stores (honey & pollen) for them to last until the next inspection?

I'd recommend looking here: <http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/hoopersfive.html> for a more detailed run through of each of these points.

### The Suffolk Show - 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> May

After some doubt as to the viability of attending the show this year we now have a very good and dedicated team from all over the county working together to put the SBKA Honey Show and associated activities together.

We have nearly 100 volunteers to help run the show so thank you everyone! The rota is being drafted at the moment and will be released in the coming weeks along with the show schedule, information on where you can drop off your entries to the show, how to sell your honey and hive products at the show and general information for volunteers.

We will be setting up the display in the marquee on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> – if anyone is able to come along and help for a couple of hours please let us know at [show@suffolkbeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:show@suffolkbeekeepers.co.uk)

Hope to see you there!

The Suffolk Show Committee

### Barrie Powell, our new President

*How did you become interested in beekeeping?*



On a cold winters morning in North Lincolnshire I was leaving to start my paper round. A round I had done for several years, but today was different. When I finished my round I was to feed my Uncle's Bees. He was in the Navy, away on a trip and I had been given strict instructions on how to do this task (in those days just after the

war bee-keepers were allowed 7lbs of sugar per hive for spring and winter feeding). I was to mix the sugar with hot water and pour into the metal feeders situated under a quilt. I had never seen inside a hive but found it very interesting to see the bees through the glass cover coming up for their feed. I was to do this several more times before Uncle returned from his tour of duty.

Some weeks later, I believe it was Easter, Uncle was to open the local Fete. Whilst walking round I heard my name mentioned over the Loud Speaker system: Would I go to the organiser's office. Feeling rather sheepish and not knowing what I had done I made my way to the office to be met by my Uncle saying there was a swarm of bees down Humberstone Avenue and would I go and collect it. I did try very hard to convince him that let alone catch a swarm of bees I had never been nearer that the outside of one of his hives.

Anyway being a Naval Officer and obviously used to telling his ratings what to do he quickly convinced me it was easy and being armed with a cardboard box, a smoker and a veil I carefully made my way to where the swarm apparently was. There it was, almost the size of a football and about 3ft off the ground on a rose bush. Following instructions received I placed the box under the swarm and shook the bush. Perfect. I quickly closed the lid and secured with string they must have been good tempered or perhaps I was just lucky. No stings. I carefully carried the bees back to the Fete and to Uncle. His reply was "good that's your first hive of bees". I have kept bees ever since

On returning to school I was pleased to tell the Science teacher of my exploits with the bees. His reaction was excellent you can now look after the school bees. These were 3 WBC hives of dubious decent. I was to learn a lot over the next few weeks and spent much time reading about the subject.

I do not know how or why but I was informed I was to visit Buckfast Abbey and meet the very famous bee-keeper Brother Adam. Some weeks later I was on my way to Buckfast and to meet him. To me he seemed rather severe but I guess I must have made an impression for I was invited back again. Over the next year I was to learn an enormous amount from Bro Adam and many of the ways I treat my bees now are learned from him.

#### ***What advice would you offer to members?***

You must always enjoy your bee keeping. Bro Adam was always in search of the perfect bee but he always impressed on me the perfect bee for you is the best one for your area.

We should all be trying to breed good bees. The main points you are looking for are

- Good health
- Good wintering
- Resistance to disease
- Longevity

Longevity of course is an important factor often forgotten because if we can get our bees to live an extra few days this could mean perhaps an extra 3 – 4,000 bees in you hive when

most needed. Out of interest Anatolian's are known to be the most long lived strain. We must also consider are they a strain that doesn't swarm too often.

At the moment I do not know what is involved, however I do look forward to being your President and assure you I will do my best to fulfil the duties thereof.

Barrie Powell

### **Where do you your bees swarm?**



Owl box?



Compost bin?

Send in your photos to  
[barry.crabtree@gmail.com](mailto:barry.crabtree@gmail.com)

## Bees in the news

### Neonicotinoids: risks to bees confirmed



*“Most uses of neonicotinoid pesticides represent a risk to wild bees and honeybees, according to assessments published today by EFSA. The Authority has updated its risk assessments of three neonicotinoids – clothianidin, imidacloprid and thiamethoxam – that are currently subject to [restrictions](#) in the EU because of the threat they pose to bees.”*

This is the latest conclusion of the European Food Standards Agency based on extended studies covering wild bees in addition to honeybees, updating the original conclusions from 2013. If you are interested in the details, head over to the EFSA website below, where they have peer reviewed studies of each of three neonicotinoids, and a useful Q&A section.

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/180228>

It is quite timely. Our association has just sent a letter to the local MP requesting they support the EU in extending its ban on neonicotinoids. The full text of the letter can be read later in the newsletter.

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### Conserving honey bees does not help wildlife

Is the title of an article published in the magazine Science, by Cambridge researchers ... They argue that honeybees “*are artificially-bred agricultural animals similar to livestock such as pigs and cows*” and should not be considered as part of the wildlife. One could imagine that building up colonies for pollination and early crops may lead to competition for other native species after the crops are gone. Like many of these reports, the devil is in the detail, and if the details are behind a paywall it’s difficult to do a balanced report...

See <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/news/think-of-honeybees-as-livestock-not-wildlife-argue-experts> for the article.

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### Lithium Chloride – not just for bipolar disorder

At one point lithium chloride was suggested as a substitute for sodium chloride (common salt) until it was banned when it was realised that lithium chloride interacts with the central nervous system and brain activity in humans.

Recently researchers were looking at modified RNA (Ribonucleic acid) as a way of eradicating varroa mites. The idea was to allow bees to ingest this modified RNA which

would be passed on to the mites, interfering with their ability to reproduce, and hence killing them off. It didn’t work (well, it did, but not very well). The mites, however, did die within three days as a result of the lithium chloride that was used as a suspension for the production of the RNA.

Further experiments were undertaken using lithium chloride directly. In a nutshell, lithium chloride (at 25mM) concentration kills 96% of the mites. However fed for three days with this concentration, it reduces the life of the bee by 25%. Fed for one day, it does not appear to reduce their lifespan and kills 93% of the mites.

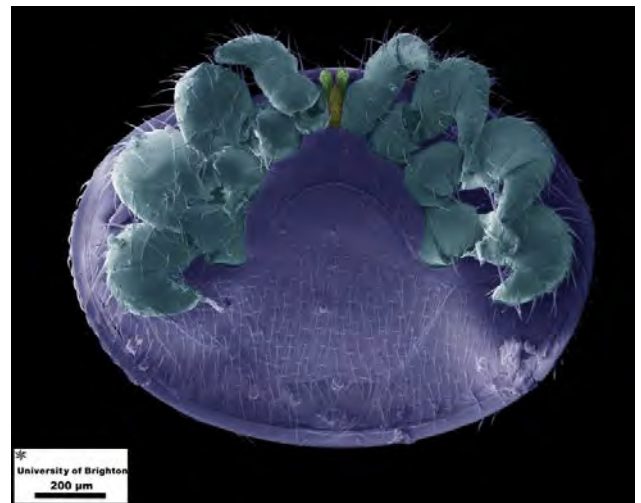
There are no long-term studies of the effect on the colonies (there were no brood involved in these experiments) so it will be a while before there are any reasonable conclusions as to its use. So don’t go sprinkling it on your bees just yet – or your chips for that matter!

If you want to look in more detail, hop over to the article at:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-017-19137-5>

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### Light at the end of the varroa tunnel?



Prof. Stephen Martin of Salford University spoke on honeybees coexisting with varroa at a meeting organised by Cambridgeshire Beekeepers.

Varroa is the transmission vector for deformed wing virus, which is the ultimate cause of colonies dying. Recent research has shown that colonies with a low rate of varroa *reproduction* (not to be confused with absolute numbers of varroa) do not develop a high incidence of DWV and therefore can, and do, survive. The vast majority of the colonies with varroa in the southern hemisphere do not die out.

Within the next five to ten years, Prof Martin believes that bees can be bred to influence the reproduction rate in the varroa mites, and hence allow them to co-exist without resorting to regular miticide treatment.

## Local news and reports

There is a garden apiary site available in Kesgrave, along with a commercial hive for sale. Please contact David Adams for more details ([dcadams007@btinternet.com](mailto:dcadams007@btinternet.com)).

First, we welcome *Thomas Gibbon, Marcel Grigore* and *Kevin Rout* as new members of the Ipswich and East Suffolk Beekeepers Association.

## Bee Tree



I had a call from a local farmer to say that there appeared to be some bee activity around an old elm tree that blew down in recent high winds. The farmer wanted to finish cutting it up and approached me for help. It turned out there was an established colony in the tree with the original heavily propolised entrance about 4m up and about 15cm in diameter, facing southwest. I would estimate the tree had been occupied for at least 15 years maybe more.

The decision was made to relocate the bees to a spot about 500m away. The trunk was cut through above and below the entrance to form a log of just over 2m long and a diameter of 70cm. This was moved and 'planted' along a hedgerow. The centre photo of the montage shows the bees in their new home. It was hard work but very satisfying. I do hope they thrive in their new home, they are all God's creatures and worth saving.

Neil Page

## PERSONAL PASSIONS

### THERE'S A STING IN THIS TALE....

When Sam Williams of Playford walked into the beekeepers' magazine at the Suffolk Show in 2014 he knew he had found his passion. After reading a few books and attending a beekeeping course, he felt in a position to invest in a national hive, together with a protective suit and some

swarms so does not have to pay for a colony. This year has been a quiet year for swarms, probably because they were better managed or recaptured quickly. Sam collected a swarm by placing a box under a tree branch and gave it a sharp tug so the bees fell into the box. He saw the queen, which meant they would cluster around her and reform in the box after a few hours.

At dusk he picked up the box and put them in a spare hive which became another colony. It is possible to buy an overwintered colony if pre-booked in advance, costing around £200.

Photos: Left: Sam placing a queen excluder on to the hive; right: inspecting a frame for healthy bees.

Bee stings are inevitable and Sam's head louse on occasions been the target and recently one managed to sting his nose bringing a tear to his eye! Gloves can be worn but Sam finds they do not help keep the hive calm when inspecting. If even a few bees are killed during inspection, this can anger the hive and cause the bees to attack the intruder.

#### Health check

Sam inspects his hive to check if the bees are healthy and to make sure they have space to expand so they do not swarm. On average he spends 30 minutes a week at the hive. Removing and extracting the honey to be bottled takes a few days, and record keeping provides useful learning especially if something goes wrong. When asked what the



The weather is the most difficult aspect: if it rains, the hive cannot be opened. If it is too hot, wearing the equipment is exhausting; if it's too cold opening the hive can cause the bees to freeze. Between October and March the bees hibernate, so opening the hive is kept to a minimum. This year Sam harvested his honey after the oil seed rape had stopped flowering; he removed over 8kg of honey which he sold privately.

The Suffolk Beekeepers Association promotes, teaches and inspires beekeeping: if anyone is interested, Sam recommends doing a taster session. Membership is available from £27 (subject to change) and provides insurance. A beginners' course is being held at Dallinghoo on five Mondays from 26 February 2018 between 7.30 and 9.30pm and includes practical work. Early booking is advised: more information: [www.suffolkbeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.suffolkbeekeepers.co.uk)

Jeremy Proctor

Lynda Braybrooke  
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specially designed hive tools. A smoker is used to help keep the bees calm during inspections although if used too much this can anger the bees. The initial outlay is about £500 but Sam found good quality second-hand equipment. Sam collects

Our very own Sam Williams in the Grundisburgh News December 2017.

## National Honey Show Lectures

I went to the Honey Show at Sandown Park Racecourse, a really stunning venue. I listened to seven lectures, so I can't tell you all I heard but I hope this will encourage you to listen to any or all of them on the National Honey Show YouTube channel (link at the end).

Professor Heather Mattila is a Canadian working in the USA. Her first lecture was about her research into the need for pollen for the bees. If they have no pollen they stop laying, if they are short of pollen they produce smaller bees and those bees do less work and live shorter lives.

The next lecture was "Audacious Vision" which was about an international conference of bee specialists who spent the time sharing their concerns and ideas about bees and how to address their needs - no speakers, just continual group discussion. Their conclusions were five ideas:

1. Encourage natural selection.
2. Promote flower rich habitats.
3. Nationally coordinated body to represent the needs of bees on policy-making bodies.
4. Alliance with other organisations
5. Develop rules of engagement (like the conference structure)

Professor Mattila's next lecture was her visit to Vietnam together with eminent scientists to discover how some of their hives were able to defend themselves against hornets. Amazingly and humorously they found the hives that were

protected were covered with dark spots, and by watching where the bees were flying to they found that it was poultry and human dung the bees were bringing back to plaster on their hives!

The other well-known speaker was Professor Tom Seeley who has spent his life studying the wonders of bee behaviour. This lecture among others was on "hive thirst". Bees need water so some bees are dedicated water gatherers while others are dedicated to nectar collection. Interestingly, the house bees that take from the foragers cannot tell what they are carrying until they taste it. They regulate the water collectors by "supply and demand".

The other one I'll mention by Tom Seeley was "the bee colony as an information centre". It is amazing and fascinating how the bees organise themselves to make the best use of available nectar and pollen - in a very short time they divert bees from a poor source to a better crop, from a fading flower patch to a new flower patch involving recruitment, direction, distance and "stop" signals. This system of organisation has been copied by computer scientists and is called "Honey bee Algorithm". If you would like to know the language bees use look at the talk Jeremy shared with us at the February meeting called "The colony as a Honey factory".

You can see all the videos from the National Honey show here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiOtIebcpY0Zqqma0H5wLYQ> (be careful though, you may lose days watching these videos - Ed).

David Adams

## Oxalic treatment results

Observations from the basis of 8 local beekeepers' varroa treatments this past winter:

- MAQS works well, but if you use it in July/August you are likely to have a significant varroa build-up in the autumn (probably spread by drones). Winter treatment is therefore essential.
- MAQS in October can get rid of most varroa for the winter (very few drones still around to spread them).
- Bayvarol and other treatments can work well but the same comments apply.
- VarroMed needs 3 treatments to work in July/Aug/Sept, 2 won't be effective. (This is to be expected - it's very similar to Oxalic Acid trickling solution though much more expensive).
- If you get a big varroa drop from the first December oxalic acid treatment (say 500+) it's well worth doing a vapour treatment again after a fortnight.

There is a great variation between hives. It's essential to do regular checks for varroa buildup (e.g. natural mite drop, drone forking).

Chris Stephens

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## Mentors

Who needs a mentor? If you are new to beekeeping there can be an intimidating set of things you wish you knew when you lift the lid of your beehive roof for the first few times. It's very helpful to have someone you can call on that can offer advice, come along to help you, or even let you watch them at work with their hives to pick up tips.

Some of our beekeepers have been keeping bees for over 60 years so there's plenty of experience to be had. If you want a mentor either contact Richard Allen (our secretary), who will put you in touch, or look at the list below. Either way, just let Richard know who's being helped by who.

**Felixstowe:** David Adams ([dcadams007@btinternet.com](mailto:dcadams007@btinternet.com)), Chris Stephens ([chris.stephens@btinternet.com](mailto:chris.stephens@btinternet.com)), Thomas Lucking ([Thomas\\_lucking@hotmail.com](mailto:Thomas_lucking@hotmail.com))

**Ipswich:** Richard Allen (07889 028573), Jeremy Lain ([mail@treeincarnated.co.uk](mailto:mail@treeincarnated.co.uk))

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**Woodbridge:** John Nayler ([johnnayler@btinternet.com](mailto:johnnayler@btinternet.com)), Malcolm Rittman ([macamr@mac.com](mailto:macamr@mac.com)) Betsy Reid ([betsyr@talk21.com](mailto:betsyr@talk21.com))

Dear Dr. Tatiana,

I'm a queen bee, and I'm worried. All my lovers leave their genitals inside me and then drop dead. Is this normal?

Perplexed in Cloverhill.

Dear Perplexed,

For your lovers, this is the way the world ends – with a bang, not a whimper. When a male honeybee reaches his climax, he explodes, his genitals ripped from his body with a loud snap. I can see why you find it unnerving ..... for the rest of the answer to this question you need to read Dr Tatiana's Sex Advice to all Creation: The definitive guide to the evolutionary biology of sex, by Oliva Judson.

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## A History of the Ipswich and East Suffolk Beekeepers Association Apiary

From the 1940s until 1994 the apiary was situated at Belstead House. This was a training centre so had the facilities to host weekend courses which were arranged by David Little, the then Secretary and later Chairman of the Association. The Belstead weekend course was mainly residential but members could attend as non-resident on a daily basis. David arranged some very good lectures and demonstrations from the beekeeping world. This course was always very popular and well attended. However, the encroachment of a new housing estate near the apiary, and following complaints from new householders, meant that the apiary had to be closed down. The bees were moved to Zig Ruskin's apiary at Kesgrave, and

then onto my apiary at Melton, until someone could be found to take them on.

Although I was running several apiaries around the north of Ipswich none had the facilities of Belstead House so I agreed to take the three Association hives on for honey production only until we could find a better site. At the time I was trying to cut down on the number of colonies I kept, so three more hives was no big deal.

Early 1996 I moved the bees from Melton to my apiary at Pauls, off Valley Road, Ipswich, and then on to Humber Doucy Lane in 2005 where they have remained until now.

Apiary managers from 1945-2017

- 1945 – early 1980s Harry Mann;
- 1980s – 1990s Mrs Sally Green;
- 1990 – 1995 John Blakesley;
- 1995 – 2017-2018 Roy Ramsey and Terry Mason.

This list is done from memory, I hope I haven't left anyone out. Some older members may remember the names.

In earlier years members could be co-opted to help out. For example one weekend during August we would have an extracting day. The association extractor was taken to Belstead House where honey from the Association bees was extracted. This event was always well attended, especially by beekeepers new to the craft.

I took over the Association bees; one modified commercial and two nationals. Over the years I increased the national to double brood and then in 2001 I added two more commercial, bring the number of Association hives up to five.

In 2010 the national hives deteriorated, in need of repair. I bought two commercial broods and frames so now all Association bees are housed in commercial hives using national supers.

The parking at the Humber Doucy Lane apiary is good. At first we could use the farmyard and in later years the car park of Westerfield House. This made things easier for apiary visits by course students and other events. Over the past two years it has been used as a teaching apiary.

During 2017 a new apiary was acquired at Wherstead and two hives were moved across from Humber Doucy Lane, the rest to follow in the Spring of 2018.

Over the past 20 plus years the average honey yield has been 45-50 lbs per colony, so I feel I have achieved what I set out to do.

I am fortunate in having the help in later years of Terry Mason, with lifting supers to bring home for extracting, and also to extract the honey.

Over the years because I have produced, extracted and processed the honey for sale it has carried my label but now the Association has its own label.

Enjoy your beekeeping.  
Roy Ramsey

# The Teaching Apiary

Then new teaching apiary at Wherstead opens this spring with the first of the Sunday sessions on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2018, and then every Sunday up to the 12<sup>th</sup> August. All sessions start at 2pm. It's best to sign up at: <http://www.suffolkeekeepers.co.uk/AP18.php>

## The teaching team



Secretary of the association.

Richard Allen first helped with the school hive back in the 70's and has always retained a fascination with bees. His 9 hives in three apiaries produce over 400lb of honey. Richard has taken and passed the Basic Certificate and 6 module exams and somehow become



Barrie Powell has been keeping bees for over 70 years and been running a semi-commercial operation for many years, peaking with over 300 hives. He's now cutting back, looking after around 100 hives, and focusing on queen rearing.



Jeremy Quinlan has been deeply involved in bees and beekeeping since 1985, serving as both County Secretary and Education Secretary, now as Chairman of the Ipswich & East Suffolk BKA. He is currently Suffolk's only Master Beekeeper. His particular areas of interest are beekeeper education and bee behaviour.



Paul White - the proprietor of Box House Beekeeping Supplies. He has been the treasurer of the Suffolk Beekeeping Association for 5 years and has about 35 deep national hives spread around the village. Paul believes that you learn a lot from the observation of bees and encourages a practical hands

on approach to learning and understanding about the husbandry of bees.

The apiary is at Wherstead Park: East of England Co-op HQ; postcode IP9 2BJ. It's just off the A137 towards Manningtree at J56 on the A14. When you arrive, turn left into the car park, head to the very back and carry on clockwise until you can see the sign to further parking on your left. Follow that, right to the very end and there we are.

The apiary currently has 10 hives:

- 2 Commercial
- 2 14x12
- 4 National brood-and-a-half
- 2 WBC.

	<b>'Special' activity for the day. Followed by an inspection of all colonies.</b>
<b>2018</b>	Events highlighted yellow are particularly useful for those intending to take the basic exam.
29-Apr Jeremy Quinlan	How to light a smoker; fuels to use. Hive tools; colony records. Other useful bits & pieces. Equipment: Butler cage & newspaper.
06-May Paul White	How to open and inspect a colony. <b>THE FIVE QUESTIONS.</b> Difference between swarm, emergency, supersedure cells & play cups.
13-May Richard Allen	Bailey Comb Change, Shook Swarm Equipment: Bailey eke
20-May Barrie Powell	When to super. Bait hives. Looking for disease - how to shake bees off a comb.
27-May Jeremy Quinlan	Swarm control. Taking a swarm. Pagden with & without finding the queen; Take out a nuc. Equipment: Skep, spare QX
03-Jun Paul White	Making nucs. A dummy Basic Assessment A tame Basic examiner will assist.
10-Jun Richard Allen	Extracting honey. Is it ripe enough? Refractometer. Hand driven extractor, Uncapping. What to do with the cappings & extracted comb. Sieving. Honey storage. Cleaning.
17-Jun Barrie Powell	Queen introduction
24-Jun Jeremy Quinlan	Taking a sample for Nosema examination. Chalk Brood. Equipment: Entrance block, matchbox
1-Jul Paul White	Finding & marking queens. Wasps. Equipment: Butler cage, paint, scissors.
8-Jul Richard Allen	Varroa monitoring.
15-Jul Barrie Powell	Uniting. Equipment: Newspaper, spare QX
22-Jul Jeremy Quinlan	Varroa monitoring and treatments Equipment: Thymol, art pyrethroids, MAQS & oxalic acid
29-Jul Paul White	Feeding: calculating how much to feed and how and when to give it.
05-Aug Richard Allen	Other preparations for winter. I&ES Intro Course record book check page Top & tail, tie down, reverse entrance blocks, winter candy
12-Aug Barrie Powell	Sterilisation; fumigation of combs; preserving hives; preventing wax moth, mouse and woodpecker damage. Equipment: 80% acetic acid, entrances ≤ 7 mm.

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## Swarm control without 9 day checks

It's all in the preparation....

- Requeen your colonies in August/September (young queens are less likely to swarm).
- Give your colonies plenty of space – if a super is half full of **bees**, add another super.
- Breed bees that don't tend to swarm.
- Have bait hives set up early as an insurance policy.
- If you catch a swarm, requeen it.

(The) Ged Marshall

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### Free bees!

OK, I knew this would get your attention. Free bees. It's true, but as you know there is no such thing as a free lunch, or free bees come to that. It will cost you time, but not money. Bait hives / swarm traps are the way to get free bees. You may have heard of them, and there have been a lot of studies on what needs to be done to get the best chance of a swarm of bees moving into a bait hive. Here's the nutshell guide to bait hives.

You'll need a box (or boxes) between 40-60 litres in volume (a national brood box is about 37 litres) with an entrance about 12cm<sup>2</sup> (2cm x 6cm). Ideally it should smell bee-y, so a very old hive would be ideal, alternatively smear the inside with propolis. Pop in an old skanky frame and put it somewhere reasonably shaded about 2+metres above the ground.

Check it/them regularly during swarm season April-June. If you get lucky use the same site again. Good luck! Check out <http://horizontalhive.com/honeybee-swarm-trap/bait-hive-how-to-catch.shtml> for oodles more details.

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## National Honey Monitoring Scheme

The National Honey Monitoring Scheme is a new long-term programme being set up in 2018 that will use advanced analytical techniques to identify plant DNA and measure environmental contaminants, such as pesticide residues, in honey produced from across the UK.

A recent pilot study, identified widespread residues of neonicotinoid pesticides in honey samples collected from BBKA members across the UK.

The aims of the scheme will include:

- State-of-the-art analysis- DNA metabarcoding & high precision mass spectrometry of honey samples
- Sample archive - for future research developing new analytics, such as disease detection
- Provide feedback to participating beekeepers

- Generate robust scientific data to inform future policy decisions.

All amateur and professional beekeepers are asked to register their interest in taking part by emailing us at [honey@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:honey@ceh.ac.uk)

The viability of the monitoring scheme will depend upon sufficient numbers of beekeepers expressing an interest in participating.

See: <https://www.ceh.ac.uk/our-science/projects/national-honey-monitoring-scheme> for more details.

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## Spring hive preparation

Towards the end of the beekeeping winter, typically during March, the queen starts to lay many more eggs in preparation for the spring. Last year we did a survey on swarming and some of the first swarms were reported in early April, supporting the fact that the queen must begin laying in earnest late February / early March.

In addition to this rapid growth is a corresponding depletion of the last of the winter stores. There are many more young bees to feed, and foraging has not yet started in earnest due to the lack of flowers. This is an important and worrying time for the beekeeper for two reasons. Clearly there is the possibility of starving, and early spring feeding may be appropriate.

A less well-known problem is a consequence of using the last of the winter stores causing the hives getting very light. As we know, any sharp knock or bang on the hive can cause all the bees in the hive to buzz loudly, flapping their wings and take off *inside the hive*. As a consequence of this buzzing, the hive may lift off & topple over. In extreme circumstances the hive could fly a few hundred metres away and the beekeeper may think the hive has been stolen! Hives with a varroa floor are particularly vulnerable to this condition.

Luckily there is an easy remedy to this issue. Twelve days after the spring equinox (1/4/2018) the beekeeper should make sure that all their hives are strapped to the ground. A stake hammered into the soil with a rope tied to it should be suitable for this purpose. Early spring feeding will also minimise this problem.

Poisson D'Avril.



## Box House Beekeeping Supplies

*In East Bergholt, Suffolk - for the local supply of hives, frames and foundation, tools and other equipment for keeping bees. Open by arrangement - please email or telephone Paul White to discuss your requirements. 01206 299658 or 07768 634038.*  
[www.box-bees.co.uk](http://www.box-bees.co.uk); email: [sales@box-bees.co.uk](mailto:sales@box-bees.co.uk)



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## Prepare for the Asian Hornet

The Eastern Region of the National Bee Unit say that an Asian Hornet invasion is a certainty and could be anywhere so we must prepare. It would help the NBU's rapid reaction:

- If you have not yet done so, please register on BeeBase <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?>
- If you are registered, please check the details there for your email and apiary addresses.
- Volunteer be a Sentinel Apiary to our RBI, Keith Morgan: keith.morgan@apha.gsi.gov.uk. Those who do will be visited 3 times a year.
- Put out traps (ordinary wasp traps **with access to the liquid closed off so bodies can be recovered**) baited with apple juice and/or beer **and inspect them daily**, releasing every other occupant. If you can't inspect daily, better not to do this at all as you will trap beneficial insects.

All the Asian Hornet details are at:

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?pageid=208>

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## Association Extractors

The Association has two extractors that members can borrow – one electrical and the other mechanical. We ask that if you make use of one, in consideration for other members, you keep it no longer than 3 days.

Please contact Jackie McQueen on 01473 420187 if you need to have access to either when it comes to extracting time which could be soon for some of you, looking at the state of the rape fields.

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## Pastafrola

In my article "Musings on Membrillo and Mead" in the last newsletter, I referred to a delicious dish called Pastafrola but did not have space to write about it.



Pastafrola is a tart common to some south American countries. The crust is somewhere between pastry and cake and deliciously light and fresh (due to addition of lemon zest).

You can put other fillings in it. I have used leftover pastry to make a jam tart with home-made raspberry and vanilla jam, which was also very nice. Traditionally, however, I think it is meant to be made with quince paste – Membrillo.

How did I get there from processing our honey?! Well, you may recall that Jeremy got me into making Membrillo (quince paste) with his kindly donated quinces and my honey. I was then looking for other uses for Membrillo – other than eating sliced, with cheese.

So I searched around on the internet and stumbled across Pastafrola. A strange name for us as it suggested it was going to contain pasta, which it doesn't.

Please note, it is best eaten fresh, it does not keep like a cake. In my opinion, it is best eaten still slightly warm, with cream! Please also note that you may need more or less of the Membrillo depending on consistency and size of tart dish. I used one about 8 inches in diameter and used a bit less than 400 g but had dough left over.

So . . . the recipe:

- 380 grams plain flour
- 6 teaspoons baking powder
- 95 grams sugar
- 
- Zest of 2 lemons
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 eggs
- 4 tablespoons milk
- About 400 g membrillo

Method

1. Sift dry ingredients.
2. Rub in butter.
3. Add the other ingredients to form a ball. Don't knead too much as you will ruin the flaky consistency. You just need to join the ingredients to form a ball.
4. Alternatively, put all the ingredients in to a food processor. I have done this successfully!
5. Cover the dough with cling film and put in fridge for at least 15 minutes.
6. Roll out the dough to ½ cm thick and cover the tart pan. Keep 1/3 of the dough to make the lattice top.
7. Cut the quince paste into chunks, add a little boiling water and mash it up till it is consistency of jam and spread it over the base.
8. Make a lattice top and brush with egg wash.
9. Cook at 180°C/350°F/160°C (fan) for 20 mins, until nice and golden.

Liz Marley

## Richard Martin Beekeeping Supplies

A large range of stock including: Hives in the flat, WBC, National and Commercial; Frames and foundation, honey jars, buckets, tools, bee suits, veils and gloves. Agent for Thorne's of Wragby

Little College Farm, Creting Hills, Creting St Mary  
IP6 8PX

Opening hours: 1 April - 30 Sept 4pm - 7pm Mon - Sat.  
At other times please call on 01449 720491

Dear MP,

We are writing to ask for your support to extend the European Commission's current ban on the use of neonicotinoids in plant protection products throughout the EU.

**The European Commission** will submit its proposals to a vote by Member States in early 2018 following publication of the European Food Safety Authority's data evaluation report.

**UK Environment Secretary Michael Gove** stated in November 2017 *"the UK will be supporting further restrictions on neonicotinoids. The European Commission has now proposed the ban is extended to non-flowering crops.*

*"I asked the UK's independent advisory body on pesticides to review the issue again. In their view, there is a growing body of evidence that indicates that the risks posed by neonicotinoids are greater than previously understood. They advise that the evidence now supports the restrictions introduced in 2013; indeed, there may also be a case for going further.*

*"The most recent studies into neonicotinoids have taken the investigation out of a laboratory into the field to gather more meaningful results. These show a number of worrying indicators. First, when neonicotinoids are used on one crop, their residues can be found across the landscape. This contaminates pollinators' food sources far and wide, not only on the crops where the pesticide was used.*

*"Second, wider investigation has shown that neonicotinoids can persist in soils for many years and have been detected in areas where there has been no known recent use. Neonicotinoids are also taken up by flowering weeds or subsequent flowering crops on those soils, causing further exposure to pollinators. Although the effects are subtle, the most recent studies point to a discernible effect on food sources and the productivity of bee colonies, which could have a worrying long-term impact on their populations."*

**The impact of neonicotinoids** has now been proven much wider than previously reported. The Environment Agency monitored UK watercourses in 2016 as part of Britain's responsibilities under the EU Water Framework Directive. Their results show that the River Waveney on the Suffolk-Norfolk border had the highest level of neonicotinoid contamination of all rivers tested. The probable source of this pollution was run-off from sugar beet fields. Aquatic insects are as vulnerable to neonicotinoids as bees and flying insects, so populations of mayflies and other insects in these rivers are likely to be heavily impacted, with implications for fish and bird populations.

**The Natural Environment Research Council's** Centre for Ecology & Hydrology has tested honey from beekeepers across the UK (including IESBKA members) and found that, despite the EU moratorium in place since 2013, neonicotinoids were present in over 20% of samples collected in 2015.

Given the weight of this (and much more) evidence against neonicotinoids, we believe that a comprehensive EU-wide ban on their agricultural use should be introduced. We ask you to support such a ban in every way possible and to encourage methods of farming that do not risk the long-term health of our flora and fauna.

## To treat or not to treat?

Despite it being 25 years since varroa was first detected in the UK, the debate over whether or not to treat bees or leave them to develop their own tolerance or resistance still rages.

Peter Neuman from the Vinetum Foundation and Tjeerd Blacquière of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs recently published a serious article on this topic after studying research from all over the World. They summarised their crucial findings as:

- Treating against Varroa destructor not only prevents host-parasite co-evolution, but may also add to the exposure to pesticides thereby possibly compromising colony health.
- Recent evidence suggests substantial local adaptations of honey bees enhancing colony survival.
- Breeding for Varroa destructor-resistance over more than 20 years has still not resulted in survival of untreated colonies,

but natural selection has delivered [it] multiple times, thereby suggesting that breeders should choose traits favoured by natural selection. This suggests fundamental conceptual flaws in both commercial honey bee queen rearing and breeding.

- Since the fitness of a honey bee colony clearly is the number of surviving swarms as well as the number of successfully mating drones (all other traits are only tokens of fitness), the selection by beekeepers for low swarming tendency of colonies and removal of drone brood, mainly to combat V. destructor, remain probably the key factors in limiting natural selection [for varroa resistance].
- Beekeeping interference with natural selection, in combination with globalisation of apiculture may have now reached levels where ill effects are inevitable at the colony level.

Lune Valley Newsletter Feb 18

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## Treatment free beekeeping

Suggestions for treatment-free beekeeping

- Capture swarms from places with wild colonies (get bees with genetic resistance to Varroa)
- Disperse your hives (less spread of disease, esp. mites)
- House your colonies in small hives, and allow them to swarm (less honey, but also lower mite levels)
- Install propolis collection material on inner walls of your hives (stimulate building of propolis “shroud”)
- Rear queens from your survivor colonies (maintain locally adapted stock)
- Give survivor colonies one frame of drone comb per hive body (foster the genetic success of the survivors)

From a talk by Tom Seeley

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## What are honey bee pheromones?

Honey bees work extremely hard to maintain the desired environment within their hive. In addition to maintaining temperature and humidity, they maintain an extremely complex cocktail of pheromones, which is largely lost every time the hive is opened up.

A pheromone is a chemical produced by an animal (including insects) which changes the behaviour of another animal of the same species. In honey bees they are a major means of communication within the colony. Honey bee pheromones are mixtures of chemical substances released by individual bees into the hive or environment that cause changes in the behaviour or physiology of other bees. Together with the honey bee dance, honey bee pheromones represent one of the most advanced ways of communication amongst social insects.

There are two forms of pheromone, liquid pheromones which are tasted and volatile pheromones which are detected through smelling.

### Types and Uses of Pheromones

Pheromones can be divided into two distinct types:

- Releaser pheromones which cause rapid changes in behaviour, such as the alarm pheromone which quickly engages other bees to help defend the nest.
- Primer pheromones which cause long term changes in both physiology and behaviour, such as the brood pheromone which suppresses worker bee ovary development.

### Honey Bee Pheromones

Honey bees produce a wide range of pheromones:

- **Alarm Pheromone**, produced by workers, is a releaser pheromone that calls nest mates to help defend the colony from intruders. A sting, which also releases alarm pheromones, causes other bees to sting as well.
- **Brood Ester Pheromone**, produced by larvae, is a primer pheromone that, amongst other things, inhibits ovarian development in worker bees.
- **Drone Pheromone** is released by drones and allows them to find each other and form drone congregation areas.

• **Dufour’s Gland Pheromone** is not clearly understood except that it has something to do with interactions between queens and workers, and between laying workers and non-laying workers. The composition of the pheromone changes as a worker evolves into a laying worker.

• **Egg Marking Pheromone** allows worker bees to distinguish between queen-laid eggs and worker-laid eggs. At one time, scientists believed that the Dufour’s gland pheromone marked a queen’s eggs, but now egg-marking pheromone appears to be separate.

• **Footprint Pheromone**, also known as trail pheromone, is found in many social insects. Worker honey bees secrete the pheromone from their feet as they go about their daily business, and the odour is attractive to other honey bees. In theory, footprint pheromone is used for orientation and may aid the workers in finding the hive entrance or in locating a good food source, but the specifics are unclear.

• **Forager or Worker Pheromone** is released by older forager bees to slow the maturing of nurse bees. It is believed that this primer pheromone acts as a distributed regulator to keep the ratio of nurse bees to forager bees in the balance that is most beneficial to the hive.

• **Nasonov Pheromone** is produced by worker bees to attract nest mates to a colony entrance, a clustering swarm, or a food source. If you move a hive a short distance from its original location, you can see workers exposing their Nasonov gland and fanning the scent into the air. Nasonov can also be used to attract swarms to nest boxes.

• **Tergite Pheromone** is produced by all bees in the hive but the composition and amount vary with the type of bee. Virgin queen tergite pheromone is believed to be related to fighting among virgin queens.

Other Pheromones produced by most honey bees include rectal gland pheromone and wax gland and comb pheromone.

### Specific Queen Pheromones

Queen bees also produce a range of specific queen pheromones:

• **Queen Mandibular Pheromone** plays many roles in the hive, including regulating social behaviour, swarming, mating, and suppressing laying workers. Often known as “queen substance” the pheromone is spread throughout the hive by the worker bees, thereby alerting the colony members that the hive is “queen-right” and operating normally.

• **Queen Retinue Pheromone** entices worker bees to groom and feed the queen, and causes a circle of attendants to surround and care for her.

• **Tarsal Pheromone** is similar to footprint pheromone but it is only secreted by the queen. The pheromone is deposited on the surface of the comb and is believed to delay or prevent queen cell construction.

• **Faecal Pheromone** is produced by virgin queens. In-hive squabbles between virgin queens, or virgin queens and workers, are sometimes resolved when virgin queens squirt faeces on the aggressive bees. Workers covered in the pheromone-laced faeces back off in order to groom, and virgin queens covered in faeces are ignored by the workers.

A queen bee will secrete numerous pheromones from various body sites and these pheromone secretions will change during her lifetime.

Virgin queens go undetected for the first three days after emerging and it seems unlikely that they make any pheromones during that time. They then start secreting mandibular gland pheromones, but in smaller quantities and in a different ratio to mated queens. This ratio of pheromones is less attractive to worker bees than that secreted by a mated queen. Her repulsiveness to workers is further enhanced by the secretion of faecal pheromone during her first two weeks of life and prior to her mating flights. Although some workers will groom and feed her, others will treat her roughly. Virgin queen mandibular glands secrete several chemicals that are attractive to drones. From the age of about three days after emerging, her tergite glands secrete a range of chemicals and, during her mating flight(s) more chemicals from her mandibular gland attract drones to her when she enters a drone congregation area. Her tergite pheromones enhance this effect. Immediately after a successful mating, the chemical composition of her mandibular gland pheromones changes to that of a mated adult and she becomes more attractive to workers. Her tergite glands also switch production to cuticular hydrocarbons, which play a large role in the olfactory identity of the colony. Her tarsal glands start secreting footprint substances post-mating, which inhibits queen cell construction. Secretions from her Dufour's and Koschevnikov's gland enhance the retinue attracting properties of queen mandibular pheromone, although Koschevnikov's gland activity starts to degenerate after about two years and might increase the risk of swarming at this time.

### Honey bee pheromones are complex!

They have multiple functions and are extremely important to the welfare of a bee colony. However, there is still much that is not known about these substances and their roles. One thing we do know is that every time a hive is opened up, much of the pheromone cocktail is lost and that it takes the colony at least 48 hours to restore the environment in the hive.

Lune Valley Newsletter Feb 2018

<p><b>Suffolk BKA:</b>  <a href="http://www.suffolkbeekeepers.co.uk">www.suffolkbeekeepers.co.uk</a>          County Secretary: Helen Davies,          Hallfield Cottage, Sproughton, IP8 3AD          ☎ 01473 742862;  <a href="mailto:secretary@suffolkbeekeepers.co.uk">secretary@suffolkbeekeepers.co.uk</a></p> <p><b>Leiston &amp; District BKA</b>  <a href="http://www.leistonbeekeepers.onesuffolk.net">www.leistonbeekeepers.onesuffolk.net</a>          Secretary: Penny Robertson, 42          Church Hill, Saxmundham, IP17 1ES          ☎ 01728 604388;  <a href="mailto:penn.robertson@me.com">penn.robertson@me.com</a></p> <p><b>Norwich &amp; District Beekeeping Club</b>          Secretary: Laraine Kuntz, Whitebird          Farm, Fen Lane, East Harling NR16 2NG          ☎ 01953 714765;  <a href="mailto:lkuntze@gmail.com">lkuntze@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Stowmarket &amp; District BKA</b>          Secretary: Sue Haynes, Creting          Hills Farm, Creting St Mary,          Stowmarket, IP6 8PZ. ☎ 01449          722570.  <a href="mailto:stowmarketbeekeepers@gmail.com">stowmarketbeekeepers@gmail.com</a></p> <p><b>Waveney Bee Group;</b>  <a href="http://www.waveneybeekeepers.co.uk">www.waveneybeekeepers.co.uk</a>          Secretary: Phil Mathews,          Blythwood House, Beccles Road.,          Holton IP19 8NQ          ☎ 07539 794308;  <a href="mailto:waveneybeekeepers@gmx.com">waveneybeekeepers@gmx.com</a></p> <p><b>West Suffolk BKA</b>  <a href="mailto:wsbka@yahoo.co.uk">wsbka@yahoo.co.uk</a>          Secretary: Carol Williamson, Brook          Vale House, Stowmarket Rd,          Rattlesden, Bury St Edmunds, IP30          0RR. ☎ 01449 736362</p>
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# Calendar

Ipswich & ES BKA **winter** meetings are held in the Scout Hall, Kesgrave IP5 1JF from 7:30pm.

Members of the six Associations forming the Suffolk Beekeepers' Association are welcome to attend any or all these meetings.

There will be other meetings but details were not available at the time we went to press.

Wed 4 Apr	Diane Ling: <b>Bee Lines in East Suffolk</b> TMT: Liz Marley: <i>Show cooking classes</i>	Ipswich & ES Richard Allen <a href="#">Contact</a>
Sat 7 Apr	<b>Bee Diseases <i>Nosema &amp; Amoeba</i></b> Berg Apton village hall NR15 1AA 10:00- 3:00 £5.00. All welcome.	Iceni MSG <a href="#">Keith Wilkinson</a> 01502 741201
Sun 22 Apr	Ted Hooper Memorial Talk Norman Carreck: <b>Eva Crane &amp; IBRA</b> The Lecture Theatre, Writtle College, Chelmsford CM1 3RR: 2:00pm £10	<a href="#">Essex BKA</a>
Fri 13- Sun 15 Apr	<b>BBKA Convention</b> , Harper Adams University, Newport, TF10 8NB	<a href="#">BBKA</a>
Sun 22 Apr	<b>Bee Health Day</b> , Dallinghoo IP13 OJX. 10:00 - 4:00. Booking essential. Bring own sandwiches.	Ipswich & ES <a href="#">Jeremy Quinlan</a> 01473 737700
Sat 28 Apr	<b>General Husbandry Training</b> (Theory) Dalinghoo village hall IP13 OJX 9:15 – 16:15	Ipswich & ES <a href="#">Jeremy Quinlan</a> 01473 737700
Sun 29 Apr	<b>First Wherstead apiary afternoon</b> 2:00 - 3:30. Then every Sunday until August.	Ipswich & ES <a href="#">See website</a>
Sat 12 May	<b>General Husbandry Training</b> (practical) Easton College Apiary NR9 5EA 12:00 15:30	Ipswich & ES <a href="#">Jeremy Quinlan</a> 01473 737700
Sat 30 Jun	<b>Apiary Safari</b> Ipswich Area Details to be confirmed	

I&ES BKA Committee		
President	Barrie Powell	01473 787199
Chairman	Jeremy Quinlan	01473 737700
Hon Treasurer	Jackie McQueen	01473 420187
Hon Secretary	Richard Allen	01473 719207
Committee	Betsy Reid	01473 736506
	Barry Crabtree	07484 101021
	Gillian Leung	01394 273193
	Helen Tuppen-Davis	01473 742862
	Sam Williams	01473 622872