



Romsey and District Beekeepers' Association Newsletter November 2024



Taken at Christine Coulsting's HBA microscopy workshop, this image shows pollen grains from asteraceae (daisy). The pollen is stained pink with fuchsin and surrounded by yellow globules of pollen kitt, a sticky protective coating. Photo by Steve Pickard.

If you have a photograph you would like to share with members, please email RDBKAnews@gmail.com.

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Upcoming Events

Fondant Bulk Order Deadline
Friday 9th November. See below.

Zoom Talk: "Varroa" with Kirsty Stainton

19th November from 7pm
bbka.org.uk/bbka-zoom-talks

Wax Processing Day

Saturday 14th December - all day
Awbridge Village Hall SO51 0HG
Email Gillian at rdbkasec@gmail.com

Zoom Talk: "Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus" with Giles Budge

21st January 2025 from 7pm
bbka.org.uk/bbka-zoom-talks

Talk by Lars Chittka, author of "The Mind of a Bee"

11th February 2025. Time TBC.
Itchen Abbas Village Hall SO21 1BQ

Zoom Talk: "A Bee Inspector Calls" with Kieth Bartlam

18th February 2025 from 7pm
bbka.org.uk/bbka-zoom-talks

BIBBA course Sustainability: Bees and Queens for Everyone

22nd February 2025
Ampfield Village Hall SO51 9BJ
bibba.com/sustainability-bees-and-queens-for-everyone/

Zoom Talk: "Preparing For Exams" with Jenny Morgan

18th March 2025 from 7pm
bbka.org.uk/bbka-zoom-talks

Bulk Fondant Purchase

We are able to offer members a special price on [1kg bags of Fondant](#) from Simon the Beekeeper. Normally around £25 plus delivery for 12 kg we are able to offer a box of 12 x 1kg packs for just £19 each (to be collected locally).

If you would like to order, please contact Gillian on RDBKASec@gmail.com **before the order is placed on 9th November**. After this date you will have to purchase direct from the supplier and will not be able to take advantage of this bulk offer.



Association Apiary Update

Winter preparations continue, with the ACA colonies now well fed with heavy sugar syrup and enjoying the protection of mouse guards (right), woodpecker mesh (below) and some additional insulation in the roof spaces to help maintain a comfortable temperature and reduce excess condensation.



On the 17th of November we will be having some clean and tidy up fun at the ACA, we want to welcome you all to join us and help get the apiary ready for another great year in 2025.

We will have some hot drinks and cake available so please bring your own mug and of course any cake contributions.

If you can also bring with you flasks of hot water and if you have a 5ltr bottle just some water.

We look forward to seeing lots of members, beginners and experienced Beekeepers alike.

Future sessions will be held on the following Sundays from 10AM. All members are welcome:

- 17th November
- 15th December
- 12th January
- 16th February

If you plan to join us, would like to borrow a bee-suit, or for more information, contact Moraig: romseybeekeepers@gmail.com. This will ensure the team are prepared for the numbers coming along and able to share any last minute changes to the planned sessions.

Wax processing day, Saturday 14th December

We invite you, whether experienced or not, to a day filled with the scent of beeswax and memories of a summer (such as it was) spent with bees.

Whether you are experienced or new to beekeeping, whether you have buckets of wax lingering in the shed or not a scrap, our wax processing day will be a great day out.

We will be checking through buckets of discarded and collected wax, picking out the best and the worst. Some wax, the blackest, is beyond recovery but makes great firelighters. Wax can be extracted from everything else and can be taken to suppliers such as Thornes to exchange for goods or fresh foundation. However, we carefully pick out the freshest pieces of comb because they are perfect for candles and other items.



The association's steam wax extractor will be in action. We will also be fine-filtering the best wax and moulding candles from it, and will be making soap and a simple cosmetic from the purest. Last year we made a solid hand lotion bar; this year it will be something different. You will be able to take candles, soap and the cosmetics home.



John Hanks has kindly agreed to bring his candle-dipping equipment and show how to make beautiful candles the traditional way.

As this is an association training event, we will only be charging the cost of materials for goods taken home at the end of the day (candles, soap, cosmetics). We open at 10 a.m. and finish by 4 p.m.

The event will be held at Awbridge Village Hall, SO51 0HG

We will give priority to wax from the ACA, but please bring along any of your own that needs to be cleaned.

Our previous wax processing day was greatly enjoyed by all who attended. Don't miss out this year. Email Gillian at rdbkasec@gmail.com to reserve your place.

RDBKA Honey Show Prizegiving

In celebration of another successful Honey Show, association members gathered at Romsey Town Hall for the annual prizegiving ceremony.

Trophies were awarded by Chairman Peter Hurst - some to familiar faces but also some new to the Honey Show. For the full list see below.

Following the prize-giving, Gillian Bird gave a “potted history” of beekeeping and the development of the hives we use today, and Moraig Forrest-Charde a talk about integrated pest management and how this has been used at the ACA to manage varroa levels over the past season.



Nick Jazwinski receives one of several awards after achieving the highest points total in all classes.



Gillian Bird, recipient of both the Chapman Cup and Geoffrey Osborne Trophy.



Christine Coulsting: winner of the Mary Britton (Cake Class) trophy.



Sebastian Suski receives the Millennium Bowl for the highest total in classes 1 to 10 and 31 (honey).

Trophy	Awarded For	Recipient
Chapman Cup	Highest total for classes 11,12,13,14	Gillian Bird
Geoffrey Osborne Trophy	Highest points for classes 16,17,18,19	Gillian Bird
Junior Award	For the highest total points in the Junior classes	Waterside Primary school
Lalonde Trophy	Member with 4 colonies or less having highest total for all classes	Nick Jazwinski
Mary Britton Trophy	Highest points for cake class	Christine Coulsting
Millenium Bowl	Highest total for classes 1 to 10 and 31	Sebastian Suski
Peter Howard Cup	Highest total for classes 7,8,9,10	Nick Jazwinski
Peter Webster Trophy	Highest points for mead	Quinton Stone
Photography Prize	Best 3 exhibits in he photography class	Tracey Hood
Photography Prize	Best 3 exhibits in he photography class	Christine Coulsting
Photography Prize	Best 3 exhibits in he photography class	Joe Murphy
President's Trophy	The best exhibit from classes 1 - 15 and 31	Will Rolt
RDBKA Challenge Cup	Highest total for all classes	Nick Jazwinski
Richard Stone Cup	Highest points in the Novice Class	Jonathan Barnsley

Gard'Apis traps - last few remaining

The association has a small number of Gard'Apis Asian Hornet Monitoring Traps for sale to members at a discounted price of £15 (RRP £23.99).



This trap has been designed to be more selective than many other traps (anything bigger than an Asian Hornet will not gain access and anything smaller will escape through the mesh sides). It is also a monitoring rather than a killing trap - important as observing worker hornets' lines of flight and other behaviours can help locate nests. Effective control comes from the removal of these nests rather than the killing of individuals. See www.gardapis.co.uk/ for more information and instructions.

To purchase a discounted trap ready for next season contact Will Rolt at RDBKANews@gmail.com.

BIBBA course: Sustainability for Honey Bees and Queens

There is growing concern amongst beekeepers of all abilities and experience regarding the impact of the importation of bees and queens. Possible risks include:-

- The introduction of pests (e.g. Small Hive Beetle and Tropilaelaps – both notifiable), diseases and pathogens.
- Aggression in subsequent generations.
- Unsuitability to our fickle climate, along with higher than expected winter losses.
- Genetic contamination of both managed and free-living honey bee populations.

See <https://bibba.com/imports/> for more information

All National BKAs have concerns, so discourage the importation of bees and queens.

There will be a series of one-day regional courses during the winter to help and encourage everyone from the small-scale beekeeper upwards (and BKAs) to produce bees and queens from locally adapted stock, using simple techniques at little or no cost.

Topics include:-

- Why raise your own local adapted queens?
- Addressing perceived problems in producing queens in the U.K.
- Overwintering bees and queens.
- Demystifying queen rearing for beekeepers.
- Simple queen rearing methods.
- Simple and efficient ways to produce nuclei.
- Methods for producing small and larger quantities of bees and queens.
- Benefits of teaching apiaries with a queen rearing facility.
- Queen rearing as a collective exercise.
- Producing bees and queens whilst still getting a good honey crop.
- Queen rearing and bee improvement as part of your beekeeping.

This BIBBA course is aimed at beekeepers of all abilities from beginners to the most experienced, as well as BKA officials, beekeeping teachers, apiary managers, etc. Each course will typically run from 10am to 4pm and, to keep costs down, please bring along your own lunch and refreshments. Booking must be made in advance as courses usually sell out before the day.

Our most local course will be held at Ampfield Village Hall on Saturday 22nd February (other locations and dates are offered too). Cost is £12.88 and tickets are available from bibba.com/sustainability-bees-and-queens-for-everyone/

Situation Vacant: South West Bee Keepers' Forum

The South West Beekeepers' Forum (SWBKF) brings together ten beekeeping associations stretching from Cornwall to Hampshire and including Devon, Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire together with Jersey. The Forum is the only regional grouping of beekeeping associations in England .

The SWBKF is urgently looking for a new Hon. Secretary. The link below will take you to 2 documents with more information about the role.. There is a quarterly meeting on the 26th of November so it would be great if we could put some names forward.

Contact RDBKAsec@gmail.com for more information.

BBKA: Online talks available

The next in the BBKA series of Zoom talks will be "Varroa" with Kirsty Stainton on Tuesday 19th November at 7pm. A recording of this talk will be available on YouTube for those unable to watch live.

Kirsty Stainton works as the Technical Manager for the National Bee Unit. She worked at Fera Science from 2016 to 2020 where she performed research for the NBU that included molecular detection of the invasive pests, *Vespa velutina nigrithorax* (Asian hornet) and *Aethina tumida* (Small hive beetle), molecular analysis of the Asian hornet diet and research into the use of antivirals to treat honey bees. She then spent 2 years working on honey bee virus research before moving into science communication. She wrote the monthly beginner's series for BeeCraft in 2023 and wrote the book - 'A practical guide to Varroa management'.

In this talk, Kirsty will describe the biology of the parasitic mite, Varroa destructor, why Varroa mites are bad for honey bee colonies and how to recognise symptoms of infestation. She will then provide an explanation of the various ways for Varroa monitoring and a comprehensive overview of the treatment options available in the UK, including husbandry techniques that can be used to reduce mite loads without chemical intervention. This will be a jargon-free presentation designed to help you chose the right treatment for you and your bees.

Further talks will be:

January 21st ("Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus", Giles Budge)

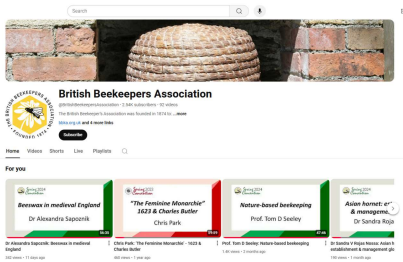
February 18th ("A Bee Inspector Calls")

March 18th ("Preparing for Exams")

All talks and recordings of previous topics can be accessed via the following link:

www.bbka.org.uk/bbka-zoom-talks

BBKA Youtube Channel



The BBKA has a comprehensive [Youtube Channel](#) which includes many significant talks from previous National Conventions as well as many relevant to those of us studying for BBKA examinations.

The range of subject matter is diverse, and the following links will take you to just a few recordings of lectures from the most recent convention held in April 2024.

Dr Eleanor Jones: 2023 Asian hornet outbreak. Plus Q&A with Dr Belinda Phillipson (DEFRA Bee Health Policy Lead) and Professor Nicola Spence (DEFRA Deputy Director for Bees)

youtu.be/vxPvtX9mMj4



Professor Tom Seeley reviews the ways in which living conditions differ between wild and managed colonies, and will also show how we can pursue beekeeping in a way that is cantered less on treating a bee colony as a honey factory, and more on nurturing the lives of our bees. The main question then becomes “What can I give to my bees?” rather than “What can I take from my bees?”

youtu.be/j8dNynzvLM



Dr Sandra V Rojas Nossa: Asian hornet: establishment & management globally

youtu.be/QfZzowbzsJO



Dr Alexandra Sapoznik is Senior Lecturer in Late Medieval History at King’s College London. Her research focuses on the relationships between economy, environment and culture in Britain and Europe.

youtu.be/qGcxT8ptrl8

