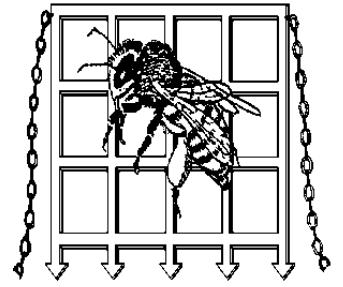


Romsey & District Beekeepers' Association

October 2021 Newsletter



Monthly Meeting on Wednesday 27th October at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom

Queen raising is not to be confused with queen breeding. Queen raising is a straightforward and rewarding part of beekeeping, yet sometimes it's avoided on the assumption that it's too complicated. However, understanding a few basics and using a small amount of standard equipment we can all raise a few queens from the bees that we already have.

Dan Basterfield is the guest speaker at this meeting. He will compare a few approaches and look at the equipment used. He will consider what is realistic and achievable for a hobby beekeeper as an individual and for a beekeeping association as a group.

Dan Basterfield (NDB) is Chairman of the NDB Examinations Board and a council member of IBRA (International Bee Research Association). He is a Master Beekeeper and a commercial bee farmer, raising queens for sale in addition to selling honey at the family bee farm premises in Devon.

Questions will be welcome – start your list now!

The Zoom link will be sent out to members nearer the time.

BBKA Modules

Information given to John Hanks:

“BBKA are currently finalising the new syllabi for the Module exams. They will be putting this live on the website and sending it out to the March candidates in the 1st week in October. If you are a candidate or part of a study group please make sure that you are aware of any changes that might impact on your study or revision.”

It's too late to enter November modules; the next exam date is 19th March 2022.

Taking at least one BBKA module is an excellent way of building on your beekeeping skills and knowledge. You can find out more at the BBKA website (www.bbka.org.uk/modules). Module 1 is the best, all-round place to start. Interested? Email Christine for information without commitment!

At a Glance

Wednesday 27th October – Zoom meeting – “Queen Raising” with Dan Basterfield

Thursday 21st to Saturday 23rd October – the National Honey Show at Sandown Park (see below)

Saturday 13th November – BBKA module exams

Saturday 20th November – HBA Convention at Sparsholt College – more information below

Wednesday 24th November – Zoom meeting – topic to be announced

8th – 10th April 2022 – BBKA Spring Convention at Harper Adams University, TF10 8NB



Sedum – a favourite with late foragers

HBA Convention Saturday 20th November 2021



Hampshire Beekeepers' Association will hold a Convention on Saturday 20th November at Sparsholt College. There will be a packed and varied programme featuring excellent speakers and including at least one workshop.

Meeting with and chatting to other beekeepers in a social setting will be wonderful after such a long period of absence.

It is hoped that an online option will be available for those who do not wish to attend in person; this has yet to be confirmed.

You will receive an email with more details soon. Numbers will be limited so put the date in your diary and check your emails regularly.

National Honey Show - Thursday 21st to Saturday 23rd October 2021

Time is running out to book your ticket for the National Honey Show at Sandown Park. Honey shows are few and far between this year but the (other) NHS has spent time considering how to make this a safe event where you will be able to see the best of the best in a vast range of classes.

Please note:

- You MUST pre-book from the website, www.honeyshow.co.uk/. No tickets will be available on the door
- Workshops might be fully booked by now, but it's worth checking the website
- There is an option to watch the lectures from the comfort of your own home, which will cost £5

You will find further information on the Honey Show website; click the link to download their newsletter.

R&DBKA Virtual Honey Show 2021



Our association's honey show will be "virtual" again this year, so you can still display your bees' efforts with pride.

This is a show open to all members. It's easy to enter: just read the schedule (you received a copy by email on 21st September and it's in the members' area of the R&DBKA website) and take photos. Send them to Steve Pickard no later than 5 p.m. on Friday 15th October.

Voting opens on Saturday 16th October at mid-day and ALL MEMBERS can vote! Simply go to the members' area of the website, view the entries, and pick your favourite in each class.

Entries are displayed anonymously, and you will not be able to vote for your own.

Voting closes at 5pm on Friday 22nd October 2021. 1st, 2nd and 3rd places in each class are awarded according to members' votes.

Best, 2nd and 3rd in Show will be awarded by our president John Goss at the Association's October meeting on 27th October.

Go on – send in your photos - your bees and hive products are worth it!

Apiary visit, Sunday 19th September at the Association Apiary

Although showers had been forecast for the Sunday afternoon, the day turned out to be pleasantly bright and warm – sufficiently good conditions to take a last look at the colonies and see how they are progressing.



There are currently four colonies at the apiary; three of them are hived in Nationals and one in a Langstroth.

All of the colonies are strong, and queenright, each with plenty of bees to fill the brood box.

A couple of weeks previously, the team had carried out a full disease check and no problems were found apart from a little chalk brood.

Varroa boards had recently shown varied varroa mite drops. To avoid varroa re-infestation across the apiary, all of the colonies are being treated at the same time with Apiguard. After the colonies were checked, the Apiguard trays were replaced with the second tray to complete the treatment.

Minimal feeding has been carried out during the treatment period, but increased feeding will shortly be started to enable the bees to process the syrup and store it around the brood box for winter.



To ensure everyone had the opportunity to handle the bees, we split into two teams.

All the queens are marked, this blue queen is from last year, and others are marked white as they were raised in 2021.

Queens were still laying eggs, but the records show that the brood nests are reducing in size.

Diana attended one of our taster days this year, but this was her first visit to the association apiary, and also the first time she had handled bees herself.

Once the hives were closed up, we enjoyed coffee and some scrummy homemade cake – beekeepers do make good bakers!!



Over tea and cake we shared what we had all enjoyed during the afternoon:

- Seeing different approaches and experiences – cakes were excellent too!
- Handling bees for the first time and spotting the queen.
- Working with old friends again.
- Reassuring to hear everyone having a difficult year – helps stop panic over bees.
- Seeing the super placed under the brood box to encourage them to take up the honey.
- Seeing bees and other beekeepers – we've missed meeting up
- Seeing 'ghost' bees coming back to the hive with Himalayan Balsam.

(by Christine Coulsting)

Plants and the Other Pollinators



Haynes, the well-known publisher, launched a book called “Bee Garden” in 2020, currently £9.74 at <https://haynes.com/en-gb/bee-garden> or Amazon.

This is not only a list of plants for your garden; it's also a beautifully illustrated catalogue of the wide range of common insects that will visit and pollinate.

The section headings are “Wild bees”, “Bumblebees”, “Hotspot plants” and “Filler plants”.

If you can't tell a carder bee from a miner bee, this book will make interesting reading.

Image: Haynes

Winter Reading

As we settle down for winter and spend less time with our bees, it is a good time to read about them. BBKA come to our aid with a wonderful series of informative booklets.

The series began with the intention of reprinting relevant articles from previous BBKA News editions, supplemented by new material. The series has expanded and many new articles have been included. Each booklet covers its topic in a concise, complete, up-to-date and relevant manner. There is something for everyone:

In the Apiary	£4	An excellent introduction for beginners
Colony management	£4	A month by month guide to caring for your bees. All beekeepers, especially those taking Module 1
Swarming	£4	Learn why bees swarm, how to recognise the signs, and what to do. Suitable for all beekeepers, essential for those taking Module 1
Feeding honey bees	£4	What to fed, when and why. All beekeepers, especially those taking Module 1
Practical mead making	£4	The methods and equipment to produce a range of meads. Suitable for everyone
Honey	£10	Everything you could want to know about honey. All beekeepers, especially Module 2
Flower families for forage	£4	Clear explanations of flower families for foraging bees, and why pollinators and plants need each other. All beekeepers, especially Module 2
Healthy hive guide	£7	A concise, illustrated description to help identify health issues. A 'must' for all beekeepers, essential for those taking Module 3
Integrated pest management	£8	Varroa and DWV remain the biggest threats. This explains how you can manage Varroa levels by combining methods. Relevant to every beekeeper and essential for those taking Module 3
Natural Varroa resistant honey bees	£4	Natural resistance does not happen overnight. This explains the research and how we can progress towards resistance. Suitable for all beekeepers and essential for those taking Module 3
Honey bee anatomy	£4	Every part of honey bee explained and illustrated. Suitable for all beekeepers, especially Module 3 or those with microscopes
General husbandry	£10	An excellent, all-round guide. All beekeepers from Basic upwards, especially those who would like to improve their skills
Queen rearing	£10	Not to be confused with "queen breeding". Explains how hobby beekeepers can use their bees to produce better queens, reduce disease and avoid replacing losses by buying. Suitable for all beekeepers above Basic, especially those taking Module 7
Advanced Husbandry	£10	An in-depth explanation of a full range of beekeeping topics. All beekeepers from intermediate upwards
Honey Bee Genetics	£7	Complex and fascinating, but not for the faint of heart! Suitable for all beekeepers with a basic understanding of the genetics. Heavy going, but worth persisting. Recommended for Module 7

All BBKA News Special Issues are available from: www.bbka.org.uk/shop. Prices include postage and packing.

DIY Honey Balm for Hands

Here comes winter; the season of chapped hands. If you have a dab of honey and a sliver of beeswax you can easily make a readily absorbed and natural remedy for your hard-worked skin. Most of the ingredients are found in supermarkets. The only unusual one is shea butter but you can buy small amounts from The Soapery (www.thesoapery.co.uk/).

The quantities are given by volume and don't need to be measured precisely, but be careful to balance the solid and liquid ratio so that it's neither too hard nor too soft; more like a smooth paste. Neither should you add too much honey or the result will be sticky.

If you only have a lump of beeswax, chip a piece off and melt it gently in hot water. Let it cool to form a thin, flat sheet on the surface that will be easy to manage when it has dried.

These ingredients will roughly half-fill an 8oz honey jar (or similar) with a soft paste.

6½ teaspoons coconut oil

6½ teaspoons almond oil

5 teaspoons beeswax

1 teaspoon shea butter

1½ teaspoons honey

5-8 drops of lavender (or other) essential oil

Put the coconut oil, beeswax, shea butter and almond oil in a heat-proof bowl and rest it over simmering water until it is almost melted. The last pieces will melt by themselves. Do not overheat the mix; oils are highly flammable.

When it is completely liquid, stir in the honey and essential oil. Keep stirring gently until it starts to turn opaque then quickly decant it into your jar before it firms.



A small dab is enough to sooth your dry skin. As there are no preservatives in this recipe, it's best to make small quantities.

ACA (Bluebell Apiary) Report September 2021

Winter preparations are in full swing at the Bluebell Apiary, with all colonies now being fed. The Apiary Team hosted the final apiary visit of the season on 19th September, welcoming back old friends, and making some new.



Image: Christine Coulsting

The glorious weather of late September allowed some late season inspections to take place, and to see how the colonies' winter stores are developing.

Another session with our Beginners, focussing on winter preparations, took place on 26th September, perhaps offering the final chance to inspect the colonies. It has been a pleasure to see so many visitors to the Apiary, and look forward to welcoming more in the coming months.

Everyone who visited handled the bees, with members of the Team pointing out features in the comb, and explaining how these change throughout the season, especially towards winter. Varroa treatments were discussed, including the benefits of the various treatments at different times of the year.

After all the colonies had been checked, further bee chat took place over tea and some delicious cakes made by the Apiary Team. Another session with our Beginners, focussing on winter preparations, took place on 26th September, perhaps offering the final chance to inspect the colonies. It has been a pleasure to see so many visitors to the Apiary, and look forward to welcoming more in the coming months.

(by Steve Pickard)

ANOTHER Reminder – the R&DBKA Virtual Honey Show 2021

The schedule and 'rules' are on our website but here is a quick run-down in case you have not yet looked. All entries are electronic – classes 1 to 9 a photo, class 10 a Word or *pdf* document.

The timeline:

When to enter: NOW

View entries on the website: from midday on 30th September

Closing date for entries: 5pm on Friday 15th October 2021

Voting opens: midday on Saturday 16th October

Voting closes: 5pm on Friday 22nd October 2021

Winners announced: at the Association's October meeting on 27th October.

Class 1 - Three jars of honey prepared for sale and judged for marketing appeal.

Class 2 - A display of four ornamental objects made of beeswax, colouring permitted, excluding candles.

Class 3 - A decorated cake made to any recipe, decorated with a beekeeping theme and displayed on a plate.

Class 4 - Six decorated biscuits made to any recipe, decorated with a beekeeping theme and displayed on a plate.

Class 5 - A decorative exhibit to display honey together with pure moulded beeswax or mead, or both. Colouring of wax is permitted, and any size and shape of jar may be used.

Class 6 - A photograph, subject of interest to beekeepers.

Class 7 - A photograph from your apiary that captures the heart and soul of beekeeping in your apiary during 2021.

Class 8 - A photograph of your honey in an unusual situation, traditional or as humorous as you wish.

Class 9 - Any decorative or artistic exhibit including needlecraft relating to bees or beekeeping.

Class 10 - Poetry – subject of interest to beekeepers, the original work of the exhibitor



Congratulations!

Four of our members passed The Basic this year – all with Credit. Well done to Colin Forrest-Charde, Moraig Forrest-Charde, Lindsay Parson and Stephen Pickard.

Janelle Quitman took the next step and passed Module 1, “Honey bee management”.

We would normally present certificates and badges at a meeting so that we can applaud their success but no physical meetings are planned just yet so here we go ...



Janelle

A big round of applause for these members, please!



Stephen



Colin



Moraig



Lindsay