



The Hive

TTVBKA Newsletter

June 2025

In this edition

[Update from the Chair](#)

[AGM Summary](#)

[Swarm Collectors](#)

[Meet the Committee](#)

[World Bee Day](#)

[Around the Apiary -
Jobs for June & July
The 'June Gap'](#)

[Talking shop](#)

[Young Peoples
Education Group](#)

[The latest from the
BBKA](#)
[BBKA updates](#)
[Zoom talks](#)

[Yellow-legged \(Asian\)
hornet update](#)

[Open Day 2025](#)

[TTVBKA Dates for the
diary](#)

[A Microscopic History!](#)

[Bee-stowing our
knowledge](#)

[Combing through the
news](#)



Update from the Chair

Dear Member,

Greetings from me as your new Chairman and very many thanks to Ray for his hard work over the last few years. I like to think of the Association as an undiscovered oasis of beekeeping in the heart of Twickenham and we are truly fortunate to have such wonderful facilities and an apiary in beautiful grounds. Please come and revisit to see the changes if you have not been here in a while.

Firstly, we are fortunate to have had, so far, such a great year weather wise and so I hope all your bees are making record amounts of honey and by now reducing their urge to swarm. There is a list of Association events in the newsletter and on the website, but our next and biggest event is the Open Day on June 7th, and I encourage you all to come along and support on that day.

I have inherited an Association in excellent health and with my committee we have already accomplished many changes especially in infrastructure (new apiary layouts, storage shed, new equipment etc.) Our organisation into smaller subcommittees means we are devoting time and energy to make the Association stronger, and I encourage you to look at the biographies of the Committee members where you may see the areas they are responsible for (eg.

BBKA Swarm Collector List

As a member of TTVBKA we can allow members to be shown on the BBKA swarm collectors map.

Members must request and be approved to be shown on the map, to qualify you need to be patient with taking calls from the public, have a good knowledge of beekeeping (preferably a Basic Certificate) and be able to ask questions to understand what is happening and how best to help the caller (sometimes very frustrating). You need to know what information to gather and what to take to a swarm collection.

If you cannot attend but are convinced it is a viable collection you can share the information with our TTVBKA) WhatsApp group.

To apply please send the following information to membership@twickerbees.co.uk

- Swarm list post code (This can be a generic postcode i.e bank, post office, etc. if you don't want your home postcode on the map)
- Swarm list mobile
- Swarm list land line

You cannot be on either list if you are collecting swarms for commercial gain as this would invalidate your BBKA liability Insurance.

If you are already on the map, please check your listing is up to date:

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/find-a-local-swarm-collector>

Education, Shop, Marketing Communication, Library etc.). If you have any suggestions, then please contact the relevant committee member. We welcome any and all ideas to make our Association better.

The biggest challenge this year is to convert the Association into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and work on this is already well advanced. The School Education groups continue and the organisation of this is a real triumph in generating interest in bees and pollinators in the next generation of children. For those learning beekeeping and wanting to sit exams, we offer a structured teaching programme, and you can read about the options later in the newsletter or speak to Ray as he is leading the teaching programme. I make a plea to all members to support our shop and again please read about this in the newsletter. We are competitive against other purchasing options, but we need your support if the shop is to continue operating.

Finally, I hope to grow our Association to make it one of the leading beekeeping Associations in the UK. We have had many famous members pass through our doors, and we have a long history of beekeeping and so I hope as Chairman that I can continue this excellent history and guide the Association through new challenges.

I wish you all a very successful beekeeping year.
Greg

AGM Summary

Always an important date in the TTVBKA diary, the Annual General Meeting is not only a chance for members to meet the committee and other beekeepers for some bee related chat but an opportunity for our members to contribute their ideas to our association.

Although only a small cross-section of the membership came to our AGM, those who did attend had positive feedback, ideas & suggestions.

At this year's AGM in March, the Committee presented reports on key areas and put forward two proposals for members to consider.

The education of the general public, both adults and children, is a key priority and the number we get through the gates continues to increase. The annual Open Day & Honey Show remain popular with the local community and provide the Association with the opportunity to raise both awareness of bees & pollinators among the public. The Young Peoples Education team have hosted and visited over 550 children & young people. Plans are in place to expand this number by engaging youth groups, including Scouts, as well as a local outreach initiative at Mole.

Our Adult Education group continues to provide excellent training, mentoring and support for both new & experienced beekeepers, more information on our training programme can be found in the Bee-stowing Our Knowledge article .

The associations finances remain strong. This year we expect to spend more of our reserves to fund the CIO transition.

There were no significant updates from the BBKA & BDI (Bee Diseases Insurance) delegates, but members are reminded that a maximum of 3 hives are covered by your standard membership & BDI, if you exceed 3, no hives are covered. Additional hive cover must be purchased for each extra hive.

Members voted on and approved two proposals put forward by the committee:

Membership fees

The BBKA AGM has approved increased capitation of £2 per member for 2026. The committee proposed that the TTVBKA pass this increase on to its members along with raising the TTVBKA portion of the membership from £25 to £27 per year this is the first such increase in 8 years. The increased fees are applicable from Under this proposal the 2026 TTVBKA membership charges will be:

Membership Category	Current	1-10-2025
Registered Member & School member	£48.00	£52.00
Partner Member	£38.50	£42.00
Country Member	£30.00	£33.00
Associate	£20.00	£22.00
Junior Member	£14.50	£12.00

Mole Membership

The TTVBKA committee proposed changes to both the fees & terms applied to Mole Apiary. The hive stand fees at Mole will be increased by £2 in 2026 to £14 per year per hive with a maximum of 2 stands per beekeeper. Members with stands at Mole will be required to sign up to the Terms of Engagement for the Mole Apiary, an agreement that all Mole members contribute to the upkeep and activities of the Mole Apiary and to the educational objectives of the TTVBKA. This will mean that to keep bees at mole you will be asked to contribute to community at Mole Apiary.

The Election of Officers & Committee finished off the evening. Ray Nicol & Jonathan Palmer both stepped down as Chairperson & President respectively, after completing 3 years of service. Greg Elliott was elected as the new Chair and Warwick Francis & Julie Hill were both re-elected as Honorary Treasurer & Honorary Secretary.

The committee all stood for re-election and were duly voted in.

If you have any questions, feedback or suggestions for the committee, please email chairman@twickerbees.co.uk



Meet your TTVBKA Officers & Committee Members



Greg Elliott – Chairperson

chairman@twickerbees.co.uk

Greg lives in St Margarets and has been keeping bees for 11 years having learned his beekeeping skills at the TTVBKA.

As well as the position of Chair, Greg heads up the Maintenance and Building Management group, responsible for the upkeep & repair of the Twickenham & Mole sites.



Julie Hill – Honorary Secretary

secretary@twickerbees.co.uk

Julie has been a beekeeper and member of Association for 13 years, living and keeping bees in Twickenham. Julie has taken and passed a number of assessments and exams including the Basic Assessment, Honey Bee Pests and Diseases, Honey Bee Health, and Honey Bee Products.

Julie is Honorary Secretary and part of the Education group, working with schools & young persons, and member of the Asian Hornet Action Group.



Warwick Francis – Honorary Treasurer

treasurer@twickerbees.co.uk

Warwick joined the TTVBKA in 2008. A committee member since 2010, Warwick took on the role of Treasurer in 2019. He has been the Membership Secretary since 2016 and takes the lead in the organisation of public events.

Warwick keeps bees at his allotment in Bedfont, Middlesex. He attained his Basic Assessment in 2009, General Husbandry Certificate in 2017 and recently qualified as a Basic Assessment assessor.



Christine Betley

Chris has kept bees for over 10 years and joined the Association in 2013.

Chris runs the Gardening group, taking care of the grounds and gardens at Twickenham and Mole. Chris also participates in the Adult Education group, acting as a teacher and mentor to new beekeepers and is the BDI association delegate.



Patrick Brennan

patrick.brennan@twickerbees.co.uk

Pat has been a member since 2011. He has passed the Basic & Honey Bee Health assessments and the Honey Bee Diseases, Pests and Poisoning exam.

Pat is responsible for the Honey Prep Room and Library hire and leads the Member Talks & Workshops group, a new initiative that will develop and organise interesting & topical member events.

He assists in the running of the association Equipment Centre and participates in the IT, CIO Transition & Asian Hornet Action groups.



Sally Ewen

Sally joined the TTVBKA winter course in 2019. Nowadays she manages about 15 colonies and is also really passionate about bee photography. She has passed BBKA written modules 1, 3 and 6.

Sally looks after the association laboratory and is responsible for maintaining the equipment, ensuring safety & compliance and developing new workshops and clinics for members, as well as developing the knowledge base for members to undertake the BBKA

Microscopy Certificate.

Sally is also a keen member of the Adult Education group, tutoring beginner groups in the craft of beekeeping.

Irek Gajowniczek

Irek teaches and mentors experienced beekeepers for their Basic Assessment as part of the Adult Education group.



Harvey Kirk

A member of Mole Apiary from 2008, Harvey became a member of Twickenham when they merged in 2009 and keeps 15 hives over three sites. Harvey joined the committee in 2011, working with the late, great Ted Chatley in the Equipment Centre.

Harvey now manages the Association Equipment Centre, a not-for-profit 'shop' with a discounted selection of hives parts, frames and foundation along with other useful items.

Alex Lawrence

Alex is a member of the Maintenance & Gardening group. He also participates in the Mole User group.



Mandy Moss

newsletter@twickerbees.co.uk or
cioproject@twickerbees.co.uk

Mandy has been a member since 2019 and beekeeping with Greg since 2020. She gained her Basic Certificate in 2023.

Mandy leads in the development and management of the associations marketing communications, web site & social media activities. She is a member of the IT & Asian Hornet Action Group teams and participates in both Public events & Member Talks & Workshops groups. In addition, Mandy tutors new & experienced beekeepers and is currently heading up the CIO transition project.



Ray Nicol

exams@twickerbees.co.uk

Ray has been keeping bees for 14 years after joining the association 15 years ago.

Ray manages the Twickenham Apiary team who are responsible for bee management, bee health, equipment and other apiary related activities, including Asian Hornet awareness and response.

He leads the Adult Education team, helping new & experienced beekeepers achieve practical skills & certification. He steers the IT team and contributes to the Mole User, Laboratory & CIO transition groups.



Jane Sachdev

schools@twickerbees.co.uk

Jane joined the Winter course in January 2017 and has kept bees since Summer 2017 at our Mole apiary.

Jane leads the Mole User group, set up to develop a strategy for Mole's future, and crucially, she also leads our Education group, responsible for children & young people engagement.



Phil Webb

Phil started keeping bees 6 years ago when he became a member of the association.

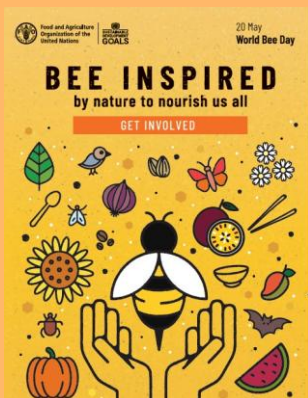
Phil is actively involved in the Maintenance & Apiary Management groups, ensuring our facilities and equipment are well maintained



Candy Williamson

Candy started beekeeping back in 2011...she thinks!

Candy is a member of the Education groups, working with children & young people, and the Honey Prep Room team.



World Bee Day

Chosen to commemorate the birth of pioneering Slovenian beekeeper **Anton Janša** in 1734, 20th May was designated **World Bee Day** by the **United Nations** in 2017, with the aim to raise public awareness and attention around the world to the importance of protecting and preserving bees and other pollinators.

This year's theme, "**Bee inspired by nature to nourish us all**", highlights the critical roles bees and other pollinators play in agrifood systems and the health of our planet's ecosystems. Pollinators are increasingly threatened by habitat loss, unsustainable agricultural practices, climate change and pollution. Their decline jeopardises food production, increases costs and exacerbates food insecurity, particularly for rural communities.

Find out more about this year's theme by reading the '[Get Involved](#)' guide.

Around the Apiary

June & July

June can be a challenging month for beekeepers. Colonies can still be primed to swarm and the 'June Gap' can significantly impact the health and productivity of bee colonies

- Continue weekly inspections, staying vigilant for Queen cells and other signs of swarming
- Check brood space, June is peak brood time, and a lack of laying space can induce swarming
- Continue adding Supers for nectar flow before a colony gets congested
- Remove any sealed honey frames for extraction leaving a sufficient amount for the bees. Replace frames with spares while extracting so the colony doesn't get 'honey-bound'
- Plan for honey extraction - check your extractor is clean and ready for use and stock-check your jars and lids
- Keep your swarm collection kit ready!

Did you know, we have a Honey Preparation & Extraction Room and Extractors for home use that can be hired by members. For more information contact patrick.brennan@twickerbees.co.uk

July sees colonies at their maximum size, the rate of egg-laying will now start to decline and it's time to think about preparing for winter.

- Continue weekly inspections. Swarming is mainly over but a late round of swarms can catch you out
- Remove honey frames. Supers can be extracted when around 75% of the frame is capped. Use a refractor to [measure the moisture content](#)
- Start thinking about what colonies may need uniting to improve chances of over-wintering. The [newspaper method](#) works well
- Do a [full disease & varroa](#) check to plan for Autumn treatments
- Keep an eye open for wasps and take relevant precautions

What is the 'June Gap'?

The 'June gap' is a phenomenon which occurs in the UK and some other countries when, after the spring flowers and abundance of pollen & nectar but before the summer yields, there is a shortage of forage available for bees. During this period, colonies are at risk of starvation due to a lack of nectar and/or because swarming has depleted their stores and reduced the number of flying bees.

You can often tell if there's a June gap by watching the hive entrance. If there's little activity and no pollen being brought in, it's likely a dearth of flowers. You may also notice a change in temperament; bees can become more 'aggressive' during this time.

A full-size colony should always have sufficient stores for 10 days about 5kg (11lb). A full BS deep frame holds approximately 2kg (4.5lb) of honey and a super 1kg (2.25lb). When removing any spring honey bear in mind that there may be a June gap and the colony will need enough stores to survive until your next inspection.

If you believe a colony is low on stores, you should consider feeding them a summer sugar syrup (0.8 litre water to 1 kg sugar – equal volumes water and sugar) via a rapid feeder directly above the brood. Avoid feeding colonies that you expect to harvest honey from unless absolutely necessary, it may lead to the honey becoming contaminated with sugar.

For more information on feeding, read the NBUs ['Feeding sugar to bees, Best practice guideline No. 7a'](#)



Talking Shop...

Are you taking advantage our member only 'shop'?

Run by our friendly volunteers, the association's not-for-profit Equipment Centre is for exclusive use of our members.

We offer a wide selection of hive parts, frames, and foundation for common hive designs. We stock an extensive range of hive tools, feed and supplements, queen catchers and markers, feeders, and many other essential items to support your apiary.

Through our strong supplier relationships, we are able to source a wide range of beekeeping products at discounted prices. We pass these savings directly on to our members, ensuring they receive high-quality supplies at lower costs than most other beekeeping suppliers and online sources.

For instance, compared to a well-known bee equipment supplier, purchasing two packs of DN4 Brood Frames and two packs of Premium Wired Foundation from us saves you £15.20*—an impressive 23% discount! And that's without delivery fees or your time and costs to collect.

And our honey jars are, on average, 50% cheaper than those offered by other suppliers. And with the cost of glass jars set to rise sharply due to a new tax introduced in April we can still offer 2024 prices.**

We currently have standard 1lb (454g) jars with gold or white plastic screw lids, along with 12oz (280ml) and 8oz (190ml) hexagonal jars and matching lids in stock. Get ahead of the rush, order now at 2024 prices before the upcoming increase!

Our volunteers are experienced and knowledgeable beekeepers, always happy to offer advice or just a friendly chat. And by buying from us, you're not just getting great products & service, you're also supporting your association in fulfilling its charitable objective to educate the public on the importance of honey bees & other pollinators to our environment.

Located at the Twickenham Apiary, the shop is open every Friday, 6pm to 8.30pm, throughout the season. Please take a look [**Twickenham & Thames Valley Bee-keepers' Association**](#)

*Prices for May 2025, **Discounts vary depending on jar type

Young Peoples Education Group

The Young Peoples Education team has expanded its outreach this year and successfully booked several nurseries, Scouts, Beavers, Cubs and Youth groups in addition to 15 local schools!

In keeping with Mole's proposal to extend its educational outreach, the Mole members have been taking the bees to visit local schools. The school kindly provided these pictures and I'm sure you will agree that both children and beekeepers were having a fun time!



Jane & our marvellous volunteers (too many to mention here) work exceptionally hard to put on these extra evening sessions and outreach visits, doing a fantastic job of adapting the content and activities to suit the ages and interests of the visiting group. A big thanks to all of you!

Sharing your knowledge with young people is a worthwhile and satisfying experience. If you are interested in joining the team, please contact Jane at schools@twickerbees.co.uk.

BBKA updates & talks

World Bee Day – BBKA Press Release

Cooking with Honey - Diane Shepstone, Bradford BKA, enjoys cooking for family and friends using her own honey. She will be sharing seasonal and delicious recipes using honey.

Next BBKA Zoom talk

Dates for the Diary - Future Talks:

17th June: 'Small Scale Queen Rearing' with Jane Medwell

Previous BBKA Zoom Talks can be found on the BBKA Youtube channel - [British Beekeepers Association - YouTube](#)

Yellow-legged (Asian) hornet update

Latest News from Defra – 16th May

Yellow-legged Asian hornet tally January - April 2025



Total = 19 sightings inc. 1 nest

23rd January - Oswestry, Shropshire - Specimen
17th March - Canterbury/Dover, Kent - Specimen
8th April - Marchwood, near Southampton, Hampshire - Specimen
12th April - Deal, Kent - Specimen - Specimen
13th April - Appledore, Kent - Specimen
14th April - Ramsgate, Kent - Specimen
16th April - Langley, Kent - Specimen & embryo nest
17th April - Hythe, Hampshire - Specimen
19th April - Folkestone, Kent - Specimen
23rd April - Marchwood, near Southampton, Hampshire - Specimen
28th April - Sandwich, Kent - Specimen
29th April - Broad Oak, Kent - Specimen
30th April - Nonington, Kent - Specimen

The Animal and Plant Health Agency's National Bee (NBU) informed us that they have received 6 credible reports of YLH's. This means that currently there has been a total number of 19 sightings in 2025.

9th May, a householder in Chatham reported a live YLH in their conservatory.

11th May, a householder in Barham reported a YLH which flew into their bedroom.

Both of these samples were collected by the local bee inspector and sent to Fera Science.

Yellow-legged Asian hornet tally May 2025



Confirmed
9th May - Chatham, Kent - Specimen
11th May - Barham, Kent - Specimen
12th May - Crundale, Kent - Sighting
12th May - Cliff End, Hastings, East Sussex - Specimen
13th May - Shepherdswell, Kent - Specimen
13th May - Southampton, Hampshire - Sighting



Apple



Android

Please download the Asian Hornet Watch App - report sightings

12th May, a householder reported a YLH flying and feeding from the flowers on an Aster shrub in their front garden. The local bee inspector went to investigate and saw the YLH feeding and flying but it has not yet been trapped. Traps have been placed nearby and are being monitored.

13th May, a householder in Shepherdswell reported a live YLH which flew into their conservatory. The sample was collected by the local bee inspector and sent to Fera Science.

12th May, a householder in Cliff End, Hastings reported a live YLH which they saw on their sofa. The sample was collected by the local bee inspector and sent to Fera Science.

13th May, a householder reported a YLH inside their house but released it after taking a photograph. Some of these locations are close to sites where the NBU are carrying out spring trapping so additional monitoring traps will be put out. At the other sites local Yellow-Legged Asian Hornet Teams have been asked to monitor.

Latest sightings and locations can be found on the [NBU's website](#).

Yellow legged hornet news & research

UK's first Asian hornet nest of the year discovered in Kent

Yellow-legged Asian hornet nest found in Langley, near Maidstone

Scientists detect and analyse flight sound of invasive Asian hornet in move to protect honeybee colonies

Scientists have been able to remotely detect, capture and analyse the sound of the invasive Asian hornet in flight, in a move which could help save honeybee colonies from distress and destruction.

Meet "VespAI": The AI System Combating Asian Hornet Invasion

A team of researchers from the University of Exeter, England, has developed an artificial intelligence



Beekkeepers Open Day 2025

Each year we open our doors to the local community to raise awareness of the work we do and important funds for the association.

This year's event will take place on Saturday 7th June, 1-4pm. Everyone is welcome, especially families, and admission is free.

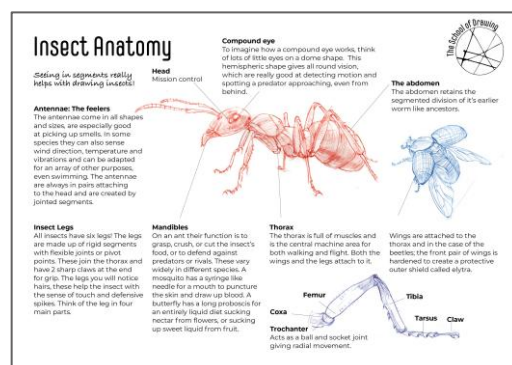
There will be children's activities, candle rolling, honey sales, the always popular plant stall, and the very busy tea and cakes! We have some great raffle prizes including Afternoon Tea at Petersham Nurseries.

Tim Pond, a local artist, educator and author, will be coming back this year. Specifically aimed at children, Tim will be giving a live drawing demonstration of bee anatomy at 2.30pm. For more information and examples of Tim's work visit www.timpond.me



Many thanks to those of you who have volunteered to help on the day. But we are still in need of the following:

- People to plant seeds or provide flowers/vegetables for the Plant stall
- Bee-related products that they would be willing to sell on the day (to help demonstrate that bees aren't just useful for honey)?



Dates for the diary

Open Day

Saturday 7th June

Guest Speaker -TBC

Friday 26th June

Honey Market

Monday 25th August

Annual Honey Show

Friday 3rd, Saturday 4th &
Sunday 5th October

Last night for members

Friday 26th September

President's Evening

Friday 14th November

Subscribe to TTVBKA Calendar

- Donation of bottles (non-alcoholic as well as alcoholic) for the tombola. We are happy to receive jars of sweets too. Please just check that nothing is out of date!
- Book donations for a book stall
- Anything fancy for the raffle (tickets to be sold on the day)?
- Cakes! Please bring along on Friday 6th or Saturday 7th. Homemade cakes go down particularly well...
- A volunteer to run the Plant stall
- Volunteers in general, even an hour is helpful!

We will be selling apiary honey but that is likely to run out fairly quickly, given the expected levels of demand.

We are willing to consider selling honey on behalf of members once we have sold out (for a small percentage donation) but need to know in advance to gauge interest.

Please contact Carl at creswellc@yahoo.co.uk if you have any questions, donations, want to sell honey or can volunteer for a stall.



Beekeepers' Open Day

Twickenham Apiary

Saturday 7th June 2025


1pm to 4pm

FREE ENTRY



Learn about bees and beekeeping,
buy local honey, enjoy tea and cake in
the apiary garden and activities
for all the family!



Find us on 
@TwickenhamBeekeepers

Twickenham & Thames Valley Bee-keepers' Association
The Apiary, 41 Whitton Rd, Twickenham, TW1 1BH

www.twickenham-bees.org.uk Registered Charity No 296439



A microscopic history!

The association has a history of having once been a leading microscopy department*, and we are fortunate to still have a well-equipped laboratory and extensive kit. Sally and other members have been working to build upon our history by re-establishing a working microscopy department here, and they are currently teaching themselves the skills to take the BBKA Microscopy Certificate later this year.

These skills have already been put to good use at the Acarine & Nosema clinic held in April.

Colonies should be routinely checked for nosema and acarine early in the season. If a colony does have a high level of nosema, it can fail to build up and it may eventually dwindle and expire. But if you know your colony has nosema, it can often be saved by putting the bees on new comb (Bailey Comb Change). And although less common than it used to be (probably thanks to varroa treatments), infestation of acarine can also prevent a colony from building up in the spring.

Both conditions can only be diagnosed by microscopic examination. So, on the 26th of April, members were invited to bring in a sample of bees from each of their colonies and have them tested by the team; they were also offered the opportunity to have a go at the process themselves. A good number attended and did have a go, with the dissection for acarine proving particularly tricky!

Nosema can affect a colony at any point throughout the year. The symptoms could be very subtle, and might include increased winter mortality, slow spring build-up, queen failure, and bees walking around in front of the hive - i.e. it doesn't necessarily have to include the classic dysentery.

If you have a colony with any of these symptoms or you have other reason to suspect nosema, you can arrange with a member of the microscopy department to have a sample of bees tested. You don't need to wait for the next clinic to be organised, the team are here to help at any time of the year. Sally can be contacted via email on sallylewen@gmail.com or via telephone on 07814 265 485.

*Among our many notable members was Major H. A. Dade (1895-1978), a great pioneer in the world of beekeeping microscopy and author of the seminal text "**Anatomy & Dissection of the Honey Bee**", which is still the standard reference book on that subject to this day.



Bee-stowing our knowledge

This is an outline of the training available to, or being planned for, members of the association to improve their knowledge and practice of beekeeping. A little learning goes a long way in beekeeping; it gives you a greater understanding of bees and offers benefits beyond just harvesting honey.

Practical courses

We provide training and education for adults in the form of several practical courses. The most fundamental course is that for complete beginners where over the course of a season, complete novices are introduced to and get to work with bees with the intention of giving them the experience and confidence of handling bees on their own. This is the start of their beekeeping journey.

After their first season, novices are encouraged to take the Basic Assessment. This is a BBKA qualification which is a practical and oral assessment that assesses a beekeeper's ability to manage a bee colony and demonstrates their competence to landowners or local authorities. This assessment is taken after keeping bees for a full year.



The BBKA Honey Bee Health (HBH) assessment can be taken after you've been keeping bees for three years or more. Pests and diseases are one of the major topics in beekeeping as in the past decades new pests and diseases have made keeping healthy bees more of a challenge and can significantly affect your colonies and honey production. The HBH focusses on this increasingly important area of the health and welfare of honey bees, how to recognise the major pests and diseases of honey bees and how to deal with them at a practical level.

Starting next season, the association will be trialling a new, in-house course aimed at creating a sustainable apiary. This will be for those beekeepers who have been keeping bees for two years or more and will sit between the Basic assessment and the HBH. The goal is to teach those techniques needed to efficiently run a sustainable apiary and will include topics such as swarm prevention and control, queen rearing, making nuclei for various purposes, Integrated Pest Management and apiary hygiene.

The association is also participating in the BBKA's General Husbandry 2026 (GH26) initiative. This is to prepare those beekeepers who want to take the General Husbandry (GH) assessment in 2026. The GH assessment is a comprehensive assessment of a beekeeper's own apiary and management techniques. The HBH course is a direct input to the GH26 initiative.

For those members who are interested in the more detailed aspects of honey bee anatomy or in the analysis of honey or pollen, the association has a well-equipped laboratory. A fledgling microscopy group has been up and running for a few months now. One of the aims of the group is to pass on the skills required to those interested in this fascinating aspect of beekeeping. Twickenham has significant history in this area. A past member, H.A.Dade, was an innovator in the area of honey bees dissection and analysis. The techniques he developed and published have been adopted as the global standard.

Modules

In addition to the practical courses the association runs, there is also support available for those of us who want to take a more academic approach to the subject of bees and beekeeping. The BBKA run a series of Modules – assessments that are theory based and involve written exams. No physical bees involved. Despite being academic in nature, the modules cover a lot which is based on the practical aspects of beekeeping and go a long way to informing and improving a beekeeper's day to day beekeeping. There are eight module subjects:

Module Examination subjects:-

- Module 1: Honeybee Management
- Module 2: Honeybee Products and Forage
- Module 3: Pests, Diseases & Poisoning
- (Module 4: Plants and Pollinators: this is a new topic and supersedes the previous module 4 topic)
- Module 5: Honeybee Biology
- Module 6: Honeybee Behaviour
- Module 7: Selection & Breeding of Honeybees
- Module 8: Beekeeping and Honeybee Management



Support for modules comes in a number of ways. One option is no support at all – the individual just gets on with it. He or she notifies the exams officer that they wish to take a module and the exam officer will send them an application form to

send to the BBKA. Or, the individual can study by themselves and just ask questions or ask for help / clarification to the person running the current Study Group. Which brings me on to the other form of support in that the association will normally run - a Study Group where candidates can get together to support each other and exchange ideas moderated by the association Study Group Moderator (also involves a Whatsapp group of the Study Group).

Short Talks

Someone will give a short talk on a relevant beekeeping subject after the apiary roundup on a Friday evening. These talks are intended to be brief and on a practical topic relevant to the beekeeping time of year. They are usually posted on the association website shortly after. The posts can be in the forms of the presentation slides, a narrated presentation or a video. They can be found on the website at:

<https://twickenhambeekeepers.apps-1and1.net/education/courses-for-members-2/>

External Speakers

There are moves afoot within the association to engage more external speakers. Watch this space.

Combing through the news

A round up of Bee related news & research

[**Steve Backshall is back | The Secret Life of Bees**](#)

This series with Steve Backshall, is an intimate portrayal of the everyday lives of bees, exploring the different species, showcasing the marvels of their societies, and examining the importance of their existence throughout history.

[**Beekeeper losses 'unsustainable,' industry leader says**](#)

Beekeepers rebuild after record losses threaten crop pollination

[**Not just bees and butterflies: beetles and other brilliant bugs are nature's unsung pollinators**](#)

If what happened this past fall and winter is not an isolated incident but the start of a trend, the ramifications are substantial.

[**Towards a Stable Host-Parasite Relationship Between Honey Bees and Varroa Mites Through Innovative Beekeeping**](#)

Conventional beekeeping involves multiple Varroa treatments, limiting bees' ability to adapt to the mite. To foster a stable host-parasite relationship, we tested an "innovative" beekeeping method with fewer Varroa treatments, focusing on its impact on honey bee health.

[**The UK Glass Packaging Tax**](#)

What It Means for Us at The Elmer Honey Co

[**Beekeepers alarm that bee mortality has reached 90%**](#)

This spring, beekeepers in various regions of Bulgaria have reported a 90% mortality rate among bees.

[**Specieswatch: new bee species in the UK a rare gain in a changing climate**](#)

Osmia cornuta is a solitary bee spreading rapidly in the south of England, which was once too cold for it

[**Inspector absence puts bee population 'under threat'**](#)

Northern Ireland's honey bees are "under threat" due to the absence of a bee inspectorate since last year, according to the chair of Ulster Beekeepers Association (UBKA).

[**Honey Bee Sleep Mirrors Human Brain Activity**](#)

Honey bee sleep shows brain activity patterns similar to humans, offering insight into memory and pollinator health.

[**Improved treatment timing reduces honey bee losses to Varroa mites**](#)

Honey bee mortality can be significantly reduced by ensuring that treatments for the parasitic Varroa mite occur within specific timeframes, a new study reveals.

[**City hopes to become 'pollinator capital'**](#)

A wildlife trust is running a project which could help a city become the pollinator capital of the country.

[**I'm a vet for bees – I think I might be the only one in the US**](#)

Every bee is precious, and as the weather gets more erratic I'm growing concerned about the effect it is having on their wellbeing

First report on isolation and characterization of Bacillus Sp. associated with honey bee brood disease

Bacterial infections in honey bee brood pose a significant threat to bee populations, leading to decreased honey production and disrupting critical crop pollination networks...

Honey wine is causing a buzz - here's what to drink on fine summer evenings

We explore the diverse and exciting world of honey wines, from traditional meaderies to innovative modern brews

When honey bees 'disappeared' on this small Italian island, wild bees feasted

Unusual experiment suggests managed bees can outcompete wild bees and contribute to their decline

Warning issued to anyone buying honey at supermarkets

It's one of the most popular natural foods in the UK but supermarket honey is often not what it seems say experts

Bees Are Not Declining Everywhere: A Global Perspective on Population Trends

For years, media headlines have depicted a dire situation regarding global bee populations. While it is true that honey bee numbers in certain areas, recent data reveals a more nuanced picture.

Where bees won't go: The unloved pollinators of the underworld

New research is showing just how much plants and crops rely on a host of darkness-dwelling creepy crawlies.

Scientists embark on crucial study to save Britain's bees

Bee populations are falling all over the world due to a mixture of habitat loss, climate change, and the use of pesticides, with a devastating impact on our biodiversity and food production.

The London Bee Situation: How Sustainable Is Beekeeping in London?

For more than 10 years London has seen an unprecedented rise in beekeeping across the city's urban landscape. This talk will look at how sustainable beekeeping is in London.

Scientists embark on crucial study to save Britain's bees

Plants produce more nectar when they 'hear' bees buzzing, scientists find

Residents plagued by 'a million bees' in their road

Residents are being plagued by huge swarms of up to a million bees in their street that have stung "on numerous occasions" and left them fearful of opening a window.

Any other buzzness...

We would love to include more content from our members. If you would like to discuss an idea, drop us a line at newsletter@twickerbees.co.uk. We'd also like to hear your feedback on the newsletter including any topics you would like to see included.