



Founded in 1913

Apiary Newsletter...

New Style Honey Show a hit with members

This year the club decided to combine the honey show with a convention style lecture programme and make it an all day event with lunch provided.

The event was held at the Northfield Centre and was well received by members with a good turnout and over a hundred class entries.



Our honey show judge, John Goodwin, provided lots of valuable advice as he demonstrated 'open judging', giving a running commentary as he judged all the classes.

He told us to make sure our jars and lids were scrupulously clean and to ensure the honey was clear with no bits in it.

As in previous years the honey tasting (class 21) was a firm favourite, attracting lots of entries and providing a big sugar hit for all as they got tasting to decide this year's winner who turned out to be Stuart Roberts.

Congratulations to Elizabeth and Nancy Bennett who came joint first in Class 22 - Bee related craft project and also received their Junior Certificate in Bee Keeping awarded by the BBKA and presented to them by Kate and Charles Davies.

Dayna set up the club shop in the foyer selling club hats, badges and honey as well as seed bombs, hessian sacks, fondant and books. She made well over £100 for club funds, well done Dayna.

The raffle also made money for club funds. Thank you to all those members who contributed raffle prizes.

Our guest speaker for the convention was Professor Stephen Martin from Salford University who delivered two talks.

In the morning he gave us a compelling insight into varroa resistance in bees and how it could change beekeeping in the future as the bees continue to adapt to the effect of the mite.

After lunch Stephen gave an equally fascinating talk all about invasive wasps and hornets and their impact on the environment, bees and insect life.



Thank you to everybody who entered exhibits in all the classes and made it such a big success.



Thank you to Wendy Woodward, Trevor Smith, Ed Bennett, Chris and Alan Brewin and Dayna White and the team who worked together to make the Honey Show a big hit.



SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE & DISTRICT

BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

WINTER SOCIAL



**FOOD AND
GAMES INCLUDED**

Please inform us if vegetarian option or any dietary requirements

TEA & COFFEE AVAILABLE

**No Bar available! Please bring your own
alcoholic/soft drinks with your own glass**

**TICKET PRICE STAYING LOW
AT £6 PER PERSON
£3 FOR UNDER 13 YEARS OLD**

26TH NOVEMBER 2022

19:00 - 22:00

SHAREHILL VILLAGE HALL

1 Elms Lane, Shareshill,
Wolverhampton,
WV10 7JS.



Pay in advance via the bank details below:

Account: South Staffordshire & District Beekeepers
Association

Account No.: 00095894

Sort Code: 405240

Ref: Winter Social

Friends and Family Welcome

Please email Claire George on ce.george@talktalk.net or text to 07828282130 to book your tickets

If you don't let us know you're coming we can't cater for you!!!!

Sugar for Bees

Some years ago the late Steve Smith and I went up to Nottingham to an environmental presentation event at Bidvest. We arrived early as we were unsure how long it was going to take to travel there and we were invited to sit in and listen to the presentations of organisations that were booked in before us. The presentations were factual and interesting but it was evident that the managers attending were bored so although we had taken display boards and other items we dropped the prepared information and decided to have some fun with the factual information that we all know as beekeepers.

I spoke first and Steve followed. The information that we presented was well received and one of our older members had said to me "If you can get sugar at a reasonable cost then I would be able to feed all the swarms of bees I collect instead of having to choose which ones will be fed and which will not." and I repeated this to those present. We ended with honey tasting and laughter and two weeks later I had a call to collect the first load of sugar.

The sugar we are given is not fit for human consumption as it all comes from split bags. The bags are various sizes from 25kg bags of granulated and caster sugar to individual 1kg split bags that are split during transport or have been caught by the forks on the machinery used to load the vehicles.

There was about a third of a ton in the last sugar collection, which is a lot in the back of a domestic car, but it is not practical to use a trailer as transporting sugar when it is damp or wet would be impossible.



While Penny and Paul Twibill are collecting, members of the Hilton Green team sort out the buckets and ensure the buckets have the correct lids that close securely.

Originally Steve and I sorted out the sugar at my home but there was so much rubbish to get rid of and it attracted ants which infested the garage much to John's annoyance. So we moved it to Hilton Green.

The team at Hilton Green handle the deliveries of sugar as volunteers and pay for their own sugar as it all raises funds for our association.



Sugar can be collected from Penny or Chris by arrangement or from Hilton Green, and if any of the team are visiting Shugborough they will take sugar there but do not allow people to take away the buckets because in the past they have not been returned and without buckets we cannot take the next delivery' as in the unit if it is not in sealed buckets it attracts ants etc. and goes damp and soggy.

It is hard heavy work handling the sugar and the weather is not always kind to us so I want to say a personal thank you to the team at Hilton for all their help. **Chris Shaw**

In the SPOTLIGHT



Apiary Coordinator

Chris Brewin

Each issue we will be asking the same questions of our committee members. We will be putting them in the spotlight, for your pleasure, so to speak.

The questions have been devised by a secret beekeeper to find out as much as possible about the person...

... *'in the spotlight'*.

Q1. How long have you been a beekeeper?

A. Just over five years.

Q2. Why did you become a beekeeper?

A. Alan and I were looking for a joint hobby after retirement and went to Keele university for a taster event and the rest as they say is history.

Q3. What is your favourite bit of beekeeping kit?

A. Our electric honey extractor. We had a manual one for the first two seasons. Alan added a motor but it struggled with the increased volume. We bought our new electric one at Bee Tradex on 14th March 2020 just days before lockdown, which turned out to be our last social mixing event for two years! .

Q4. How many bee suits do you have?

A. I have two full suits, one solely for Shugborough and a nice Oz Armour suit for our own inspections which Father Christmas kindly bought me a couple of years ago. I also have a jacket for winter feeding.

Q5. What is your proudest beekeeping moment?

A. It has to be seeing our colonies transported safely back to Shugborough after their temporary holiday at Hilton Green. Putting them on their new stands, opening them and seeing them alive, buzzing and flying was a proud moment. I was so relieved that we had completed the mammoth task successfully.

Q6. Do you have a favourite pair of socks?

A. My brown merino lambswool socks that I wear with my trusty walking boots.

Q7. Who is your beekeeping hero or heroine?

A. Marin Anastasov, I could listen to him talking about bees for hours.

Q8. What beekeeping disasters have you had?

A. Last year we used a white marker, purchased

from a reputable supplier, to identify two new queens and each one was immediately balled by the worker bees when the queen was returned to the colony and yes, we stopped using the marker after the second incident.

Q9. Which aspect of beekeeping do you like best?

A. I enjoy monitoring queen cells through to emergence and successful mating. I have created my own queen cell timeline tracker. Seeing a queen for the first time is particularly rewarding.

Q10. What is your least favourite beekeeping job?

A. Taking drone laying bees for a Hansel and Gretel into the woods to throw out....

Q11. If you didn't keep bees, would you be a campanologist or a Morris dancer?

A. With my Irish heritage I am closer to the church than a maypole so it would have to be a campanologist.

Q12. What would be your best bit of beekeeping advice?

A. Handle with care!

Q13. What would your last meal be?

A. I am meat intolerant so it would not be anything exciting unless I could visit Souter Johnnie's restaurant in Maybole, South Ayrshire and have their vegetarian dish of the day.

Q14. What is your favourite bit of a bee?

A. Their pollen baskets. Watching them come back with heavily laden colourful baskets and have that flight wobble as they try to negotiate entry to the hive.

Q15. When you think about your bees, what makes you smile?

A. The first time you see them emerge properly in the Spring sunshine in abundance after their winter confinement. Looking to see if they are bringing in pollen. It is a mixture of relief and delight that they made it through.

Q16. Do you like honey?

A. Yes, I have honey and lemon every morning, always with water that has gone off the boil. I don't want to damage all those wonderful health beneficial enzymes.

Q17. What annoys you about working with bees, apart from the stings?

A. Followers, they are on a mission.

Q18. Do you talk to your bees?

A. As Alan and I inspect together we tend to discuss them and rarely involve them in conversation apart from asking them politely to move or ask, 'what exactly are you playing at?'.

Q19. Are you asked to stop talking about bees?

A. I have never been asked to stop talking about bees but at a friend's birthday meal recently some new friends were really interested in beekeeping and it started to dominate the conversation.

The birthday girl had heard it all before so I changed the subject.

Q20. Do you prefer sweet or savoury nibbles?

A. Savoury for me, cheese based is a winner.

Q21. What other interests do you have besides beekeeping?

A. Beekeeping tends to dominate the majority of my spare time but I do enjoy reading, problem solving, a bit of gardening and walking, preferably in the Lake District. Travel has been limited recently but there are still places we need to explore.

Q22. Who would you like to inspect a hive with?

A. David Attenborough.

Q23. What sums up your attitude to bees and beekeeping?

A. Every day is a school day.

In the SPOTLIGHT

2



Apiary Coordinator

Alan Brewin

Q1. How long have you been a beekeeper?

A. Just over five years.

Q2. Why did you become a beekeeper?

A. When we retired we needed something to keep the grey matter working so lets try beekeeping.

Q3. What is your favourite bit of beekeeping kit?

A. My hive tool, it does everything.

Q4. How many bee suits do you have?

A. Four - the first one was off ebay for £26, didn't last long.

Q5. What is your proudest beekeeping moment?

A. Seeing a perfect supercedure.

Q6. Do you have a favourite pair of socks?

A. I have many Christmas socks that get worn all year round.

Q7. Who is your beekeeping hero or heroine?

A. Chris, she has a handle on everything.

Q8. What beekeeping disasters have you had?

A. Moving a hive, strapped it up, carried it to the back of the car, pushing it into the back of the car it came apart, they were not happy bees.

Q9. Which aspect of beekeeping do you like best?

A. Most of it apart from equipment cleaning.

Q10. What is your least favourite beekeeping job?

A. Cleaning nucs

Q11. If you didn't keep bees, would you be a campanologist or a Morris dancer?

A. Sorry, I can't answer that in case I have to give up bees.

Q12. What would be your best bit of beekeeping advice?

A. What Charles Davies said to us, "Be patient".

Q13. What would your last meal be?

A. Assamese Chingri Jalfrezi from our favourite Indian restaurant.

Q14. What is your favourite bit of a bee?

A. The eyes of the drone.

Q15. When you think about your bees, what makes you smile?

A. The sound and smell of the hive.

Q16. Do you like honey?

A. Love it.

In the SPOTLIGHT 2 continued

Q17. What annoys you about working with bees, apart from the stings?

A. Greeters and followers, they are just annoying.

Q18. Do you talk to your bees?

A. No, they don't listen to me. We don't share the same reading matter.

Q19. Are you asked to stop talking about bees?

A. It hasn't happened yet, but maybe people are just being polite.

Q20. Do you prefer sweet or savoury nibbles?

A. Sweet if there's an A in the day, savoury if there's a Y.

Q21. What other interests do you have besides beekeeping?

A. I enjoy watching most sport. Genealogy, I traced my family back to the mid 1700s. Love being with my family.

Q22. Who would you like to inspect a hive with?

A. Mary Berry, as long as she brings cake.

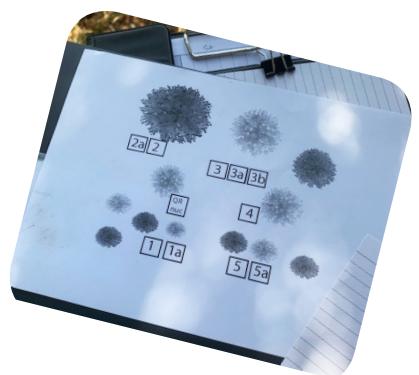
Q23. What sums up your attitude to bees and beekeeping?

A. We need them more than they need us, so look after them.

A very HOT Safari indeed!



You remember how hot it was in mid August, and yes, the thermometer was really creeping toward 38C when a hardy band of beekeepers prepared to inspect Dayna's bees at her home apiary.



The map above told us where they were sited and which hive was which, so off we went with hive notes in hand to inspect the bees. The hives were spread out through a small copse which afforded them dappled shade during



the middle part of the day. This made for a comfortable temperature for the bees and beekeepers alike.

Dayna has a fabulous apiary and it was a joy to help her with her bees.

The wooden hives and nucs, some set on pallets, were just the right comfortable height to work at.

It is always exciting to see how other beekeepers run their apiary and there are always new things to observe and perhaps to try on your own bees.

After our stirring efforts, Dayna treated us royally with delicious warm home made sausage rolls with strawberries and cream to follow and all under the shade of a magnificent cherry tree.

It was such a delightful bee safari on a wonderful sunny day and nobody really wanted to go home... Thank you Dayna...



Shugborough - The Walled Garden



The section of planned restoration to the walls of the south Walled Garden has now been completed.

This was funded by the government's Culture Recovery Fund and is an amazing achievement.

It brings to an end a five-year project to restore the walls which as you may remember were in a bad state.

In some areas the walls were in a much worse condition than we anticipated with centuries of organic matter built up, ivy embedded and rooted in, and missing coping stones.

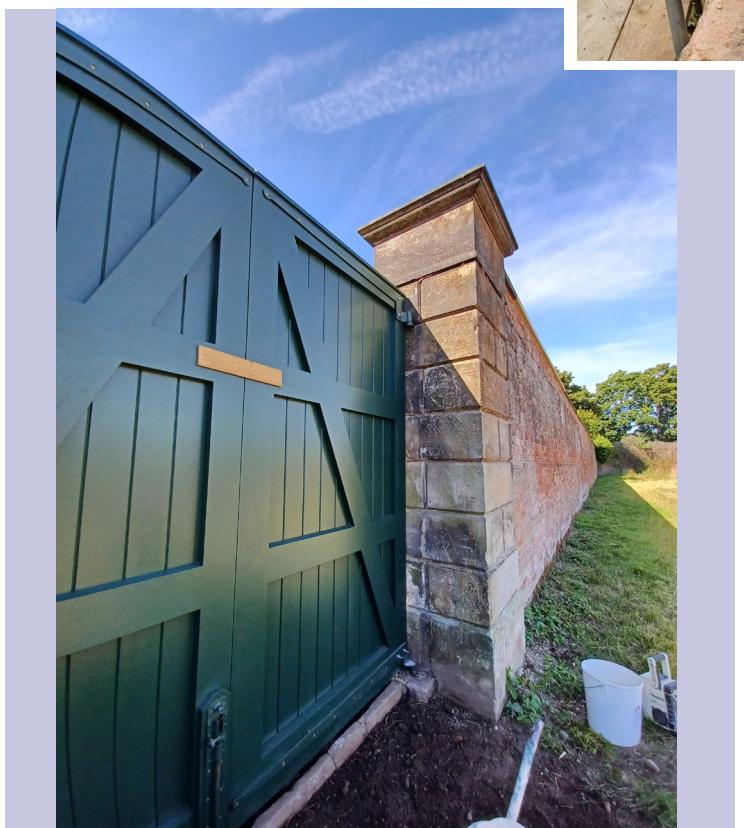
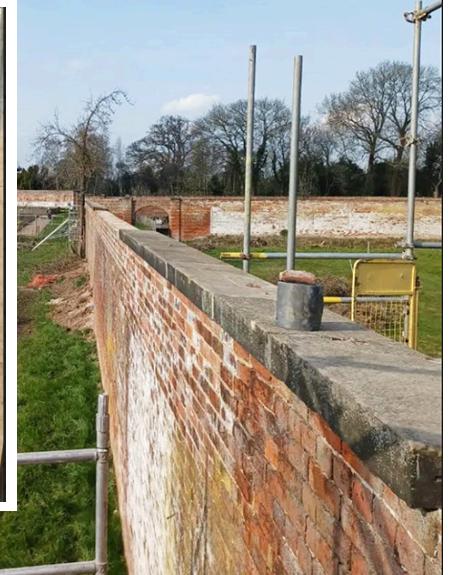
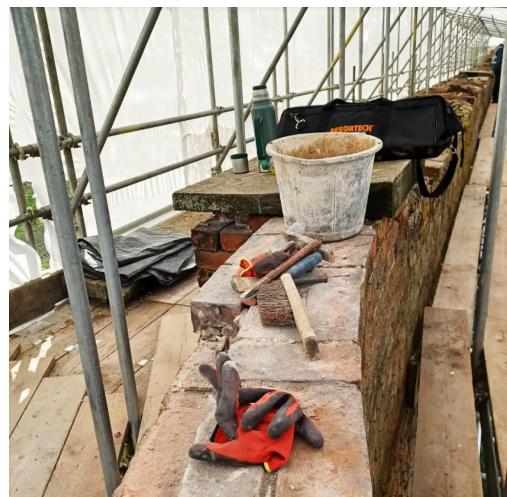
These have been carefully restored with new hand carved coping stones, bricks replaced and lime mortar re-pointed.

There remains a section of the Walled Garden wall that still needs work, but we anticipate doing this as part of the Shaping Shugborough project.

There is now some new work happening along the Sherbrook which you might see to your left as you approach the Kennels.

This is to repair several issues along the aqueduct and also picks up some repairs where the Sherbrook flows past the Walled Garden 'haha' wall.

photo credit: Caroline Beacall



Apiary life - in pictures...



Club BBQ - we gather on a sunny day in late August
photo credit - Paul Mann



Beginners, Class 2, course complete - August 27
photo credit - Paul Mann



Apiary maintenance & cleaning day - September 17
photo credit - Chris Brewin



Thursday chat in the marquee - Trevor talks us through preparing the bees for the winter months

Top Bar hives for sale

I have reluctantly decided to give up beekeeping and I have two top bar hives with bars, feeders etc and some equipment for sale.

I also have a large child's half suit with fencing hat and an adult male medium full suit with fencing hat, both in excellent condition and good quality., I wondered if anyone at the club would be interested in buying the hives etc.

I live in Tamworth and the hives are presently just to the north of Tamworth off the Ashby Road on a farm. To buy or for more information please ring me on 07541357683. Jennifer Hillerby



Bee Suits - WANTED!

Do you have a bee suit, a jacket, some trousers or a veil that we could use at the club on our honeybee experience day or the beginner beekeeper course?

We would be grateful for all sizes, including bee suits for children.

To donate your bee clothing, please bring them along to either of our apiaries on your next visit.

Thanks WW



Can you find the new Queen?

In the August 2022 edition of the newsletter our new queen bee was resting on the Moog honey display in the picture on the left side of page 6.

Our new queen bee will want somewhere safe to spend the winter months, but where? So have a good look around the Newsletter and see if you can spot her?

Phil's Corner

Hi to all members.

I gave a short talk at Hilton Green Apiary recently. For those of you that missed my presentation, I have attached the information.

Bees seem to like grated apple and water



1. Honey bucket tilt stand

To use during jar filling, for details contact Charles Davis.

This is a secure way to tilt honey bucket and avoid entry of any surface matter.



2. Stewart 50cm x 50cm gravel tray

This can be purchased from most garden centres for approx. £6. Ideal for safe transport of full super boxes to contain honey and as a lid. Also good in the shed when cleaning boxes and equipment.



3. Fondant Boxes

I use discarded take away containers, with two lids. Hole size about 5cm.

Each container takes a good block of fondant and avoids those sticky messy bags.



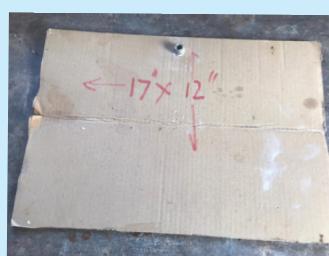
4. Wasp protector

Made from standard electric plastic trunking, 25mm x 16mm cut to length. 1 mm holes in front slide section and a hole in back 15mm x 30mm.



5. Brood box card

Simple sheet of cardboard 30cm x 40cm plus weighted nut. I use over the brood box during inspection to keep the bees quiet in the dark.



6. Winter supplies

Soda crystals for all cleaning jobs at £1 per 1kg bag from The Range.

Thymol crystals £6 from C. Wynne Jones

Surgical spirits £2.50

from any chemist. Shake before use and mix as directed 5ml to every 12.5 kg tub prevents black mould.

Vaseline jelly 250ml tub £1 from The Range.

I use on the runners in my brood and super boxes and the tops and ends of my frames to avoid propolis build up.



Club events and meetings

Please go to the Club Website for the latest information

Items for the newsletter

If you have any stories, pictures or information that you would like included in the newsletter, or if you have items for sale or wish to comment on the content of previous newsletters, please send to: ssbka-mail@southstiffsbeekeepers.com and make the subject "Item for the newsletter".

SS&DBKA Links

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/SSBKA>

Website:

<http://southstiffsbeekeepers.com>

E-Mail:

ssbka-mail@southstiffsbeekeepers.com