



# Preveiling Wind Spring 2021

Kendal and South Westmorland Beekeepers Association Newsletter



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**It's not just about bees.....** I had a trip out with a friend last summer, Sue, who told me about her new camera. She was taking pictures of the insects that she came across. I asked her to send me a few of them from her gallery, as I realised, that once you start noticing them close up, they are a wonderful bunch to live alongside. Top left is the comma butterfly; then moving clockwise, it is a hover fly (one of many types), a flesh fly, and then a male yellow dung fly. Part of my job when I go with Dave to his woodland project is to remove the dung dropped by his two ponies who graze the land set aside as flower meadow. Especially in spring I get to see these deposits alive with those insects and invertebrates that have evolved to solve the problem of 'what to do with dung heaps' ..... and the two ponies produce a lot of it. So when I hear the government is wanting to allow the use of neonicotinoids again and we clamour 'what about the bees', I also feel there is a need to stick up for these small delicate creatures who do so much of our dirty work. 'What about the yellow dung flies'. Each seems to me a wonderfully designed work of art which we can so easily for granted. We need a minister FOR the environment.

**Phil**

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## **ECOWild & the ECO projects at Lancaster University**

Since 2018, Lancaster University have had their own campus apiary, the ECOHives, and I am the "Apiary Manager" (<http://wp.lancs.ac.uk/lubk/>). This project is part of the non-academic activities aimed at educating our community on some of the relevant aspects of our environment.

Thanks to Green Lancaster (<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/sustainability/green-lancaster/>) and enthusiastic students and staff, several projects have been established: the ECOHub, the ECOWood, the ECOHives, and now, we are launching the ECOWild project. This latter is a re-purposed activity that we had started with Jacqui and Karen (from Heron Hill School) and their pupils before the pandemic, but which we had to put on hold because of you-know-what...

The main objective of ECOWild is to assess the health of our local environment via monitoring of wildlife (pollinators, mammals and vegetation) throughout the seasons. On the one hand, the participants would benefit from some valuable non-academic education (and from a healthy outdoor activity!), and on the other hand, the data gathered would help those in charge of shaping our landscape, in that they would have useful information helping them to see where our environment is at risk, and hopefully inform them of "good" trees for pollinators, for instance. The beneficiaries, long term, of ECOWild, if successful, should be our local environment and the wildlife in it. Of course, for this to be effective, we need to have the decision-making people on board (and they are!), and also the science-based evidence, which we hope to gather in the coming weeks.

Actually, this idea is not unique and I've seen that masterclasses on the subject of wildlife monitoring have recently taken place at the University of Cumbria.

Beyond the "environment sustainability" aspect of these activities, there is a perhaps more relevant aspect of sustainable development, including the human aspect. In this year(s) of frustrations in our society, I have seen many students struggling with their mental health because all of their favourite "real" pastimes have been taken away from them, except those that can be continued "virtually". This got me thinking during summer 2020, and... well, all I could come up with is: let's give everyone some opportunity to engage with a useful and healthy activity: ECOWild!

Perhaps you too feel inspired by my experience, and, within your community, school, or "bubble", you can start your local ECOWild. We are launching ours on the weekend of 29-31 January 2021, to coincide with the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, and the traditional bird count

(<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/>) What about you?

(<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/maths/people/nadia-mazza>)

**Nadia**

**“I like pulling on a baggy bee suit, forgetting myself and getting as close to the bees' lives as they will let me, remembering in the process that there is more to life than the merely human.” Sue Hubbell, *A Book of Bees: And How to Keep Them***

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Geraldine

Jonny

Pat

Julia

Phil

Julia

Andy

Karen

Judith, Ron, Jacqui, Meg, Diane.

## K&SWBKA Meetings & Events - Spring 2021

As I write spring is in the air (occasionally). Today our bees were flying strongly as we walked up through the fields to check the cattle. We watched for a while hoping to see pollen going into the colonies signaling that the queens were present and laying but the furious activity seemed to be all about going to collect water from the nearby grass tussocks so the bees must be accessing stores.

**Meetings:** I am sure everyone has been listening to the government's deliberations about trying to get the schools back and the extent of the current lockdown; for the time being we must assume that we are restricted to meeting via Zoom and the final winter get togethers have been planned:

	9th February 2021 7.30pm	<b>Wasps &amp; Hornets</b>	
	9th March 2021 7.30pm	<b>Dark Skies Project</b>	Jack Ellerby, Friends of the Lake District
	13th April 2021 7.30pm	<b>Book Chat</b>	
	May 2021	<b>Can we meet outside?</b>	Summer apiary meetings would normally start

**I will present Wasps & Hornets** – I designed this talk for the Cumbria Honey Show 18 months ago. It followed the bad summer we all had with wasps so I thought it would be useful to look at the literature and see if there was any helpful advice on managing wasp attacks on our colonies. I will also talk about the Asian Hornet of course; one of the few good outcomes of the Covid pandemic seems to have been that there was only one identified incursion of Asian Hornet into the UK in 2020.

**Jack Ellerby's talk on Dark Skies** was zoomed by Friends of the Lake District in November 2020 and I really enjoyed it. He speaks very well and engagingly. I found it inspiring because I felt I could make changes at home that would make a difference. The issue is that light pollution is having an impact on human health and relevant to us bee people, pollinator numbers – insects are confused by our night lights, enough so that this is contributing to the fall in insect numbers. The plan is to try and tackle this by showing us how we can make changes on an individual basis and there is a plan to make parts of Cumbria 'Dark Sky Reserves'.

**A Kendal & South Westmorland Beekeepers' Book Chat** in April is a way of sharing favourite and most useful bee related books, websites, magazines, Facebook groups amongst all of us. I hope this might be especially useful to newer beekeepers. Please get in touch with me if you are willing to contribute to this meeting on Zoom. I suggest no more than 10 minutes each and 2 minutes is just fine. No need to do a full book club style review, just tell us all what you have found useful. **Julia**

### **BBKA Practical Assessment Mentoring Evenings.**

Zoom sessions to support beekeepers wanting to take the 'Basic' or the 'Honeybee Health' Certificate assessments started in January 2021. The Basic sessions run on alternate Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm and the HBH certificate sessions run on the alternate Thursday evenings also at 7.30pm. Each session lasts about 1 ½ hours. Anyone can join in, there is no pressure to take the assessments, which after all, might not be able to run this year – last year they were cancelled. It is fine to join part way through the course, email [julia@bcs.org](mailto:julia@bcs.org) to be included; so far there are 15 of us including members of Penrith & Lancaster BKAs.

### **The BBKA Spring Convention.**

The spring convention is cunningly described as an armchair event this year. We enjoyed participating in the National Honey Show events via Zoom last autumn. However, Zoom was perhaps a bit more novel and exciting then. The good thing about the Honey Show was that talks were available online afterwards **to those who had signed up** so there was no need to watch at a particular time and the good talks could be watched a second time. I suspect the Spring Convention will follow a similar model. <https://www.bbka.org.uk/Pages/Category/about-spring-convention>

**BIBBA (Bee Improvement & Bee Breeders' Association)** BIBBA are offering talks if anyone would like to join via Zoom. <https://bibba.com/webinars-four/>

**Beekeeping Courses, Brigsteer Village Hall.** See [www.BeeEd.org.uk](http://www.BeeEd.org.uk)

March 14th, 2021 Intermediate Beekeeping, swarm & disease control & management  
May 14-16th 2021 Introducing Beekeeping for those just starting out –  
Course Full June 25-27 2021 Introducing Beekeeping for those just starting out -  
places available July 30 - Aug 1 2021 – Introducing Beekeeping option will be made available **if** the above courses have to be cancelled/postponed to follow Covid restrictions.

Unfortunately, all or any of these courses may have to be postponed, modified or cancelled because of Covid 19 issues.

### **Health Bee Day – a date for your diary but in pencil only!**

The NBU Healthy Bee Day 2020 was cancelled of course.

Jenny Gilpin of Lancaster Beekeepers hopes we can re-instate the plans we had, so we have pencilled in **June 12th 2021 at Lancaster Royal Grammar School**. This is a unique opportunity to see diseases such as American & European Foulbrood for real and the event is near us. The Northern Team NBU inspectors run these days across the North West changing venue/locality each year. This is the year for our patch.

**Julia**

**Success:** I have been trying to establish some aconites into our garden for three years. I found out that, like snowdrops, they are best planted 'in the green'. This year, two have appeared. Apparently, again like snowdrops and also primroses, once they get established, they will multiply by spreading their seed. So, what exactly pollinates them just now?

**Phil**

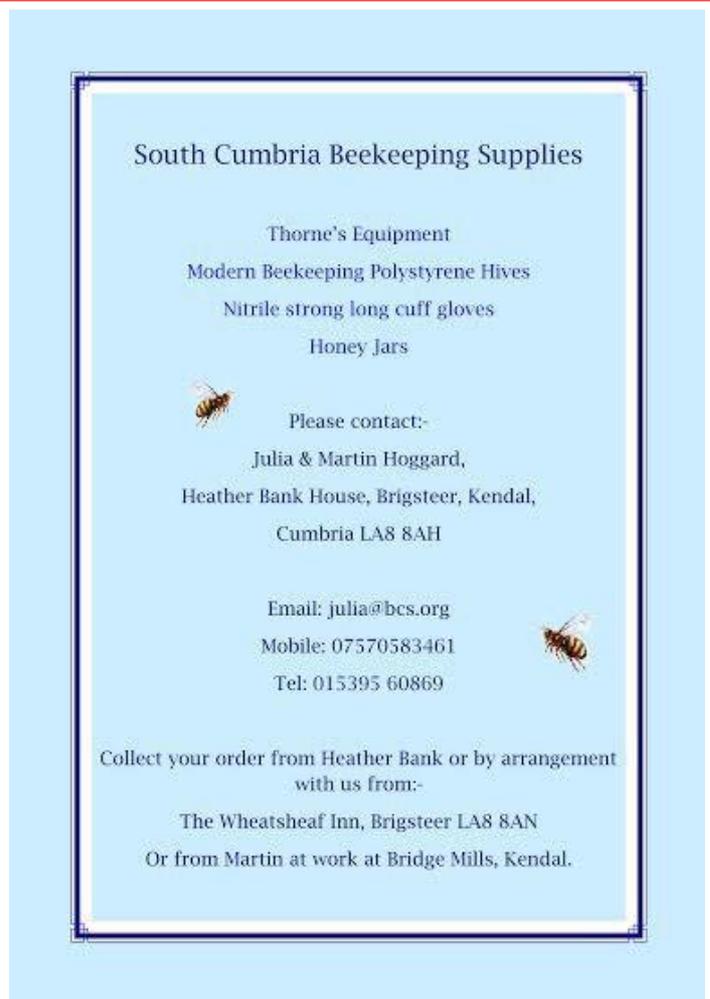


## The Annual Delegates Meeting

No trip to Coventry, but the 6 hours passed fine in our front lounge. The idea of the meeting is for the associations to make proposals for possible changes within the BBKA organisation, which are discussed, voted on and if successful, must be adopted by the BBKA. So, it the organisation's attempt to be democratic. Many of the propositions are minor and technical, so I will just cover the more interesting ones after an account of the preamble. I needed the laptop to join the zoom meeting, and my mobile to vote on the propositions. The BBKA did a good job at running the virtual meeting, especially considering their main technical brains got caught in a traffic jam and arrived 2 hours late. It was Margaret Wilson's first year as the chair and she did a great job at

exuding a calm presence in front of the camera for the first half hour, with nothing going on, whilst the office staff paddled hard under water to cover Martin Smith's absence. The treasurer, Howard Pool, told us that the BBKA finances were generally sound, but in the future there may be a good case for sending out all of the magazines by email as the postage costs were getting excessive. He was keen that the BBKA proposal to raise the capitation subs from £19 to £21 from April 2022 was successful and this indeed got passed later. He pointed out what good value the BBKA is as membership includes 3rd party insurance and 12 magazines, delivered, monthly. There have been several attempts to form new associations in recent years. Smaller groups of beekeepers breaking away from larger associations. A proposal was passed to increase the criteria that any new association would need to meet before being granted permission. There would have to be at least 75 members for example, and evidence of a sound training scheme for new members in operation for example. This seemed sensible and was passed. There was a long discussion about introducing a new single voting system to replace the current system whereby a 'delegates' vote can be overturned by a 'members' vote. This narrowly failed to meet the 75% majority it needed to the frustration of the smaller associations. Lastly, it was suggested that there should be a zoom facility in future as an option for future ADM meetings alongside travelling to Coventry in person. This is to be discussed sometime in the future after its feasibility has been considered. It would save a number of long car journeys and would get my vote.

**Phil**



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### **Hello Everyone..... swarm collectors needed.**

It's that time of year again where we are looking for people to volunteer to be a swarm collector. It sounds like a good deal to me. If I was physically able to, I would be doing it myself. If you do decide to be a collector, you will receive an email every time I get a notified about a swarm. Then you can decide if you'd like to go out to it or not. There is absolutely no obligation to do so. If you did decide to collect a swarm, you get to keep them. The club doesn't get anything for this, and you'll get a new colony every time you get a swarm. If this sounds of interest to you or if you have any questions, please email me and I'll send out some information. If you haven't done it before I'll try and put you in contact with an experienced collector.

Thanks.

**Jonny**

Thanks to the contributors for this edition. Nadia, Julia, Jonny and Granville. Not so many photos but we ran out of space. Granville's story below makes me wonder just how many Heron Hill youngsters will take up beekeeping as they grow older. A lot I would imagine. Time well spent with them. Hopefully, others will try and answer the same question in future editions How did you get to keep bees?

### **How come I keep bees ?**

Back in the early 80's a good friend asked if he could put his hives in my garden. They had been in someone else's orchard, but the owner had been stung and wanted them moved. They were a couple of Smith's hives - my friend was Scottish. After a couple of good seasons here, hiving one swarm himself, he suggested I get a hive for a second swarm myself, which is why I also use Smith's hives. Not long after, he took himself and his bees back to Scotland, leaving me with mine.

But that's only part of the story. It started when I was a child at a small Yorkshire primary with a very keen bee-keeping head. On many a fine summer afternoon we went out for a beekeeping "lesson" where some of the bigger boys were kitted up to help him and the rest of us stood at a distance. We had illustrated indoor lessons, watched demonstrations of wax extraction and very much enjoyed the observation hive he set up every year. I recall doing tests on bees and bee keeping. We alerted him if we saw a swarm at playtime, and he offered a shilling for a matchbox full of Himalayan Balsam seed to scatter in the wetter areas of his large and beautiful garden! At the seasons end we were able to buy his jars of honey, which included heather from the nearby moorland, for 2s6p each; about £3 in today's money. With such an early introduction to bees I was very happy to take up the offer of a hive of my own when it came many years later. I became fascinated with bees and other aspects of "science" as a child, encouraged by a set of 8 volumes of 'Newnes Pictorial Knowledge' bought by my parents in the early 50's. Though their schooling finished at age 13 their chapel upbringing led them to value education. I rather shunned the volumes on British history and industry, but at the back of volume 3 was a lovely fold-out illustration of the anatomy of a bee. I will ask our webmaster if he could place all 5 on our web site with the accompanying key to the 67 numbered parts. I wouldn't like to be tested on them now, but much of my learning about bees came about in those early days.

**Granville**