

PreVeiling Wind

Newsletter of the Kendal & South
Westmorland Beekeepers Association



Winter 2020 Edition

On the 14th of January, at our AGM, Judith stood down as secretary after 8 years in the role. I had been asked beforehand if I would be willing to take over from her. I have to say that knowing the amazing work Judith has done, made this quite an overwhelming prospect. As a new member of the club, and a new beekeeper, I thought it important to accept. I would again like to thank Judith for all the help and advice she gave me before handing over and her continuing help since then. By all accounts she truly has been a key and vital member of the committee and will continue to be so moving forward, only in a different role. I only started keeping bees last year. I have to use crutches due to a back injury and in fact from time to time I use a wheelchair. Because of this I am unable to lift and move full size boxes. Therefore I have decided to use nucs exclusively. I attended Julia's beginner course at Brigsteer last year, and since then I have been enthralled with beekeeping. I have always been eager to learn and I hope this will help both with beekeeping and with being the secretary. I trust that the club will bear with me whilst I learn the ropes over the coming months. I look forward to speaking to as many of you as possible over my time as secretary.

Best wishes

J. O.

I went down to Coventry again to the Annual Delegates Meeting and can report back here on the most interesting bits. I luckily sat next to the Jersey delegate over lunch break. He was upbeat and seemed to be enjoying the challenge of the hornets. He told me that now France is overwhelmed by the insects, Jersey gets a regular number arriving and last year they reckon after having destroyed ALL of the nests the year before, 61 successfully flew across again last spring and set up camp. He told me that they don't become a pest until July which is of some consolation, and the island beekeepers were beginning to adapt to their presence. I'll summarise some of the main points of the formal meeting below:

1. It was decided that the position of honorary treasurer of the BBKA was no longer required.
2. There was a discussion about proxy voting and that it should only be allowed if there were 90% of the associations represented in person at the ADM : It failed to carry.
3. The title BBKA 'Chairman' is to be replaced by BBKA 'Chair'.
4. It was proposed that new applicants for Area Association status should have at least 50 members. This was destined to fail. Each delegate gets one vote, but if the big associations don't like the result of the vote, they can ask for a 'members vote'. Our vote then counts for 66 and Yorkshire's vote then counts for about 1700 votes (the number of members they have). 4 small associations all then said one by one that if this went ahead and it failed because of a members vote, they wouldn't bother coming next year. Cumbria, who had put forward the proposition were asked to withdraw it by the executive so that it didn't have a chance of failing. It was interesting to see 'democracy' at work.

5. There is to be a reintroduction of a BBKA 'year book' by common demand.
 6. BBKA insurance now covers up to 15 members to search for Asian hornets if there is a need, but not to actually deal with them (phone for Julia!)
 7. There was a proposition passed that will enable the BBKA to further raise pollinator awareness in different ways.
 8. A proposition was passed whereby the BBKA will actively pursue membership of Apimondia (the international federation of beekeepers association).
 9. Laddingford association applied for full association membership for the second year running. They gave a good account of their club, but having only 83 members, they passed the delegates vote, but failed again when Yorkshire asked for a membership vote. Plenty of unrest about this.
- Tyneside association won the Surrey shield for the most basic test passes. Yorkshire won the trophy for the most certificates gained not counting the basic. If anyone fancies becoming president of the BBKA next year there was only one candidate put forward to replace Margaret Murdin. Margaret Wilson is the new president.
- There is an Asian hornet conference organised for March 8th. It is fully booked with 250 attendees! There will be another on put on for later in the year. **P. W.**



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Message from the Treasurer..... Please would all members renew their subscriptions for the coming year. It is something we all put off, but it really helps Pat if we can get the money and form to her as quickly as possible. The form can be found on the 'contact us' page of the website. Please read the accompanying notes about the tick boxes at the bottom of the form. You are then asked to either email or post the completed forms to Pat and either transfer the money or send a cheque with the form. **Many thanks.**

Brigsteer Bee Reserve and Beekeeping Courses.

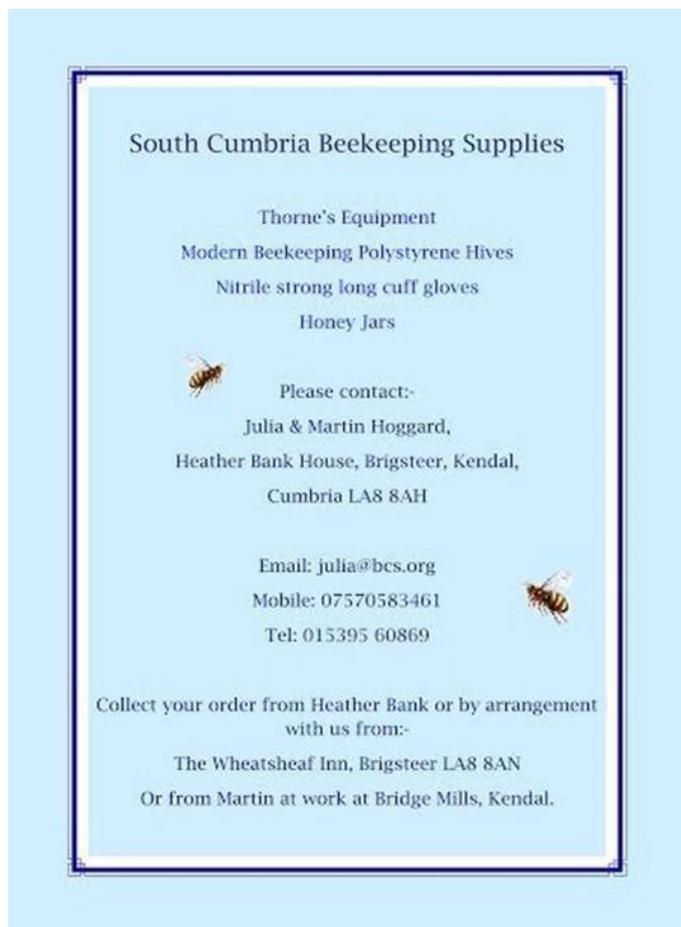
The land that is now the bee reserve came up for sale in 2007 inviting sealed bids.

We surveyed the land and submitted a management plan to create a nature reserve enclosed with our bid; despite putting in the lowest offer we were very fortunate, and the land came our way. By chance, for a few years, we had been running beekeeping and bumblebee courses for the Field Studies Council:

Brigsteer Village Hall Committee asked us if we could run the courses here. Thus, we were identified in the Heritage Lottery Funding request as start-up organisation enabled by a new village hall. As the 2 events came together, we decided to call ourselves BeeEd, a not for profit business to teach people about pollinators. We run the nature reserve 'hand to mouth', any

money we can earn funds the nature reserve bit by bit. Most of our money is raised by giving talks and the beekeeping courses. Over the years we have had some amazing donations from kind people. We work to create flower rich pasture and meadow with scrubby woodland and woodland pasture supporting not just bees; we have good butterflies, other invertebrates, bird life and good quality soil. The reserve is grazed at the end of the season and through winter by Ruth and Wal's Shetland cattle. In 2020 we shall celebrate 15 years of running courses with our intermediate Beekeeping course in March, timed to take place just before the swarming season starts. This is a day course concentrating on swarm management, simple queen rearing and expanding knowledge of bee diseases. In May, when we hope the weather is warm enough to open the hives, we shall run our Introducing Beekeeping weekend. The two courses together were built around the BBKA Basic Assessment syllabus. If people have paid us once to come on a course they are always welcome to return in the future and do some revision, new and aspiring beekeepers on the courses gain a lot from meeting members of the Kendal club who help out or just come along for a refresher. Thank you all of you who have helped us over the years, especially our chairlady and queen bee, Geraldine who rules in the kitchen while the courses run.

Julia and Martin www.BeeEd.org.uk.



Message from Judith: I would like to thank you all for the lovely card and gardening voucher presented to me at the AGM. I have enjoyed my time as secretary but am pleased that a newer, younger member has now taken over. You will have already received information from the new secretary, Johnny Oates. I hope you will be able to support him and our association as you have me.

Best wishes, **Judith B**

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Swarm Collectors: Please contact Johnny if you can add your name to the list of swarm collectors that the SLDC can contact if needed during the season. The more the better as it spreads the load. **Thanks.**

Learning from a Himalayan Beekeeper

In October 2019 we travelled to the northern part of India where we spent two weeks cycling in Sikkim and a week trekking in neighbouring West Bengal. It is an area of incredible beauty being in the foothills of the Himalaya. We were treated to several days looking at Kanchenjunga and Everest as many of the world's highest mountains revealed themselves to us through the Himalayan mist. It is not surprising that much of the world's botanical exploration has taken place in the Himalaya with the early plant explorers finding new and exciting species to record



and share. In recent decades the Sikkimese people have realised that their natural environment is important to them on numerous levels. Apart from understanding the responsibility of caring for such a special place they realise that the natural beauty of the area is the very reason people continue to visit, which in turn contributes to the economy. Sikkim is working towards a negative carbon footprint (producing more green energy than the state consumes) and in 2003 it adopted organic farming throughout the state. The fauna and flora are certainly flourishing. It was therefore not surprising that we saw examples of beekeeping on our journey and it was with great pleasure that I spent time with Mingma the owner of a homestay in Gudrun at an altitude of 2293m just over the border in West Bengal. Mingma had a small holding in which he kept a few cows, chickens, a flourishing vegetable patch, fruit trees, marijuana (apparently completely legal and for medicinal purposes only) and 3 beehives. He was relatively new to beekeeping and was

being mentored by a government sponsored beekeeper who was introducing him to new methods of managing his bees. He was very excited to hear I had an interest and before I knew it, I was whisked away with no protective wear to look inside his hives. He spoke no English and I speak no Hindi or Nepali, nonetheless we managed to communicate with the help of our trek guide. Mingma had been keeping his bees in the side of his house and he showed me the small hole where they would get in and out to their hive but with the mentorship program he had now adopted what looked like quite small National hives all of which had one brood box and one super. His boxes were certainly small and he was most surprised to see photographs



of mine that were much bigger and had more supers on. We then realised that his bees were also small and it turns out that they are *Apis cerana* the eastern honey bee which I suspect means he needs smaller bee spaces in his hives. I was particularly interested to see that he had filled any gaps with cow dung. He was surprised to hear that I have never done that at home with my hives!

It was a real pleasure meeting Mingma who eventually treated me to a half teaspoon of his treasured honey. It was absolutely beautiful.

You heard it here first – the solution to the problem of the Asian giant hornet

During our trek through West Bengal we were privileged to be in the company of Kinzong Bhutia a guide on our trek who had also been involved in writing the environmental policy for the state of Sikkim. We were talking bees with Mingma the homestay owner and discussing threats to beekeeping. I asked if they had any problems with what I would call the Asian hornet and they looked at me surprised. With various communication methods we made sure that we were talking about the same thing and with the help of Wikipedia we agreed that the Asian giant hornet *Vespa mandarinia* was indeed what we were all talking about. Kinzong said it was imperative that I tell my English friends that Asian hornet is not a problem. He said ‘you just have to teach people how to eat them and that will solve your problem’! I was amazed but sure enough on the same Wikipedia page just after the section on extermination there is information on the use of Asian hornets as a nutritional supplement. According to Kinzong you have to take the larvae, let them starve for 2 days and then fry them with butter and garlic. He agreed that retrieving the larvae is a bit hazardous but he tells me it’s well worth the effort.....



Alison C

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WASPS AT CROOKLANDS

At the January 2020 AGM, Julia shared the content of the planned meeting in the coming months. The April talk will be on Wasps, with Julia saying that she will try and persuade us to like wasps! In July/August 2019, I had split a very full hive with a view to grow a nuc to give me some options when the bee year ended. Then September, when doing an inspection, I noticed more than the usual stray wasp around my hives. Opening the nuc was distressing, seeing lots of wasps removing larva and basically decimating the nuc altogether. I then went on to inspect the other hives, and there seemed to be a wasp for every bee! All supers were empty, the wasps had had it all. They had even managed to get in under the roof of what was my big hive, and again, I was shocked by the destruction! I put some Ambrosia into the 2 hives and taped up the entrance. Within a few minutes, the hives appeared to be yellow, due to the sheer numbers of wasps. A panic post on our KSWBA Facebook page brought lots of help and advice. Jonny sent me a photo of the homemade entrance “confuser” that he had made with Julia. Ken and Nicky leant me a wasp trap box and Julia gave me some Asian hornet bait. The hives were covered in bedsheets for a few days as well. The garden looked like I'd given it some strange makeover with hanging traps everywhere – jam, slightly tired elderflower champagne, Asian hornet bait; you name it, I had it everywhere. I spent a lot of time suited up squashing wasps, but they kept coming. John had been in pest control so he did a search for a nest in all the neighbouring barns but nothing could be found, so we assumed it was in the ground somewhere. Due to the sheer volume of wasps, I was left with nothing more than a handful of bees. Fortunately, Nicky and Ken were able to supply me with a nuc of bees, and I am hoping they are ok. I really don't want to see another wasp in our garden EVER! and I don't think I can be persuaded to tolerate, let alone like wasps on the 14th of April!



Diane E

Please try and remember that when we get emails from Johnny personally addressed to us, that they are designed to be friendly. We need to resist answering them however, unless necessary, otherwise his inbox becomes overwhelmed. **Thanks**

At the AGM the following were elected/re-elected :

Officers for 2020

Chairperson	Geraldine
Secretary	Jonny
Treasurer	Pat
Meetings/Education officer	Julia
ADM delegate/Newsletter editor	Phil
Assessment/Exams officer	Julia
Website Editor	Andy
Honey show Sec	Karen
Additional Committee members:	Judith, Ron, Jacqui, Meg, Diane.

Many thanks to the contributors for this edition of the Preveiling Wind : Johnny, Judith, Diane, Alison and Julia.