



# THE TIVVY BUZZETTE

The Newsletter of Tiverton Beekeepers – April 2021

Tiverton Beekeepers are a branch of the Devon Beekeepers' Association Registered Charity No. 270675

*Opinions expressed in articles in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect either the opinions or the policies of The Devon Beekeepers' Association*

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



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March 24th 2020 may be remembered by many as the first day of lock down, and how it has affected all of us in many different ways, and may do for many months to come. I do hope that a successful outcome is arrived at soon.

The 4th April 1992, was a major date in the beekeeping world, which still affects all beekeepers after 30 years! This was the date when the Varroa mite was first identified in the UK, at Torquay in South Devon. Honey bees have been here for millions of years, and yet we hope to find a solution in just a short time?

### The Mid Devon Show is back!

The 24th July 2021, will be another very important date to Tiverton Beekeepers as this is the date of this years Mid Devon Show. For those who do not know, the Mid Devon Show is the finest back drop for the Tiverton Beekeepers to meet the public, show off our knowledge of the subject of beekeeping, and also sell members honey products. It is also the main area to attract new members to our association. I am in contact with the show organisers about our stand at the show which is normally 7 metres in length.

Due to possible ongoing Covid 19 restrictions, I am suggesting that we have a stand of 4 meters in length as we won't have any large display stand to use after the Devon County Show this year. Honey tasting probably won't be permitted but hopefully the sale of members honey products can go ahead.

The smaller stand will involve less staff to operate and smaller numbers of the public at any one time, so hopefully a safer environment.

Please contact me if you don't agree with this years show proposal.

Hopefully we can soon meet together for the obligatory tea, cake and chat.

Malcolm

## **BBKA VOLUNTEERS WANTED**

We have received the a message from the BBKA for volunteers.

“During the swarm season the BBKA office receives hundreds of phone calls from the public, often elderly people who don't have access to the internet, asking for help with swarms. Very often the bees in question are not honey bees so the caller just needs more information or reassurance. If it is a genuine swarm call, we give them the contact details for a local BBKA swarm collector.

The office team are seeking beekeepers to help us answer some of the calls by volunteering to have calls redirected to their own mobiles or land lines for an hour or so a week.

The caller would not be able to identify your mobile or land line number as they will have rung the BBKA swarm help line initially and then the call is diverted. The swarm line is open between 8.30am and 4.30pm Monday to Fridays but busy times are late mornings onward.

It will be easy for volunteers to opt in and out of the system so this is not a forever commitment.

We will arrange a zoom meeting for potential volunteers to discuss how this will work in practice. If you want to consider joining the team and would like more information (without committing yourself) please email me: [gen.manager@bbka.org.uk](mailto:gen.manager@bbka.org.uk)”

## **Stop the importation of honey bees into GB from the EU via Northern Ireland**

The BBKA is asking you to take a stand:

We have received an email from Anne Rowbery, Chair of the BBKA re the above, the text is as follows:-

"As you are probably aware, there is a move to bring bees into the UK via Northern Ireland. This is to circumvent the law that prohibits Package Bees, Nuclei and Colonies entering the UK and is a result of a loophole allowing direct entry into Northern Ireland from the European Union. These bees would have a health certificate issued in the area of the EU from which they originated but would have no other serious inspections in Northern Ireland or when they enter the rest of the UK.

They are coming from southern Italy near the site where the outbreak of Small Hive Beetle (SHB) originated. Although officially there is not a threat of SHB in the area, there is little compensation if beekeepers report an outbreak that would result in colonies being destroyed and restrictions put officially on the movement of bees in the area.

The SHB is in Italy and in the area where these bees are being bred. If they get into the UK they will spread rapidly. The BBKA with Bee Disease Insurance, organised cooperation between Northern Ireland beekeepers, Welsh and Scottish beekeepers. Joint letters were sent to Ministers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. For more information, on a Parliamentary Petition, please use the link <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/577603>



### Tiverton Beekeepers' Branch Members Meeting Programme .

#### April

##### **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> Branch members' meeting**

This meeting is normally dedicated to providing our members with a testing process to identify nosema in their bees, this year we hope to include more opportunity to examine pollen, bees & disease under the microscope. In place there will be another branch meeting via Zoom starting at 7.30 pm. This will hopefully either be.. our local seasonal Bee Inspector talking about his role & the importance of registering on Beebase or a Devon beekeeper letting us in on his secrets of making his own beekeeping equipment. Once this is confirmed members will be updated. Either way this looks interesting so pencil the dates into your calenders.

#### May

**Thursday 13th May @ 7.30 pm . Branch Committee Meeting via Zoom**

**Wednesday 19th.** Hopefully by this date we will be able to get to the Apiary but if not keep this date



*Spring* 2021  
*Convention*

16-18 April 2021

## **The BBKA Spring Convention An Armchair Event**



**The Spring Convention 2021 will be an on-line 'virtual' event**

Speakers include: Keith Delaplane (USA), Steve Pernal (Canada) and from the UK - Steve Martin, Celia Davis, Nicola Bradbear, Marin Anastasov, Jane Medwell, Rinke Vinkenoog, Colin Pavey, Lynfa Davies, Matthew Pound, Shirley & Richard Bond and more – Plus the Virtual Trade Show and Social Activity.

Visit [www.bbka.org.uk](http://www.bbka.org.uk) for more news and event updates



Due to the present circumstances the Bee Marquee at the show is reduced in size, to save money, and this means there will not be a Stevenson Trophy this Year. Due to our Clubs previous good record in this event at the show we have been invited to make a display for people who may wish to take up Beekeeping in Devon. Details to follow. I understand that most of the usual events will continue e.g. Honey Competition, Honey Tasting, Honey Sales, Candle Making, Observation Hive, etc. If you have any specific questions, please contact Liz Westcott the Bee Marquee organiser via email [lizwestcott@me.com](mailto:lizwestcott@me.com).

Derek EVANS, Display Organiser

### **ASIAN HORNET UPDATE**

#### **Asian Hornet Spring Monitoring 12 April to 26 April 2021**



#### **See the March 2021 edition of the Buzzette for the rationale and further information**

Monitoring Period Monday 12 April to Monday 26 April 2021

Pick a day when its sunny and the temperature is 15 degree C or more, little wind and no chance of rain. Pick a time between 10 and 3 o'clock in the afternoon although around midday to 1 o'clock being ideal. Place your monitoring station, preferably on an upturned yellow bucket, near to flowering plants such as camillias. Let the attractant have time to warm and waft its vapour into the air for approximately 20 minutes. Observe what is attracted for at least 10 minutes, 30 would be ideal. Record any observations and email the results.

Want to use a bespoke attractant?

The branch has a supply of Suterra (re-named as Trappit). If you would like a sample to take part in this exercise, then this is the procedure.

Email the AHAT Coordinator to book a collection time between 17:00 and 19:00 on Friday 9 April 2021. Please provide your postcode in the email and a contact number. You will be emailed by return with a confirmation and an allotted time hopefully close to your requested one.

The meeting place will be the car park of Uplowman Village Hall. The masked socially distanced handover of the 50 ml sample will require you to bring your own sealable container. The sample collection timings will ensure that only one vehicle will be present in the 10 minute transfer window.

Homebrew attractant alternatives

If you are unable to collect a sample, then, the following recipes have been published as suitable alternative attractants.

The French recipe for the attractant is approximately 50% by volume of cheap lager or sweet white wine and 50% by volume of sweet fruit syrup. In France, cassis is used but blackcurrant juice / squash is a suitable alternative. Other recipes are:

- 500ml dark beer +2 tablespoons of sugar or honey
- 500ml water + 3 tablespoons of sugar or honey + 250 ml cider vinegar
- 350ml of beer + 2 tablespoon of sugar or honey
- 200ml of water + 2 tablespoon of sugar or honey + a dash of vinegar (no more than 30ml)
- 350ml sweet white wine (or white wine sweetened with sugar) + 20 to 30 ml of mint or blackberry syrup

Looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the sample transfer.

Gavin Nuttall-Owen

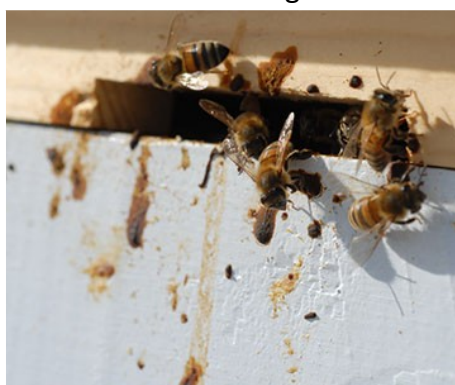
AHAT Coordinator

ahat@tivertonbeekeepers.uk

## Nosema

### Honey bee threat – Microscopy reveals a cause

As April warms the hive so first inspections get underway. What is happening if you are confronted with scenes similar to the images below?



D. Broberg, [www.flickr.com/photos/dbroberg](https://www.flickr.com/photos/dbroberg)



Beebase, Crown Copyright

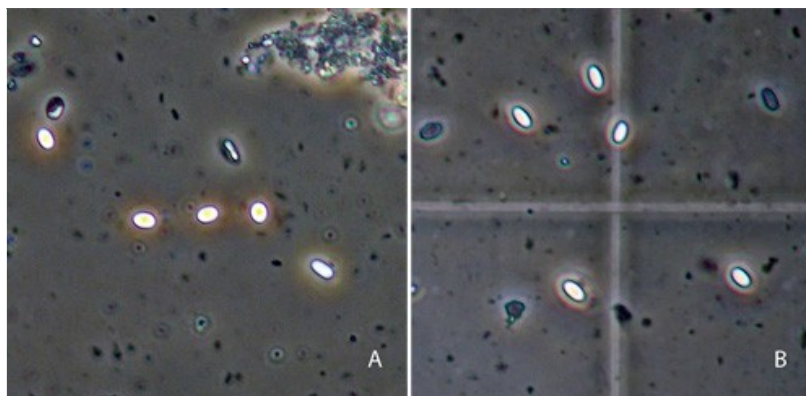
These scenes are excess defaecation which may be the bee equivalent of diarrhoea caused by dysentery or infection by Nosema.



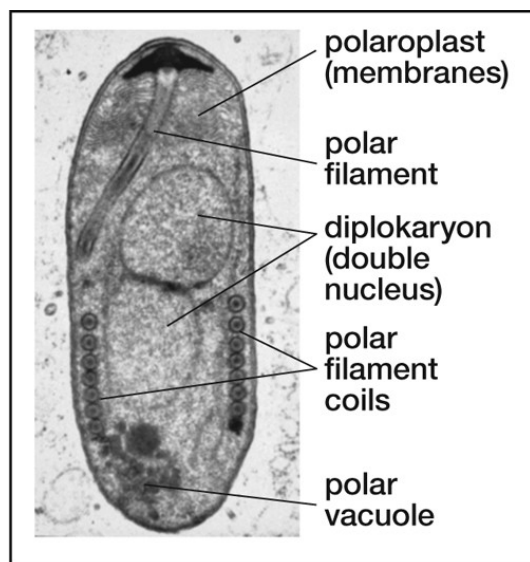
Honey bee dysentery is not due to a pathogen but is due to an excess accumulation of water in the honey bee gut. In cold weather when the bees cannot go outside to defaecate, they must hold on to their faeces sometimes for months. Although the biology of the bee is such that they can do this faeces retention if they consume too much liquid over time then they reach a point when they can no longer 'hold it in' and end up defaecating inside the hive or on the front porch.

Nosema disease is caused by a unicellular organism classified as a microsporidian which was thought to belong to the Protozoan phyla, an example being the amoeba. DNA sequencing of several genes indicate that Nosema are more closely related to the Fungi although where in the lineage is unclear. The microsporidian reproduces, like fungi, by producing spores.

The honeybee microsporidia (*N. apis* and *N. ceranae*) are approximately 4 microns in length (1 micron = 0.001 mm). One hundred nosema fitting end to end would just cover the fullstop at the end of this sentence.



X 400 magnification Mature infective spores of *Nosema apis* and *Nosema ceranae*, pathogens of the honey bee. Photos by W.-F. Huang The thick spore wall shines under light microscopy



Major organelles inside an infective microsporidian spore. Photo courtesy of the Society for Invertebrate Pathology. (electron microscope x5500)

The spores enter the digestive tract of the bee through the mouth and travels to the midgut. There a spring-loaded lancet (polar filament) injects the spores contents into the epithelial cells of the bee's gut. Once inside the epithelial cell the spore reproduces by forming multiple copies of itself. The spores interfere with the digestive enzymes that are normally produced by the cells. When the epithelial cells

try to release digestive enzymes Nosema spores are released instead. With a lack of digestive enzymes the bee weakens from malnutrition and may eventually starve to death.

The bees can have Nosema with or without dysentery and can have dysentery with or without Nosema. One does not cause the other and one is not dependent upon the other. The only way for a beekeeper to tell if their bees have a Nosema infection is by the use of microscopy.

The colony does not build as quickly as expected in the spring because Nosema shortens the life of the bees and inhibits pollen digestion.

Treatment by the antibiotic Fumidil B® is no longer available, the best treatment is to replace brood combs with new.

Covid-19 government guidance regarding meeting of non-households and maintaining social distance makes drop-in microscopy sessions impractical.

Should branch members consider that they have a high density Nosema infestation and require a confirmation then please contact the branch chairman or myself and we will endeavour to arrange a microscopic investigation.

Gavin Nuttall-Owen  
ahat@tivertonbeekeepers.uk

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## **March 8<sup>th</sup> 2021 was International Women's Day**

Beekeepers for Life is a new initiative to empower women to become leaders, trainers, and entrepreneurs through the creation of Beekeepers for Life communities. This campaign builds on the success of current Bees Abroad women-led beekeeping projects in communities across Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Beekeeping enables women in the communities they work with to learn new skills and earn a sustainable income to pay for education, feed their families, and medical services.

There are many barriers to women becoming beekeepers – cultural, environmental and financial:

A traditional male preserve

Wild hives – dangerous to handle, remote locations

No money to purchase training courses, hives and equipment

Bees Abroad address these barriers through dedicated training, equipment and support that spans activities starting with the classroom, progressing to constructing hives, making bee suits and establishing apiaries through to harvesting and selling honey and wax products



*The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby Archbishop of Canterbury*

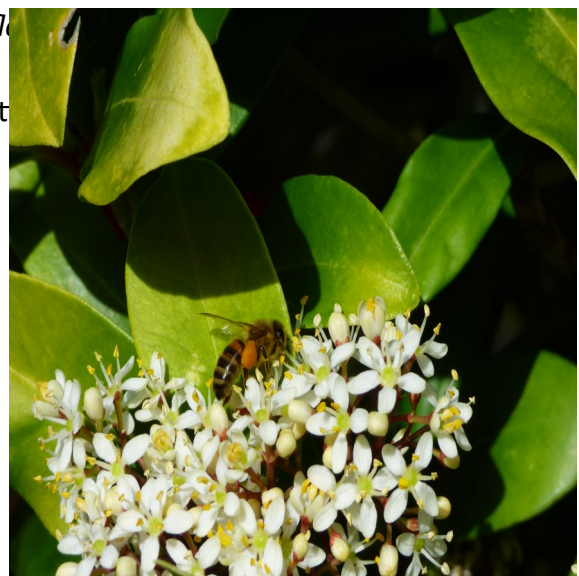
*“I am delighted to be Bees Abroad to support their campaign to empower a new generation of female beekeepers in Africa.*

*Similar to the structure of hives, centred around the Queen Bee and with female worker bees which collect the nectar and pollen, women are the lifeblood of their communities. When they are side-lined and prevented the opportunity to use their gifts, the structure of their community crumbles and everyone suffers.*

*Bees Abroad with this campaign will support women to learn the craft of beekeeping and create their own sustainable livelihood. They will be able to sell their produce, providing vital additional household income for themselves and their families. Their children can eat their honey promoting nutritionally healthy lives. Pollination is essential to local crops and thereby the local economy.*

*These tiny creatures of mere millimetres, so integral to our ecosystem and food resources, bring life abound and will allow women and their communities to flourish.*

You can support Beekeepers for life with further information at [Bees Abroad](#) and [BBKA News](#).





# Around the apiary in April

By Keith Owers

*Apis mellifera mellifera* on Skimmia

Hilary Sanders. Taken 30/03/21

It's officially spring, so we are expecting temperatures down to just above freezing, that is our British weather but you cannot do things by calendar dates. Over the last two or three months I have been on about feeding bees, well we are now in the high risk period. I have been hefting my hives and they are starting to become light. From the amount of pollen I have seen going into the hives I am sure the queens are laying well, hence the stores are going down fast. If the next two weeks are warm 15/16 C we can expect to see the bees out and about collecting nectar and pollen but should the weather turn cold and wet the bees stores will take a hammering. We do not see much nectar coming in until willows and dandelions are flowering. In some places down the Exe valley I have seen some good patches of willow flowering but only the few dandelions in flower. I will be watching my hives closely to make sure they are not dangerously light. I anticipate they will need 2 to 4 litres of Ambrosia or sugar syrup to enable the colonies to keep building.

I expect many of you are eagerly waiting to look in the hives, the first inspection of the year. Please do not be in a rush, wait for a calm day with the temperature 15/16 C or above, shirt sleeve weather. Should you start looking in colder or windy weather there is a high risk of getting chilled brood. Young larva of the same age will die and look at first glance as if they have died of European Foul Brood. This will set the hive back in its development and give you a lot of unnecessary worry. This first inspection is much easier to demonstrate than to write about. What should you be looking for? First on the list is do they have enough food for the next two weeks and at least 2 brood frames of honey. Is the queen laying workers and not drones in worker cells.

Is the laying pattern good and not patches here and there. Has she enough space to lay in. It is possible to overdo spring feeding and leave the bees little space for incoming stores and space for the queen to lay. Over feeding will also increase the risk of early swarming. No matter how interested you become looking at you bees, keep it short. No longer than 10 minutes on early inspections. If you do not like what you see ask a friend to look with you next time.

Late April early May is a good time to go changing old dirty or damaged brood frames. More about frame changes next month.

Should we have good April weather be prepared to put the first supers on by the middle of the month, drawn comb if possible for the first super.

I hope all of your hives have come through the winter and are ready for the off.

Keith Owers

*Spring Convention*

*2021*

*All details*

*below*



**The BBKA Spring Convention, 15<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> April: A 'virtual' armchair event  
Advance Registration opens this week**

Just around the corner...The 43<sup>rd</sup> BBKA Spring Convention, opens on the evening of Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> and continues through to Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April. With over twenty practical and scientific presentations, attendees will find a mix of speakers and topics every bit as broad, interesting and relevant as usual, whatever their experience of bees and beekeeping.

Prof. Keith Delaplane will give the George Knights Memorial Lecture, '*How honey bees use genetics to solve their problems and what we can learn from it*', on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April.

Social events planned include 'Locked Down' with Bill Turnbull on Friday evening and the Jimmy Doherty Interviews, plus the Bees-A-Buzzing quiz final, on Saturday. The full programme can now be downloaded from the Spring Convention pages of [www.bbka.org.uk](http://www.bbka.org.uk).

Registration is needed to take part, but free-to-view content includes a keynote address by Dr David Aston, 7.30pm, Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> April, plus the Beacon School presentations on Sunday at 15.30 and free access to the Market Place, for your favourite beekeeping equipment suppliers and other exhibitors.

Paid registration is needed to watch all live content (presentations, Q&A etc) and to view content later, on demand. 'Tickets' for the entire three days are £10 in advance (until 15<sup>th</sup> April), or £12.00 on-the-day. Complimentary registration is available for BBKA Junior and School members. Further Information at [www.bbka.org.uk/Pages/Category/about-spring-convention](http://www.bbka.org.uk/Pages/Category/about-spring-convention) and register soon at [www.springconvention.bbka.org.uk](http://www.springconvention.bbka.org.uk). Please use the SAME e-mail address for access thereafter.

Newsletter editors interested in joining a 'Get Together' at 15.45, on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April, require paid Convention registration. They also need to contact: [bristolbeekeepersnews@gmail.com](mailto:bristolbeekeepersnews@gmail.com) by noon on 17<sup>th</sup> April to sign-up for the session.

A great event to look forward to, which this year comes to you! Best viewed on a full-sized screen, but available on phones and tablets too.....

Joyce Nisbet,  
**BBKA Trustee and Spring Convention Committee Chair**



Spring 2021  
Convention

## More Social...

In addition to the excellent presentations from leading speakers the More Social programme gives an opportunity to learn more about current issues in and around beekeeping, to meet key influencers and test your own knowledge and understanding. Here's the programme to look at; all that's bees and beekeeping from a different angle.

### Put Your Back Into It – Safely!

**Friday Lunch 13.00-13.30**



The most physical aspect of beekeeping is lifting equipment whether it's boxes of bees or containers full of honey. Pilates expert Wendy Joelson gives tips on how to keep yourself and your back safe.

### Locked Down with Bill Turnbull

**Friday Evening 18.00-19.15**



Six beekeeping personalities are locked down in a place of their choosing. Bill Turnbull, beekeeping TV and Radio presenter finds out what makes his guests tick and talks about issues which particularly concern them. He asks what essential kit they need in lock down and rounds off by letting them choose a piece of music to have with them. Featuring Celia Davis, Willy Robson, Sara Robb, Nicola Bradbear, Keith Delaplane and Martha Kearney and some quirky choices of music!

### Sponsors' Videos

**Saturday Lunch 13.00-13.30**

Learn more about the organisations that have supported the 2021 BBKA Spring Convention.

### The Jimmy Doherty Interviews

**Saturday Evening 18.00-18.30**



BBKA Patron Jimmy Doherty chats with beekeeper Simon Irvin; mead expert Suzie Hutchinson of Northumberland Honey and bee cosmetics expert Alison Derrick of Bee Inspired.

### Bees-A-Buzzing Quiz Final

**Saturday Evening 18.30-19.00**

Julian Routh presents the final of this quiz on more than just beekeeping and announces the winning team.

### Lunch with Lesley and Jerry

**Sunday Lunch 13.00-13.30**



A light hearted ramble with Lesley Jacques and legendary beekeeping publisher Jeremy Burbidge of Northern Bee Books, to whet your appetite this lunchtime.



## Event Timetable

Thursday 15 April				
19.30-19.35		WELCOME with Jimmy Doherty		Sponsors
19.35-20.30	1	Tipping-points and Perceptions – Keynote address	David Aston	III
Friday 16 April				
10.15-10.30		WELCOME TO FRIDAY		
10.30-11.15	2S	The evolution of natural varroa tolerance	Stephen Martin	VI
11.30-12.15	3P	European Foulbrood	Colin Pavey	II
12.20-13.00		Live Q&A with Stephen Martin and Colin Pavey		
13.00-13.30		LUNCH with 'Beekeeping - Put Your Back Into It – Safely!' Wendy Joelson		
13.30-14.25	4P	From Comb to Candle with Live Q&A	Shirley Bond	VII
14.30-15.15	5S	Developing markers for breeding bees	Stephen Pernal	
15.30-16.15	6S	What is left of the Welsh Dark Bee?	Dylan Elen	
16.15-16.45		Live Q&A with Stephen Pernal and Dylan Elen		
18.00-19.00		Locked Down with Bill Turnbull		
Saturday 17 April - Channel 1				
09.15-09.30		WELCOME TO SATURDAY		
09.30-10.15	7S	Pollination syndromes – a bee for every blossom	Rinke Vinkenoog	IV
10.30-11.15	8	Ins and outs of pollination	Celia Davis	
11.30-12.15	9S	Melissopalynology - grassing bees up....	Matthew Pound	III
12.20-13.00		Live Q&A with Rinke Vinkenoog; Celia Davis; Matthew Pound		
13.00-13.30		LUNCH with our Sponsors		
13.30-14.25	10P	Spring cleaning the honey bee way with Live Q&A	Lynfa Davies	
14.30-15.15	11S	How honey bees use genetics to solve their problems	Keith Delaplane	I
15.30-16.15	12P	Management of mini mating nucs	Marin Anastasov	
16.15-16.45		Live Q&A with Keith Delaplane and Marin Anastasov		
18.00-19.00		The Jimmy Doherty Interviews plus Quiz – Bees-A-Buzzing Final		
Saturday 17 April - Channel 2				
09.15-09.30		WELCOME TO SATURDAY		
09.30-10.15	13P	Taking the BBKA Basic Assessment	Sean Stephenson	
10.30-11.15	14P	BBKA Exam Technique and Module 1	Margaret Murdin	
11.15-12.00		Live Q&A with Sean Stephenson and Margaret Murdin		
13.00-13.30		LUNCH with our Sponsors		
14.30-15.25	15P	Assemble the perfect home for your bees with Live Q&A	Oliver St.John	
15.30-16.25	16P	Tales from the Honey Isles with Live Q&A	Chris Park	
Sunday 18 April				
09.15-09.30		WELCOME TO SUNDAY		
09.30-10.30	17P	Swarm Control the natural way with Live Q&A	Jane Medwell	
10.45-11.30	18S	Asian Hornets: A brief overview and new insights	Peter Kennedy	III
11.45-12.30	19P	Know your enemy: Facing the Asian Hornet threat	Lynne Ingram	
12.35-13.00		Live Q&A with Peter Kennedy and Lynne Ingram		
13.00-13.30		LUNCH with Lesley and Jerry		
13.30-14.25	20P	Making kitchen cosmetics with Live Q&A	Sara Robb	V
14.30-15.30	21S	Research needed for better beekeeping development & Live Q&A	Nicola Bradbear	III
15.30-15.45		Beacon School Presentation and Close		

**S** suggests content is more Scientific; **P** suggests content is more Practical. **Sponsors** - see list for details  
**Programme correct at time of writing but subject to change**