

BOURNEMOUTH & DORSET SOUTH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter

March 2025

Report from the Chair

I write this on 1st March, officially the first day of spring, according to the meteorologists. Although it is sunny it is still chilly, and the temperature will struggle to achieve double figures over the next fortnight. Your bees may be flying about on sunny days and bringing in some pollen, but they may be hungry. Please do check fondant levels regularly, but don't be tempted to open up the hive just yet.

Booking for the BBKA Spring Convention, 4th-6th April, at Harper Adams University is open online until 25th March. Andrew and I will be going for the first time this year. There are 24 lectures, 70+ workshops and seminars as well as the extensive trade show. Please let me know if you are thinking to attend and we may be able to share transport. For more information follow the link

https://www.bbka.org.uk/pages/category/about-spring-convention?srltid=AfmBOooS32YxiOqm4GYg_ZHmQj3LgsXRMqb3Oi718oSKHIQH90KQC6XD

In January we held our AGM at which David Aldersley had to resign as chairman as he had held the position for the maximum term. We are very grateful to David for his years of service to the Association and his willingness to share his accumulated wisdom and knowledge with us. David will still be around and continue to serve as our Education Secretary and as a fount of wisdom. I shall try to serve you as faithfully but have big shoes to fill. We also welcome two new members to the committee – Nick Earl and Brian Morgan and thank them for their willingness to stand and give their time to us.

Now is the time to check you have sufficient equipment for the coming season. It is also the time to put out your Asian Hornet traps as the queens will

be emerging from their hibernation period as the temperature rises. There has already been at least one confirmed sighting of a Yellow Legged Asian Hornet this year. It was found in Shropshire in a delivery of imported shallots. If you do suspect you have trapped an Asian Hornet, please take a photo and send it to alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Lesley has had a difficult time in organising the monthly meetings this winter. Our usual meeting place of St Andrew's Church Centre was flooded and though we were able to use another room in the centre for our Christmas meeting it was not available for our regular meetings. The last two meetings have been held at St Francis Church Hall in Charminster, but had to be held on a Wednesday. We are going to try out a new venue not far from the West Parley Hall we had been using before their fire. **The next two meetings will be held at St Mark's Church Hall, West Parley on the Wednesdays, 19th March and 16th April.** All being well, we shall continue meeting there in the autumn but revert by then to our usual Tuesdays.

Happy beekeeping and look forward to seeing you on 19th March.

Anne Jablonski

Association Diary Dates 2025

The Evening Meetings have moved from St Francis of Assisi Church, to St Mark's Church, 250 New Rd, West Parley, Ferndown BH22 8EW. Please also note the change in dates. The start time remains the same, 7pm.

March 19th - "Defensive Bees" Martin and Clare from Buckfast Abbey

April 16th - Spring Social with refreshments. Talk on the Osprey Translocation Project in Poole Harbour by one of the staff working on the project

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Thank you.

Lesley Morton

Speakers secretary

speakers@bads-bka.org

Change in Course dates

Wannabee Day from 13th to 12th April

6 week courses to be every Saturday rather than Sunday starting 26th April

Dear Members – Your Contributions please

The next Newsletter will be in June 2025. I don't mind what you would like to send in so long as there is a bee theme...good or bad experiences, some ideas on how to do things better, anecdotes, interesting photos, honey based recipes.

Also, I invite you to send me the story of one of your mistakes! I have made plenty over the years and in this newsletter. Please contribute and don't feel embarrassed. If you want your piece to be anonymous it will still be acceptable!

Thank you

Adrian Rozkovec

newsletter@bads-bka.org

***Tropilaelaps* ; What is the Threat to the UK?**

Like varroa, *Tropilaelaps* are brood parasites that feed and reproduce in honey bee brood. They naturally infest giant Asian honey bees, but have jumped species to western honey bees (*Apis mellifera*) causing significant colony losses in areas they are found. These high losses are due to *Tropilaelaps*' ability to reproduce more quickly than varroa as well as causing

more damage to brood when they feed. With ever increasing global trade providing new transmission routes, and climate change expanding the areas these mites can survive in. *Tropilaelaps* is an emerging global threat to beekeeping following much the same route that varroa did back in the 1980s.



Tropilaelaps was confirmed in Europe for the first time in 2024 in the Krasnodar region, after beekeepers there reported high colony losses for a number of years before its presence was confirmed.

The BADSBKA committee have agreed to make a donation to PHIRA-Science following an approach from Maggie Gill, the founder of PHIRA-Science, a non-profit organisation, dedicated to improving honey bee and pollinator health globally. www.phira-science.org.

This is their statement...

"Over the past two years, my team and I have conducted extensive research on the parasitic mite *Tropilaelaps*. During this time, we have developed and refined detection techniques now used by government agencies worldwide to monitor for this mite. Our research has also investigated mite transmission and survival, their resistance to synthetic chemical treatments, and the efficacy of organic treatments such as oxalic acid.

It seems that it will be only a matter of time before *Tropilaelaps* potentially reaches the UK. Therefore, British beekeepers will play a crucial role in preventing its spread. If it should reach the UK early detection will be crucial to ensuring its eradication and again the vigilance of British beekeepers will be vital.

In March, we are scheduled to return to Thailand to continue our critical research on *Tropilaelaps*. We intend to use this opportunity to collaborate with a professional videographer to create a series of short educational videos for beekeepers. These videos will cover topics such as:

- The lifecycle of *Tropilaelaps*
- Monitoring techniques for *Tropilaelaps*
- Transmission routes (migratory beekeeping, bee sales, wild colonies on shipping containers)
- Symptoms of *Tropilaelaps* in honey bee colonies
- Treatment options (e.g., oxalic acid sublimation)
- Why and how *Tropilaelaps* kills honey bee colonies
- Global distribution of *Tropilaelaps*

PHIRA-Science is entirely funded by grants and donations. My team and I volunteer our time to these projects because we are deeply committed to their importance. We are seeking to raise £3000 to hire a professional videographer to film and edit these educational videos. The finished videos will be made freely available online to promote awareness and understanding of *Tropilaelaps*. Any donation will be gratefully received and acknowledged in any material that is produced from this project.

If you have any questions or require further information, please feel free to contact us.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,
Maggie Gill
Founder, PHIRA-Science"

Hearing (Asian) Hornets

The problem of 'yellow-legged' Asian Hornets wreaking havoc on pollinators is well known. Their rapid ingress into Northern Europe due, in part, to the prolific rate the colony can produce Queens.

Without any natural predators to keep them in check, our only defence is to hunt down and destroy their

nests. The only snag? These nests are harder to find than your car keys when you're already late for work.

I recall staring into the canopy of a tree for five minutes before a volunteer pointed to a bulge along the branch of the tree – Hornet HQ. Other nests I've seen were buried deep inside bramble bushes, and on sloping ground, making access about as easy as skating on ice in flip-flops.

Volunteers, working hand-in-glove with The Government of Jersey, have developed the art of finding and locating Asian Hornet nests, it now typically taking 2-3 days. Last year they found, located and destroyed over 260 nests, but as we approach the Spring 2025 equinox, already three Queen's have been found in Jersey, so its too early to say how effective this rate of location and destruction has been in stemming the tide.

But what we do know is that for reasons that include resource, geography and terrain, the Jersey methodology isn't a long-term solution for the UK.

My first encounter with an Asian Hornet was not visual, nor painful, but an auditory experience. It wasn't quite the roar of a WWII Lancaster bomber, but the Hornets buzzing my protective suit certainly had their own distinct timbre—somewhere between middle C on a piano and the B-flat of a honeybee, for those with a musical ear.

The idea of using sound to locate these nests isn't new—our ancestors were doing it while hunting wildebeest on the Serengeti 300,000 years ago, and in more recent history, enormous 'concrete ears' on Romney Marsh helped detect incoming Luftwaffe aircraft. So, why not apply similar principles to tracking Asian Hornet nests? The question is: can we use technology to distinguish an Asian Hornet nest from that of a wasp or European Hornet? The equivalent of singling my voice out from amongst a crowded BADS meeting?

In 2020 Conor, Dr Kirsty Stainton and I sailed to Jersey to record Asian Hornet nests, the experience of being surrounded by several thousand of furious insects trying their darndest to inflict as much pain as possible, whilst trying to push the boundaries of modern science, is not one I shall forget easily.

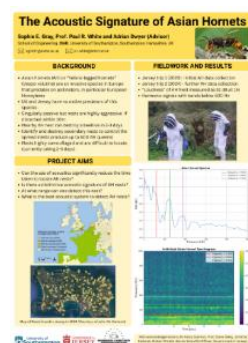
We recorded two nests, one at the edge of a field and another alarmingly close to a golf range, where

players had no idea how close a careless swing could result in a very painful surprise.

Although expensive, the equipment we used in 2020 wasn't expensive enough . . . or to be more scientific, the microphone was indiscriminate in the wide range of frequencies it captured, including an annoying lawnmower and planes flying overhead. But our analysis, persistence and, it has to be said, bravery paid off, when listened to in the lab, the recordings revealed a small range of frequencies that warranted further investigation.

Fast forward to 2024, and I found myself flying to Jersey once again, along with a researcher from the University of Southampton, this time carrying a large black briefcase that could easily be mistaken for something out of a crime thriller, so it was with some surprise that the Crown Dependency allowed us entry without question. This time, our device was a piece of high-tech wizardry—smaller than a marker pen but more expensive than all the cars parked at a BADS meeting combined. It could detect sound frequencies in far higher definition than the human ear can perceive. Back in Southampton, testing inside the University's anechoic chamber, a room so silent that you can hear your own heartbeat (and which, of course, costs more than an average house), suggests that we've made good progress in cracking the Asian Hornet acoustic code. Science isn't cheap!

And science rarely advances through dramatic 'Eureka!' moments. Instead, progress is made in small but vital steps. Thanks to financial contributions from BADS, we've been able to take another step toward using acoustics to track and locate Asian Hornet nests with greater speed and accuracy.



*Poster being presented at the BBKA Spring Convention
– Not for publication beforehand*

Our work to-date has been described in a scientific poster which was submitted by the University to the BBKA's Spring Conference in April, and I am pleased to say that the poster has been accepted for presentation at the conference, and the researcher was awarded a travel grant to contribute towards the cost of attending.

Of course, there's still work to be done. The University of Southampton has just announced that a PhD student will be continuing this research, with hopes of developing a cost-effective and practical device for volunteer beekeepers, Asian Hornet Action Teams, and beekeeping associations. And beyond that? Well, the vision goes further, but one step at a time!

Adrian Dwyer and Conor Wall

Honey and Lavender Panna Cotta



Serves 4

Ingredients

- 500 ml whipping cream
- 40ml whole milk
- 55g runny honey
- 2 ½ gelatine leaves, soaked in a little cold water
- 1 teaspoon dried lavender

Method

Put the cream, milk, honey and dried lavender into a saucepan and heat to 90c or almost boiling

Add the softened gelatine leaf (having squeezed out excess water) and stir to melt.

Leave to infuse for about 15 minutes

Sieve the mix and pour into 4 panna cotta moulds (I lined mine with cling film for easy unmoulding)

Allow to cool then place in the fridge to set (about 8 hours would be enough)

To Serve

Unmould each onto a plate and serve with a fruit of your choice ie, peaches, nectarines, raspberries, strawberries etc. You could also add a small shortbread to add texture to the dish.

Anne Moran