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21.01.2024



Hello All

As I write this there is an impending storm threatening and the active bee season seems a far greater distance away than the months left before the bees start to stir. But of course, we know that the days are growing longer and in a relatively short time we will be seeing them coming and going as they are depicted in the medieval painting above.

I can't give you any history to the painting except it is probably a 10th century work. But that in itself and the fact that our relationship with the honeybee stretches back much further than this is a matter of great wonderment.

My spirits are lifted just looking at this work and I can't wait for the bees to show themselves.... I hope you feel the same!

In the meantime, the Committee have hit the ground running in 2024 dealing with a number of items that I wish to draw your attention to. We have our monthly meeting which we hope more members will consider attending.

All the meetings are an informal gathering where as well as listening to the invited speaker we can have a chat over a tea or coffee.....try your best to attend and help make them a real success.....and your Chair a happy man!

The Asian Hornet is going to be a major issue for 2024 and beyond. So its most important that all beekeepers are up to speed with what action to take if one is spotted. You will be receiving more information from us throughout the year.

Andrew Abraham our Education Secretary is waiting to hear from any members that might be intrested in doing some studying to improve their beekeeping knowledge. If you're one of them contact Andrew and have a chat about it.

We now have a Husband and Wife team in place as Honey Show Managers and they have already started to look towards organising a show for this year.

Two events round this newsletter off and I look forward to chatting with you more as the beekeeping year unfolds.

Brian.

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## **February Meeting**

**Wed 07 Feb 2024**

**Marin Anastasov:**

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The Father of the Drone - bee keeping and genetics

From 19:30 until 21:00

At Friends Meeting House

2 Miller St, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Newcastle  
ST5 1QJ

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The aspect of inheritance in mammals is well understood by most of us as we relate to it in our own day to day interactions. However haploidy, parthogenesis and multiple mating in the honey bee mean that the transfer of genetic information and the expression of traits at a colony level is not as straight forward. The issue is further clouded by the fact that within the colony there are many sub-families and the performance of that superorganism is a result of complex interactions between individuals and the families.

The talk aims to give clarity on how genetic inheritance in the honey bee works, in a way that can be easily understood. It covers aspects of kinship, basic genetics, sex determination and how as beekeepers we can manage the selection process of our bees.



Marin Anastasov NDB

Marin started beekeeping in 1992 and developed his initial beekeeping knowledge and skills while he was studying towards a BSc in Animal Science. Later, he completed an MSc in Organic Farming at Aberdeen University.

He is passionate about sustainable food production and his entire working career has been in organic food and farming. His job involves training and development of farming operations in 35 different countries, so they can meet the required standards for organic food production. Working with farmers and growers around the world has allowed him to experience beekeeping practices in different countries in Africa, Europe, Asia and America.

He currently manage 30 colonies in Gloucestershire in 3 apiaries. The main objective of his beekeeping is honey production, but he

also finds working with bees rather relaxing after a busy day at work. Marin rears all his own queens, as well as few extra for sale to other beekeepers. To manage the quality of the mating he uses instrumental insemination for those destined to be the breeder queens.

In 2014, he became a Master Beekeeper and since, he has taken an active part in all areas of the BBKA examination system, both setting Module papers as well as conducting practical exams from the Basic to the Advanced Husbandry. In 2017 he gained the National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB), which is the highest beekeeping qualification awarded in the UK.

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## Asian Hornet

We are under the threat from a non-native ferocious predator called the **Asian Hornet**.

The Asian Hornet is thought to have been accidentally introduced into France in 2004 and has quickly spread to other western European countries.

It has crossed the channel and is now establishing itself in south-east England. It is almost inevitable that it will arrive in **Staffordshire in 2024**.

It poses a significant risk to members of the public and attrition of pollinating insects as well as consequences for agriculture, horticulture, and biodiversity.

Controlling the spread needs all beekeepers to be alert to possible sightings, and report them. Help from the general public is also essential in reporting sightings and we have

produced a flyer that can be downloaded and distributed in your local communities:

[https://mcusercontent.com/e0bc30ffa38f883d1aa25abff/files/0ebea666-a355-a73d-b1c9-597a5a2fdb0/AH\\_awareness\\_communication.pdf.zip](https://mcusercontent.com/e0bc30ffa38f883d1aa25abff/files/0ebea666-a355-a73d-b1c9-597a5a2fdb0/AH_awareness_communication.pdf.zip)

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**“See it! Snap it! Send it!”**

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The easiest way to learn how to recognise and report the Asian hornet is by downloading the “**Asian Watch App**” on your mobile phone. This can be done by scanning this QR code:





## Education

Dear Members,

As we start to make plans for the beekeeping year ahead and consider what we need to do in preparation, now is a good time to consider how you might improve your beekeeping knowledge. I am considering which areas of my beekeeping I should try and improve this year and I have already signed up for one beekeeping course. I really should give some 'proper' queen rearing a go.

I hope you too are considering these things and whether it's time for you to undertake the basic assessment, if it's not something you've done already. Basic is probably not the right title for it as it covers a breadth of topics and takes a reasonable amount of preparation. However, as beekeepers, we really should know the content to effectively look after our bees. It's a great opportunity to brush up on any areas you may not be confident on. The syllabus is here: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/basic-assessment>

There will be discussions at The Hollybush Inn, in Longsdon on Saturday mornings which cover the topics in the basic assessment, do come along. These will be posted on Meetup.com - Leek and Moorlands Beekeepers <https://www.meetup.com/apiary/>

If you've passed your basic assessment and you are considering the next step, the module exams may be for you. These can be daunting, but ultimately the goal is to improve your beekeeping knowledge. You do this by preparing for the exams, so you can't lose. Here are the dates to be aware of;

9th February - Closing date for March module exams  
28th February - Closing date for applications for General husbandry, Advanced husbandry and Honey bee breeding

23rd March - Module exams  
30th April - Closing date for Honey bee health (this date has been  
extended from previous years)

If you have any questions, or would like an application form for  
the any of the exams,  
please email: [AndrewGAbraham@Yahoo.co.uk](mailto:AndrewGAbraham@Yahoo.co.uk)

Best wishes,

Andrew, Education Secretary



### **HONEY SHOW MANAGERS**

Jennie & Mike

The North Staffs Committee would like to welcome Jennie and  
Mike who have agreed to take up the role of Honey show  
Managers.

They have both been beekeeping for a few years now and have  
three hives in their garden in Cheadle. They say they were  
delighted to be asked to be Honey Show Managers and hope they  
can equal the success of previous shows.





image: Member Martyn Horden at our last workshop

## **NSBKA Basic Microscopy Course**

**Sean Stephenson**  
**Saturday March 9 2024**  
**9.00 am – 4.00 pm**  
**Werrington Village Hall**

Microscopy is the technical field of using microscopes to view samples and objects that cannot be seen with the unaided eye (objects that are not within the resolution range of the normal eye).

For beekeepers with an interest in pollen, anatomy, and disease relevant to the honey bee this one day course is designed to cover all standards of attendee from beginner to old hand.

It provides an introduction to using a microscope, making pollen slides, abdominal dissection and diagnosis of acarine and nosema.

**The course is limited to 12 attendees and is offered on a first come first served basis.**

**FOR REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT PLEASE GO TO THE NSBKA WEBSITE:**

**<https://northstaffsbees.org.uk/event/nsbka-basic-microscopy-course/>**

In the event of the course being over subscribed we hope that it may be possible to run further courses in the future.

**Cost £30**

**Please bring your own pack lunch.**



- Arrival 9.15 for a 9.30 start
  - Morning Session: Acarine diagnosis and abdominal dissection
  - 12.15 – 1.00 pm Lunch break
  - Afternoon Session: Nosema Testing and making pollen slides.
  - Finish time approx. 4.00 pm
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**FOR SALE!**

## **A MORNING PRE-LOVED BEE EQUIPMENT SALE**

Do you have spare beekeeping equipment languishing in the back of your shed? Then this is your opportunity to dust it off and bring it along to our

'A MORNING PRE-LOVED BEE EQUIPMENT SALE'.

We have organised the hire of Werrington Village Hall and for a nominal fee you can sell all equipment that is surplus to your requirement.

Pitches..... Inside (or outside for larger items) £5 per pitch... payable on the day

Where.....Werrington Village Hall 358 Ash Bank Road ST9 0JS

When.....Sunday March 24th

Time.....sellers setup time 9am.....Sale start time 10am



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