



NEWSLETTER – APRIL 2025

STEERING GROUP MEMBERS 2024/2025

Tim Bullock	Mick Carter	Justin Downes
Stephen Greenaway	Clive Harris	Kathy Hobson
Kevin Holt	Marcel Marsh	Matt O'Dell
Nicola Perrett	Barry Roberts	

APIARY NOTES - Tim Bullock (Chair)

As we go into mid-April hopefully the weather will stay warm as we come into our 'peak season' for beekeeping. At the moment things are warm and dry – believe it or not but the farmers could do with some rain!! Now is the time that colonies are more likely to swarm, Are you ready? Once a colony has entered swarm preparation mode, nothing is likely to stop them so just knocking back queen cells will only stop swarming for another week – the more you do it the sneakier they will get about where they build the queen cells, so eventually you'll miss one. The key thing for us is what's their reasons for building queen cells – are they superseding the current queen, have they already lost her or are they just trying to expand the colony number? Splitting a colony that is in swarm mode is usually the best solution. We either end up with 2 good colonies so can expand our number, or there are two colonies that could be united once one of the queens has been destroyed (usually the older one, but it might be that the new one fails for some reason). As supers start to fill add more, if bees have space they are less likely to swarm. It's quite interesting that a lot of bee farmers will add 3 or more supers at one time rather than 1 now and others as they need it. Once honey is capped off then supers can be removed and extracted. If you don't expect to have much oilseed rape honey then there's nothing to stop you from just adding more supers and do a 'mass' extraction later in the spring. If you do have lots of oilseed rape honey then it's best to extract as soon as supers are capped so hopefully it hasn't granulated. When inspecting it's worth having a plan, what am I looking for, what do I want to achieve by inspecting. The key ones are is the queen there and laying? Are they running out of space? Is the laying pattern a normal shape? Is there any sign of disease? Etc. Don't forget to keep colony records up to date, including now recording and reporting the presence of varroa.

NEW BEEKEEPERS

Welcome to the world of beekeeping to all our members who have received their first colonies. We hope really enjoy the experience – don't forget we are here to support and help you.

MEMBERSHIP

Some of you are most likely thinking about "splits" this year. If you want insurance cover for all hives make sure you increase your BDI subscription. The amounts due are shown on the membership form you completed when renewing. The basic £40 fee covers you for up to 3 hives

IAN COWDY

Just to let you all know that Ian has decided to stop beekeeping due to ill health. His wisdom and innovations will be missed.

Ian has Beecraft magazines for the past 14 months which are free for collection. You can text/ring 07711 046922 or email ian.cowdy@btinternet.com

SPREAD THE BUZZ – SHARE YOUR BEEKEEPING EXPERIENCE!

Have you ever attended one of the Taster Days or Starting Beekeeping Courses with SDBKA? Your journey into the world of beekeeping is incredibly important to us, and we'd love to hear about your experience. By leaving a review on Google, you can help us improve and encourage more people to discover the joys of beekeeping. Your feedback inspires future beekeepers and strengthens our community.

Please take a moment to share your thoughts here: [Swindon & District Beekeepers Association](#).

Thank you for your support—your voice helps SDBKA continue to grow encouraging people into beekeeping and the work of a beekeeper.

“EVENTS” AT TWIGS

The annual work Party at TWIGS takes place on Saturday 26.4.25 at 10am. We need help cleaning hives etc so the Club's training apiary can be ready for the courses taking place this year.

TWIGS first open day is on Sunday 27.4.25 11am to 4pm. This is a great opportunity to spread the word to the general public about bees and beekeeping. Anyone helping is welcome to bring honey to sell

If you can help at either of the above, even for an hour or so, please email Kathy Hobson asap.

FUTURE BBKA TALKS (as per the HBT)

15th April 2025: 'Swarms' with Lesley Jacques

20th May 2025: 'Building a Strong Colony' with Roger Paterson

All BBKA talks are recorded and can be watched on the website. Beekeepers can register for future Zoom talks by registering with their membership number. <https://www.bbka.org.uk/>

CLUB MEETINGS

24.4.25 Swarm Control - tips and discussion

29.5.25 See below

Marcel and Fi Marsh are our hosts for the May meeting. They are hoping, weather-permitting, to do a “Bee Artifact Hunt” around their “plot.”

Teas, coffees, water and biscuits will be on offer

Can any you wanting to come please let Kathy Hobson know asap so that we can get an idea of numbers.

The address and final details told to us at the next Club meeting and will be shown in the May Newsletter.

Club Meetings take place at The Tawny Owl Pub (Parliament Room), Taw Hill, Swindon SN25 1WR at 7.30pm (unless otherwise informed)

SOCIAL MEDIA

Don't forget to check out our Facebook and Instagram pages. If you have any bee related photos to share please email them to Kathy Hobson. We also have a WhatsApp group please let Kathy know if you wish to be added.

