



NEWSLETTER – MAY 2025

STEERING GROUP MEMBERS 2024/2025

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

APIARY NOTES - Tim Bullock (Chair)

Spring weather this year has been the complete opposite to last year in that we've had 27mm of rain since the end of February and currently the forecast shows no rain for the next 10-14 days. Nectar flow has been very good to date but as ground dries up even more it may well grind to a halt anytime soon. The June gap could be quite long this year if the weather doesn't break. We may need to feed through this gap especially if we've taken supers off for extraction. If you do need to feed then go for the little and often method as we don't want them drawing syrup down into the brood box or supers, feeding now is for consumption. The oilseed rape is coming off flower so if you have colonies close by now is the time to clear supers and extract the honey if you haven't done it yet as it will granulate quickly. Better that this happens in a honey bucket rather than in capped supers.

Swarming is still likely to happen during June so stick to a maximum of 7 days between inspections. It may be worth doing an artificial swarm on strong colonies even if they aren't showing signs of swarming – at least we're in control and you get the benefit of another colony!!

Don't forget that water demands will be high so make sure that there are water sources for colonies – I have a large plant saucer with a sponge in full of water close to the outside tap available (it also gets used by the local hedgehogs as a bonus!)

WILTSHIRE HONEY BEE HEALTH DAY (reminder)

Saturday 28th June 2025 - 9.30-4.30

Market Lavington Community Hall, Saint Mary's Road Market Lavington SN10 4DG

Tickets are available on a first come first served basis from here: <https://bit.ly/hbt2806>

Spaces are limited and so book now.

Bring your own lunch. Teas and coffees available.

Tickets will be available to beekeepers outside Wiltshire BKA from 1st June 2025.

MINI QUIZ

1. How many eyes does a bee have?

a) 6 b) 5 c) 8 d) 12

2. How many honey bees could you find in a healthy colony, at its peak?

a) 100 to 200 b) 10 c) Up to 60,000 d) About 1,000 to 2,000

3. All of these flowers are useful for bees apart from one. Which is it?

a) Ornamental Bizzy Lizzy b) Lavender c) Clover d) Cornflower

4. How does the queen decide to produce a drone or a worker bee

5. How many pairs of wings does a bee have?

a) 1 b) 4 c) 6 d) 2

6. Which of these is NOT a real species of bee?:

a) The Hairy Footed Flower Bee b) Giant Blood Bee c) The Black-Kneed Bee d) Sharp-tailed bee

SEE END OF NEWSLETTER FOR THE ANSWERS

MODULE 3 - Barry Roberts

I am really pleased to announce that after 7 weeks of studying BBKA Module 3 - Honey Bee Pests, Diseases and Poisoning, organised and run by Rachael Banyard, 2 of our members successfully achieved a credit

TWIGS "EVENTS"

Work Party 26.4.25 – thanks to Barry, Clive, Diana, Matt, Kevin, Andy and Kathy – loads done in record time!!!!

TWIGS Open Day 27.4.25 - thanks to Nicola, Clive, Mick, Janet and Kathy. Lots of questions answered and 74 jars of honey sold (could have sold more but we ran out!!!!)

NGS Open Day 27.4.25 - thanks to Nicola, Clive, Mick, and Kathy. Not as busy as April but still spoke to lots of people who are interested in our bees and of course we sold some honey

Next TWIGS open day – 22.6.25 – neither Mick or Kathy can make this one so we will need help.

Mentoring etc - starting on the Saturday 14th June there will be a meeting at TWIGS every second Saturday of the month at 9:30am for a few hours for any member who wants to come along and gain more experience of handling bees and general "mentoring". We hope some established members will also come along to help Barry.

For more information please contact Barry Roberts at education@sdbka.co.uk.

TASTER DAYS – Kathy Hobson

The first Taster Day this year was held on 10th May. It is great to see people's interest to finding out the "bee facts" but it is fantastic to see their reactions when they handle the bees. Big thanks to Andy Phillipson who helped me.

I do need help on the 12th July and 9th August – any volunteers????.

TWIGS AND PARK FARM APIARIES

TWIGS The training apiary is now running well with there being a total of 5 operational hives for the club. The two new hives which were purchased early this year now have 2 supers on which are filling fast and these were used for April's Taster Day's practical session.

Two hives, that came through winter, have grown rapidly and as a result one hive continued to grow and another brood box was added when more queen cells were found. This did stop the production of more queen cells but the calmness of the bees has led myself and Barry to think this hive will be good for queen raising. We have now placed a Nicot queen rearing tray for the queen to lay eggs into this hive. We will keep you updated as to how these progresses.

Park Farm had one nuc come through Winter and this was placed into a full-size hive early last month. Unfortunately, it has still swarmed but on examination we managed to catch an emerging Queen and she was placed into a nuc. She has now mated and started to lay. In the main hive we are still waiting for a queen to emerge and mate. If this is unsuccessful we have the option to reunite with the nuc.

There is also a 2 ended nuc which consists of 3 frames on each side with a queen cell. Again, we are looking to increase the total hives with as many splits as we can (see photo below)



CLUB MEETINGS

29.5.25 Our May club meeting will be held at Marcel and Fiona's place. There will be a Beekeeping themed Artifact Hunt outside. Club members and partners are welcome to join us for this fun event. Parts of the grounds can get muddy so please bring wellies and an umbrella if the weather is wet.

26.6.25 Food Safety for the Beekeeper

This is a ticketed event so make sure you book your ticket. An email will be sent separately with the details

31.7.25 Rachael Banyard

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 Website, 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.

MINI QUIZ ANSWERS

1 b 2 c 3 a 4 Determined by cell size 5 2 6 c



WORK PARTY 2025



TWIGS 18.6.25

