

CBKA Yearbook 2024/5



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Editor's report

THIS YEARBOOK CONTAINS the CBKA reports on what has been happening within the Association for the year 2024. The Annual General Meeting was held in person in April, and the Minutes are included in this yearbook, along with the Treasurer's report on the CBKA finances to the end of 2024. There are also reports from the three CBKA apiaries, who each seemed to have had a reasonable later season after the early bad weather in April/May. The Wandlebury apiary has been managed for many years by Stephen Poyser, among his many CBKA positions, but sadly he has had to give up beekeeping; therefore, new volunteers are needed to run the apiary, so if you are able help please get in touch (see back page for contacts).

CBKA was able to attend nine shows/fairs during the year, and there is a report about those; Hazel Bickle has coordinated the events for several years, but has also had to stop beekeeping, so if you can help with events, again please do get in touch. Also in the yearbook, the Bee Inspector's report includes notes about the various diseases that can affect our colonies, and approaches on how to manage them; while Jack is now responsible for a different area, he still lives in Cambridgeshire and has added his contact details if you have any concerns about your bees' health. Together with other reports on education, the library and talks programme, there is also a note about the project to develop a new apiary and request for any information on potential new sites.

Having started with six hives through the winter, which were out flying in February 2024 and with Candipolline gold on each, the cold wet weather in April/May resulted in the loss of three colonies. However, the remaining hives built up rapidly and, by catching swarms from a couple of them and a swarm suddenly appearing in one we had not had time to clear out, we went through the summer with eight hives. With the warm weather and all of the forage seemingly delayed we ended up with an above average honey crop. The eight hives, all of which were treated with Apivar for *Varroa*, seemed strong and well fed going into winter, and all had bees flying early this year.

All of us beekeepers need to remain vigilant against yellow-legged (Asian) hornets, and need to get the wider public aware and looking out for them. While the bad weather in April/May last year possibly affected them, with

seemingly fewer reports of sightings and nests destroyed, there has been some evidence of overwintering and breeding. It remains important to continue to put out traps and report any sightings, and CBKA will continue with the sentinels to monitor the approach. Hopefully we can continue to keep this invasive species away for a while longer and that we can keep other diseases and pests under control. With that, I wish you all a disease-free, productive and happy 2025 season with your bees.

Peter Bates

Chair's Report

I HAVE TAKEN on the role of Chair of the Association at a time when the Association is in rude health. After the lull of the COVID years, we have seen successive successful Beginners' Courses introduce new members to the craft of beekeeping. Meanwhile, our One-Day Seminar and Online Talks programme have gone from strength to strength and extended our reach internationally, establishing the Association as part of a truly global network of bee enthusiasts, with 200 Associate members who support our work. In August we had an outstanding quantity – and range – of entries for the Honey Show, with the prize-winners celebrated at our Annual Prizegiving Dinner in December. Having the opportunity to discuss bees with members of the public at events such as the Honey Show is always rewarding, and has left me in no doubt that the public has an increasing appreciation of the role bees, and other pollinators, play in ensuring the future prosperity of our planet. It is also clear that everyone enjoys the honey we sell, which comes from the hard work of bees and beekeepers alike, and that demand shows no signs of diminishing. In summary, the Association has never been stronger, both financially and as a community.

My immediate predecessor as Chair, Paul Schofield, told me that most of my time as Chair would be taken up with thanking people on behalf of the Association. It is, therefore, appropriate that I start by thanking Paul himself for his many years of service to the CBKA. Paul served as Editor, Vice-Chair and subsequently Chair, before stepping down at the last AGM. Paul's careful stewardship of the Association as Chair included our successful transition to a CIO, and managing the impact of COVID on our activities.

We wish Paul well with his future endeavours. I would also like to thank my fellow Committee members for their unsung efforts. This now includes Jane Hamilton, who has stepped into my former role of Treasurer, with effect from 1 January 2025, and thereby reduced the burden on me personally, as I had to juggle multiple roles throughout 2024.

At the same time, we have reluctantly said goodbye to Stephen Poyser, who has stepped down from the Committee after 41 years of beekeeping. I was, like so many, taught beekeeping by Stephen, and we all owe much to his ability to enthuse those around him with his knowledge, no-nonsense approach and sense of humour. All of my subsequent mistakes, and each and every bee sting, have been my fault, and most definitely not his. I hope that you enjoy his reminiscences of his time as a beekeeper later in the Yearbook.

The success of the Association, and the strong position that we are in, boils down to one simple thing: the willingness of volunteers to get involved. It is a genuine pleasure to thank everyone who has made a contribution, however small. When I have the time to reflect, I am always amazed by how much we achieve for what is fundamentally such a small organisation. You may be surprised by the range of activities we undertake; to misquote the unusual bedfellows of Monty Python and John F. Kennedy, apart from providing training, bulk purchasing beekeeping supplies, lending equipment, arranging insurance, putting on social activities, arranging the talks programme, holding the One-Day Seminar, and hosting the Honey Show and the Annual Prizegiving Dinner, what has your Association ever done for you? And when thinking how best to respond to that question, perhaps it is time to ask not what your Association can do for you, but to ask what you can do for your Association. Each and every one of these activities was made possible because someone somewhere took on the work required to see it through. While some knowledge of beekeeping is useful for supporting a stall at a particular event, or for jarring Association honey, the CBKA also needs volunteers who have a wide range of experience in non-beekeeping related areas such as insurance, web-design, technology, property maintenance, and event management. There are so many more things that we would like to do and whatever your skills may be, we will find a use for them – but only if we know what you can offer. So please let us know if you feel you can contribute.

What then of the future? Beekeeping in the UK faces a wide range of threats. Climate change is impacting the beekeeping season, making

predicting what the coming spring holds next to impossible – only that it will be different to the previous year. Annual sightings of Yellow-Legged Hornets increase across the country and, more locally, Cambridgeshire continues to experience particularly high levels of European Foul Brood (EFB).

The Committee is aware of the role beekeepers must play if we are to navigate these challenges in the years ahead. We have taken steps to monitor for the presence of Yellow-Legged Hornets in Cambridgeshire through our 'Sentinel' programme, and arranged with the National Bee Unit to host a 'Bee Health Day' this May to help members identify EFB and other diseases early and so take immediate action to protect the health of the local bee population. We will continue to work hard to ensure future generations of beekeepers also get to experience the pleasure and satisfaction of beekeeping that we enjoy today.

I wish all of you and your bees a very productive and fulfilling season, and look forward to seeing you – whether as a satisfied participant or, even better, an enthusiastic volunteer – at one of the many events we have planned in 2025.

Peter Connor

Membership Report

THE AUTOMATED ENCOURAGEMENT by our membership system stimulated a significantly higher number of renewals by the end of the year. Below are the figures for 2024 showing how many members were registered at closing of the membership year, on 31 December 2024. The figures for 2022 and 2023 are also shown for information.

Year	Ordinary	Partner	Associate	Non-UK Associate	Honorary	Junior	Total
2022	213	56	94	n/a	4	n/a	367
2023	417	49	133	36	9	0	644
2024	300	39	200	53	11	2	605

The Ordinary and Joint (an Ordinary plus a Partner category) membership fees increased by £1 at the end of 2024; therefore, all renewals for these categories will be at £30 and £46 respectively. Joint memberships no longer require the Partner to have an email address. During 2024, Associate memberships were expiring at various times, depending on when they were

registered/renewed, 12 months prior to the varying expiry events.

The CBKA WhatsApp Community, comprising several distinct groups, has gained popularity and members are able to communicate directly with each other using this medium. Our Facebook group continues on a strictly for-members-only basis and has been enhanced by a similar Facebook Messenger Community of several chat groups. This has proved to be as popular as the WhatsApp Community.

Martin Kendall

Wandlebury Apiary Report

THE EIGHT COLONIES at the end of 2023 came through the winter in differing strengths, which did not appear to be dependent on the type of hive they were in (National (one with a super on as a brood and a half) or 14 x 12). Regretfully, one of the 14 x 12 hives failed in the spring of 2024 as a result of the queen failing before a replacement could be created. The *Varroa* control in the Autumn of 2023, and the treatment with oxalic acid in early 2024, was again successful to such a degree that it yet again proved difficult to find mites to show beginners during their practical sessions in the late spring.

In January 2024, the colonies were fed fondant icing as an insurance against starvation and later Candipolline as a pollen substitute to boost brood production. The weather fluctuations and the location of the hives in the wood did not help the buildup of the hives. The good weather disappeared as soon as the early nectar became available and the cool dark nature of the wood restricted the flying time for the bees. The cold weather also had the effect of preventing as many inspections as I would have liked, and when the warm weather did arrive there was an urge for the hives to swarm due to being prevented from flying for a while.

Swarm prevention and/or swarm control was implemented, which resulted in three splits, but the poor weather did not help with the production of viable queens. However, the apiary went through the summer with eight hives of varying strengths that resulted in approximately 250lb of honey being extracted, for sale by the CBKA in 2025. There was also a byproduct of approximately 25lb of wax, which will be traded in for new foundation for use in the apiary. We were able to use the apiary for the practical sessions for

some of the 2024 beginners, and a Practical Apiary Meeting (PAM) session.

One National hive dwindled in the autumn of 2024, so the apiary went into the winter with seven hives in either National (one as brood and a half) or 14 x 12 brood. As a result of personal circumstances, I was unable to feed the hives in late August; the colonies took advantage of this by collecting a profusion of ivy nectar from the surrounding woodland and filling every part of the hives with ivy honey. This was not what I wanted to happen, but it did remove the need for me to feed the bees with syrup. I can currently only hope the bees will have enough good weather in the new spring to be able to fly and collect water to enable them to dilute the ivy honey to keep them alive.

When inspected in early January 2025, the hives were all still alive and they were supplied with fondant icing. It is intended to use Candipolline again in the spring of 2025 as a pollen substitute.

The restriction on swarms being brought to Wandlebury, to prevent the spread of European Foul Brood (EFB), meant that I again had to use a CBKA colony to provide a stocked observation hive for use by the education team of wardens at Wandlebury. In addition, several times during the year a hive was disturbed to create an observation hive for use at an event the CBKA were attending. EFB was again found to the south of Cambridge, which resulted in me receiving three notifications of it being found within 3km of the apiary, but I am pleased to report no EFB was found at Wandlebury.

Cambridge Past Present and Future (CPPF), our landlords, undertook more work around the shed and the apiary during early 2024 and additional felling of diseased (Ash Die-Back) or non-native trees is anticipated in 2025. During the winter, the storms have caused some damage in the vicinity of the apiary, with some trees either being blown over or having been damaged as a result of losing branches or even the whole top of the tree. Luckily none of the falling timber damaged any of the hives or the beeshed.

If you wish to be involved in helping with Wandlebury apiary please contact me, as I again intend to use the time for a combination of sharing information and spreading the load of looking after the CBKA interests there whilst enjoying beekeeping. However, as a result of my changing circumstances I will cease my involvement with the apiary and the bee-shed in early 2025 and I await notification of who will be taking on the roles; no doubt the CBKA will circulate the details of the new apiary manager in due course.

Stephen Poyser, Wandlebury Apiary Manager

Impington Apiary Report

ALL OF THE hives were trickle-treated with VarroMed in December 2023 and fondant blocks were added to each hive. There were 13 CBKA hives and three hives bequeathed to the association by Bill Block. These three are now incorporated into the apiary and give us a new breeding line. Our thanks go to May Block for this generosity.

As in recent years, we invited volunteers to join us to make and re-wax frames in readiness for the season. We did two sessions in February and March, and these were very productive and sociable. Thank you to Caroline, Milly, Serge, Jack, Adrien, Anne-Marie and Alex for this help.

Fondant and Candipolline were added to a few hives that were a bit light in mid-March. The 2024 season got off to a strong start and, with the first full inspection on 30 March showing colonies developing well, we prepared some splits on 14 April to prevent swarming. The main and isolation apiaries were inspected by Jack Silberrad, the SBI, on 22 April. As no foul brood was found, we were able to go ahead with training sessions for beginners and other beekeepers. During the inspection chronic bee paralysis virus (CBPV) was found in two adjacent colonies. These were united on an open floor and have then been productive throughout the season. They provided useful discussion at the various training days, but weren't opened for any of the sessions. After the good start to the season, the wet weather in the latter part of April and throughout May restricted foraging. In mid-June the weather improved and all the colonies were foraging strongly. Nearly all hives showed signs of swarming; to manage the colonies, we inspected regularly, prepared some splits, clipped queens and supered hives, and by 20 June there were 20 colonies in the apiary.

There were six beginner's practical sessions between 14 May and 11 June 2024. These were disrupted by cool and wet weather, with some inspections under umbrellas! The beginners were divided into small groups and we are grateful for the help of Milly, Anne-Marie and Tomas, for demonstrating and enabling the sessions to run smoothly in tricky conditions.

The CBKA offered a more complete programme of Practical Apiary Management Sessions (PAMS) in 2024. These had previously been offered pre-COVID and it is proposed to offer them each year to CBKA members who have at least one season's experience of keeping bees; three PAMS were run at

Impington in 2024. On 27 April we had a session on 'Swarm Prevention and Swarm Control'; unfortunately, we couldn't open hives for this because of the weather, but demonstration and discussion was well received. On 13 July the PAMS was 'Frame Management for Colony Health and Brood Production' which included demonstrations of a shook swarm and Bailey comb change on live colonies. On 18 August the PAMS was 'Methods for Assessing and Treating *Varroa*', run by Jonathan Baynes and several hives were examined. We were pleased that Jonathan didn't find too much evidence of *Varroa* damage!

The second and final year of the Bumblebee study started on 4 July. Nynke Blömer and Dr Sarah Scott, of the Agroecology Unit of the Department of Zoology, Cambridge University, are assessing whether honeybees and bumblebees forage on the same species, and whether the density of honeybee colonies changes the foraging behaviour of bumblebees. The bumblebee colony was set up close to the apiary and one of the honeybee colonies had a pollen trap fitted. The traps were activated on the same days to collect pollen over three days on three occasions. We look forward to seeing the study results, and hope these weren't upset by the badger that turned the bumblebee colony over towards the end of the trial.

Bees from the apiary were used for the CBKA Honey Show observation hive and for an observation hive for the Stourbridge fair. The observation hives create huge interest at the shows amongst all age groups.

Bees were still busy collecting nectar during late August, but we decided to take off the honey supers on 22 August so that the *Varroa* treatment could be applied while the weather was still warm. There were 32 supers taken off the original 13 CBKA hives, and another five supers off the three hives Bill Block donated. Bill's hives had wired frames so were spun out, while the rest of the supers with unwired frames were extracted using the CBKA Apimelter. Overall, this amounted to a record apiary yield of 800lbs, significantly up on the previous best; the late summer flow was a major contributor to this. After extracting the honey and wax with the Apimelter, the 363 frames were cleaned using the Easisteam. The supers are marked to the hives and kept separated by boards in the stacks so they can be reused on the same hives next season. These will be rewaxed at our frame-making parties in February and March. The wax was cleaned and traded for fresh foundation at Thornes.

All of the hives were treated with Apiguard on 3 September and feed was added to some hives. A number of hives were quite heavy and the bees were

very actively foraging. A shed painting and maintenance session was held on 27 October; it was another very sociable occasion and well supported. Thanks go to Milly, Anne-Marie, Joan, Serge, Adrien, Paul and Jane for their help. All hives were treated for *Varroa* with Apibioxal liquid glycerol oxalic acid treatment by trickling on 14 December and fondant was added where necessary.

The apiary managers would like to thank everyone who has helped throughout the year. The association remains very grateful to Chivers Farms Ltd for their continued support of the CBKA apiary at Bedlam Farm, Impington.

Roy Cross and Peter Dawson, Apiary Managers

Bourn Apiary Report

ALL FOURTEEN OVERWINTERED colonies came through the winter into 2024, thanks to Mark Taylor's regular fortnightly checks where fondant continued to be required, sometimes in quite large amounts due to the mild winter weather. The mild conditions meant there was no real break in the brood with queens continuing to lay throughout the winter. Fortunately, we had treated for *Varroa* with Apivar during the autumn to avoid oxalic acid treatment because this would have killed brood and set the colonies back for spring growth.

Unfortunately, I was out of action for the first three months of the year and in February became the proud owner of a new hip. Two working parties were organised by the group in my absence, to prepare for the coming season, and by the middle of March I was back beekeeping, all be it on light duties. The four colonies over-wintered in our new Abelo six-frame poly nucs had done exceptionally well, with two being moved into brood boxes and two being split into four new nucs.

Four colonies were made ready for the beginner practical sessions. Over three Wednesday evenings in May, our group of beginners were able to experience live bee colonies for the first time. As well as colony management, advice was given on disease management and biosecurity. A Practical Apiary Meeting (PAM), entitled Sustainable Queens, was held in June. Producing local queens from local stock is always better than buying in queens, which

will most likely have originated from abroad and could easily contaminate your bees. Since Brexit, successive governments have continued to drag their heels and adequate animal border controls are still not in place. Sixteen members attended the PAM and explored various simple methods to sustain a small apiary with colony increase and queen production.

I am pleased to say we were again able to supply all our beginners who wanted bees with a starter nuc reared on site, although something of a challenge due to the very wet spring. A catalogue of weather-related problems beset our early mating programme, including queens unable to leave the hive to mate, queens not mating properly and queens not returning from mating flights. The prolonged wet spell also devastated honey production right across our region with reports of spring honey crops far below average.

Happily, the second half of the season saw a marked improvement in our regional weather and the bees responded accordingly. Colonies began to grow at breakneck speed, so splits were regularly being made and nucs were suddenly in abundance. As a breeding apiary we don't aim to produce much honey, but this year we had enough honey to keep all our bees happy throughout the autumn.

Apistan was used for autumn *Varroa* treatment, by way of good practice in not using the same medication year on year, and we will not treat with oxalic acid over winter. The bees certainly seem more comfortable with the *Varroa* strips and it is possible to treat and feed at the same time, which means supers can be left on for much longer and removed just before treatment begins. Our climate is certainly changing, along with the bees' foraging habits. Summer crops are getting later and more farmers are sowing a second later catch crop such as sunflowers and *Phacelia*, as well as green manure crops.

Autumn feeding, *Varroa* treating and winter-proofing of the fifteen colonies set up to go through winter was completed in good time and in November nine members of the group had a very enjoyable end of season evening at the Red House restaurant in Longstowe.

Although this year was exceptional in offering a bumper crop of summer honey (I even had to use a step ladder to remove stacks of supers from my own hives) the first half of the year was somewhat challenging. If we look closely, we can see our bees adapting to the fast changing climate. Beekeeping has never been along straight lines and the bees don't read the same books as we do. I'm sure 2025 will be just as challenging, but if we work with our bees

and adapt our methods accordingly our beekeeping will remain fun.

Thanks to all who helped with the running of the apiary and who regularly attended on Tuesday evenings, and to Mark Taylor for running the WhatsApp group.

Colin Bell, Bourn Apiary Manager

New Apiary Report

IN ORDER TO support the membership and have facilities for ongoing training and instruction, the Committee are looking for a site in which they can develop a permanent teaching apiary. The aim is to have appropriate on-site facilities that would become the CBKA base and a centre of excellence for Cambridgeshire beekeeping. The intention is that this would support our existing network of apiaries such as Bourn and Impington.

With this in mind, CBKA would wish to acquire land within Cambridgeshire that, in addition to an apiary site would allow for the erection of a structure for equipment storage, lectures and training away from the bees. We are looking for a site of about an acre, with the ability to connect to services (electricity and water), vehicular access with parking/space for the creation of parking, and an area for bees away from direct contact with the public. This site would need to be either acquired by CBKA or on a long-term lease to justify the investment. This is a significant capital project and ,whilst the Association has some funds allocated, fundraising would be necessary once we have identified a suitable site.

We have approached a number of organisations around the county, but none as yet has yielded a suitable site. We would, therefore, be delighted to hear from any members who may have contacts who are able to help with the identification and provision of a site. If you are able to help in any way, please contact me by email at richard.strugnell@cbka.org.uk.

Richard Strugnell

Practical Apiary Management Sessions

THIS IS THE first year since lockdown that PAMs have been run. The events are for all members who have kept bees for at least one season, and they are run at the three association apiaries: Wandlebury, Bourn and Impington. There is a strong practical element to each event, with demonstrations on the association's hives and group discussions. Numbers are kept to manageable levels to enable everyone to see and interact.

There was a total of 86 attendances, with several people who attended more than one PAM session. There were six sessions across the three association apiaries: Swarm prevention and swarm control; Hive inspection concentrating on diseases and pests; Simple methods of making colony increases; Frame management for colony health and brood production; Uncapping, extracting and filtering the season's honey harvest; Methods for assessing and treating *Varroa*. The subjects were topical to the season and the feedback from each session was very positive.

We are planning a series of sessions for the 2025 season and would be pleased to hear of topics that would be of interest. We would like more beekeepers with experience to join in with these sessions. They need not be leaders of the sessions, but their contributions to the discussions will be appreciated. Thanks go to all those that led and helped to run the sessions; this includes John Rayner, Stephen Poyser, Roy Cross, Peter Dawson, Colin Bell, Mark Taylor, Jonathan Baynes, Lal Goodfellow, Ken Ratcliffe, Nynke Blömer, Lesley Fletcher, Philip Turon.

Peter Dawson, PAMS Coordinator

CBKA Equipment Use

RECORDED BORROWING OF CBKA equipment from the Wandlebury bee-shed for the period 2016 to 2024 is shown overleaf. This is not a comprehensive list, because some items were taken without being signed out and some items were out for a significant time as a single booking (e.g. virtual hives for events and several series of talks). In addition to the items listed, do not

	2016	2107	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Extractors	79	106	79	65	85	60	73	58	56
Pratley trays	39	52	39	35	38	22	35	26	19
Honey tanks	24	25	18	13	17	15	21	23	23
Wax melter	1	1	2	2	2	1	3	4	4
Easi-steam	0	10	1	4	1	2	9	3	3
Virtual hive	7	9	5	7	0	1	5	8	3
Creamer-paddle	-	-	-	2	1	0	2	1	0
Candle moulds	-	-	-	3	2	0	2	4	1
Apimelter	-	-	-	-	7	7	7	4	3

forget that the CBKA have filters, an electric uncapping knife, two uncapping trays, candle moulds and wax processing equipment, including a solar wax extractor, which can be borrowed if required.

The records indicate that the yield of honey in 2024 was likely to be slightly less than 2023. This was quite probably due to the unusual weather we had in the spring and early summer, when colonies were trying to build up and were unable to do so or to gather surplus nectar. It may, however, also be as a result of members keeping more hives, and consequently investing in the ownership of their own extractor?

A reminder that when you borrow a Pratley tray, you ensure you take the correct electric lead, because there are three different types; you will have had a wasted journey if you take the wrong lead for the tray you have borrowed. When returning a Pratley tray, please ensure the electric lead, wax filter and wooden uncapping board are also returned. Do not move a Pratley tray when it is full of hot water because you will risk fracturing the soldered seams on the tray and this is a problem for us to repair. During the year, Bill Clark repaired an extractor, renewed guards around the gears on two more, repaired a Pratley Tray and several honey taps. We are also aware of at least two other repairs to leaks of Pratley Trays being carried out by members, for which we are grateful.

Please return any equipment in a state you would want to find it. If you find, when you are using an item, that something is broken, or it breaks whilst you are using it, please inform us so that repairs can be implemented before somebody else takes the item home only to find they have had a wasted journey.

The access track to the bee-shed has a gate and chain, with a combination padlock fitted by the CBKA to the Wandlebury Wardens' padlock. Please **link our padlock through the chain and the Wardens' padlock** when leaving the site, to enable both the CBKA members and the Wardens to unlock and use the track. The bee-shed is fitted with movement sensors to switch the lights on and off; therefore, you do not need to find a switch to turn the lights off when you leave, but do please make sure you lock the bee-shed door.

In order to ensure only members of the CBKA use the equipment, when you contact us for the access codes you may be kept waiting on the phone – even though we may recognise your name – which is while your 2025 membership details are checked. **In order to borrow equipment, you will need both the gate padlock code and the new door code; the door code will be changed again in 2025.** Please **do not pass the bee-shed access codes to others**, otherwise we have no knowledge of who has borrowed equipment or even if they are still members of the CBKA.

Please keep borrowed equipment for as short a time as possible (7 days as a maximum) because it is inconsiderate to other CBKA members for anyone to have equipment out for a long period of time. Do remember in 2025 to be considerate of other members if you borrow any equipment.

Please ensure you book the equipment out and back in when appropriate, putting details on the note-pad hanging adjacent to the extractors, and please write clearly and legibly because we need to know who you are. 2024 was a particularly bad year for handwriting as many of the entries in the notepad could not be read and, therefore, we had no idea who had taken some items of equipment. In addition to this, some items have been taken from the shed and subsequently not returned without being signed out; at the time of making this report in early January 2025 there are 11 items missing from the shed with no record of who has them, these include Extractors, Pratley Trays, Honey settling tanks and a wax extractor.

As a result of both Stephen Poyser and Bill Clark needing to withdraw from dealing with the equipment shed at Wandlebury, the CBKA will be advising members of new procedures for borrowing equipment in 2025.

Bill Clark and Stephen Poyser, Wandlebury Equipment Coordinators

Beginners' Course Report

OUR ANNUAL BEGINNERS' course continues to be incredibly popular, with many of those attending doing so based on positive reviews from friends and family who have attended previous courses. 160 individuals contacted me during late 2023 and early 2024 to express an interest, and in the event we had over 50 would-be beekeepers attending the 2024 lectures in what was to be Stephen Poyser's final year of running them. Once again, these took place on four Saturdays at Chesterton Community College in February and March, followed by three practical sessions for each participant at one of our three training apiaries in the late spring. The course was rounded off by further lectures in October (to prepare for winter) and January (to prepare for spring).

The Beginners' course is probably the Association's largest undertaking. Not only does it last a full year, but a host of volunteers are involved at every stage. The initial lecture series involved nine volunteers, a further 27 volunteers for the practical sessions at the three apiaries, and then yet another 31 members volunteered to mentor beginners. I would like to thank everyone for giving so generously of their time to introduce our ancient craft to a new generation of beekeepers. I strongly believe that getting our beginners off to the best possible start is essential to convert what may simply be an initial curiosity into a life-long passion. I also believe that teaching the beginners is immensely rewarding for all of those involved, and I hope that everyone who did so enjoyed their involvement as much as I did. If anyone reading this would like to get involved with the course, then please let me know.

Notwithstanding these efforts, we continue to see a drop-off rate of approximately 50%, with half of the original attendees from the spring lecture course completing a full year of beekeeping. Those who do not go on to keep bees do so for a wide variety of reasons. As far as I am aware, none do so because they did not enjoy the course itself, or felt that the volunteers teaching lacked enthusiasm or ability. Some simply attend to learn more about bees and beekeeping, with no intention of keeping bees at the end of the course, or are unable to commit to doing so due to a change in personal circumstances. All those who contacted me after deciding not to pursue beekeeping told me how much they had enjoyed the course, and appreciated the dedication and effort of all of the volunteers who had helped them through the course.

Peter Connor, Beginners' Course Co-ordinator



The real reason we tell beginners to wear wellies.

Yellow-Legged/Asian Hornets

BY NOW, ALL beekeepers will be aware of Yellow-Legged hornets (YLH) and their potential for devastating the UK insect population, particularly honeybees. There has been plenty of publicity by BBKA and the media generally, not least on *The Archers*. If you are not confident that you can identify a YLH amongst our native fauna take a look at the BBKA website. It will also tell you how to advise NBU of any sightings, preferably using the Asian Hornet Watch app. Contact CBKA if you want further information.

A slight respite in the YLH incursion was seen in 2024, with only 24 nests found compared with 72 in 2023. However, this was probably due to poor conditions in spring last year rather than preventative activity and we cannot think other than continued incursions will occur. Indeed, 2025 has seen its first YLH being found – in a consignment of shallots!

CBKA has instigated an early warning system to identify the YLH should it appear in our area; 40 members living at carefully spaced intervals across the county and supplied with zero-bycatch traps, act as sentinels and, as yet, thankfully, have not recorded the pest.

We are grateful to those members who have supported CBKA in this project. Last year's work was to establish the sentinel network to trap foraging workers, but soon we will turn our attention to queen trapping. In spring, mated YLH will be emerging from hibernation and seeking food before establishing small primary nests. Trapping queens at this stage has proved effective elsewhere and we will be prepared. CBKA uses Gard'apis traps, carefully designed to only catch YLH. If you want to set traps please use these traps or similar. Homemade traps often have a very high incidence of catching non-target species, particularly European Hornets. As responsible beekeepers we should not want to reduce the populations of our native insects, as ill-designed traps do.

Philip Turon, CBKA YLH Coordinator (philip.turon@cbka.org.uk)

The Inspector's Brief

THE YEAR 2024 saw the tail end of multiple storms, freezing and mild temperatures, and the promises of an excellent spring flow with buds and flowers set. The National Bee Unit's (NBU) Eastern region, in which the CBKA is located, has undergone its own changes in the last year. Christopher Milton finds himself managing the NBU team as the CBKA's Regional Bee Inspector (RBI). With a foot in both camps, I remain committed to inspections in and around Cambridge and now manage the Western Region. This coincided with a road accident on the May bank holiday that resulted in my left shoulder and two ribs broken, along with a crushed spinal vertebra. That said, the spring harvest was decent despite the rain, and the summer harvest, for those who capitalised on the late season, will have been excellent too. With injuries healing and a little help, I was in the same camp and continued inspections and working my own stock.

With that in mind, varying approaches to management of *Varroa*, or none at all that has sadly become increasingly widespread across Cambridge, will have seen background levels of this colony-killing parasite at high levels into the autumn. Calls for collapsed colonies, with autopsies revealing mite pressure synergising with post-December conditions, have begun to arrive, frequently misattributed to poisoning before further investigation.

With '*Varroa* 2.0', aka *Tropilaelaps*, beginning to be identified in Eastern Europe in 2024, and a serious threat to colony survival, there has never been a better time to brush-up on *Varroa* management since there is much crossover between the parasites. This year you will find me at the disease session of the CBKA improvers' course, touting updated materials online from the NBU, essential reading whether using husbandry or chemical approaches. There was one distressing phone call received, pertained to the use of oxalic acid vapour with no protective equipment; the beekeeper was horrified to learn that involving her young daughter under these conditions was hazardous. Whatever your approach, please revise the precise method of application and withdrawal of varroacides, and take all safety precautions recommended. One beekeeper in particular, who supplies local businesses with honey, was found with amitraz strips in their wet supers, introducing this chemical treatment into the food chain. You can imagine I was not impressed to hear from the beekeeper in question that their response was "people eat worse"!

The eradication plan in 2024 of what is now known as the Yellow Legged Hornet (YLH, formerly Asian Hornet), saw a robust tracking and tracing effort, with 24 nests destroyed, whilst trapping in areas of interest yielded numerous workers and foundress queens. Two nests in 2024 (Coldred, Kent, and Udimore, East Sussex) were identified as likely descendants of queens released from nests destroyed in late 2023 (Alkham, Kent, and Four Oaks/Rye, East Sussex, respectively). This is not wholly unexpected as queens were trapped in these areas, and not strongly indicative of an established population. The 2025 hornet season has certainly already started however, with those responsible for YLH response already engaged throughout winter and into January. Watch official communications from the NBU or APHA for details.

Spring trapping is to begin imminently; with progenitor queens emerging from hibernacula, the target is to prevent nest establishment. Please contact the CBKA's Hornet Coordinator for details of the Association's action plan, and offer your assistance for surveillance if you are able. Public awareness, collaboration and refined processes remain cornerstones of an effective response to eradicate this invasive insect. The easiest option to help is to **download the Asian Hornet Watch app** for photo submission and reporting all in one place. I would caution for trapping as it behoves us to ensure we check for and free any by-catch in our traps. The ecological risk from thousands of unmonitored traps destroying the local insect population is exactly the damage we are all working to avoid by preventing YLH becoming established.

European foulbrood remains persistent within and without the city limits of Cambridge, with hygiene, splitting diseased colonies and introduction of swarms to drawn comb being the main contributing factors. I received few call-outs this last year, which may be indicative of a lower level of disease, but as ever, **"If in doubt, give Jack a shout!"** I always welcome contact from beekeepers, especially where I can often reply within 24 hours, providing relief for misidentified and less serious disorders, or even just mouldy pollen. I would happily receive and relieve 1000 emails with pictures of pollen to identify a single case of EFB. I can be reached by email at **Jack.Silberrad@apha.gov.uk** or by text, WhatsApp and telephone on **07776 165869**. Bee Disease Insurance continues to function extremely well, with insured beekeepers receiving compensation within days of treatment, most of which involved shook-swarms with comparatively few destructions.

If you know somebody who has gone through this process, please speak to them if they are willing, and I am sure they will echo the positive experiences of other beekeepers.

For any aspiring beekeeper who wants the easiest route to up-to-date manuals and information, including on *Varroa* (look for my photograph of a phoretic mite on a queen!) with an updated treatment list, EFB that now has much refined wording, and all manner of advice on hygiene and best practice, just drop me an email and I'll return links directly to resources; simple!

I remain committed to supporting Cambridgeshire's beekeepers, and those wider afield, and am grateful for the assistance rendered to me this year. For anyone curious about a career as a bee inspector, recruitment for various regions will begin in spring and I welcome contact to discuss the role as a Seasonal Bee Inspector. I very much look forward to working with you in 2025.

Jack Silberrad (Authorised Bee Inspector – Eastern region, Regional Bee Inspector – Western region)

The CBKA Library

WE HAVE OVER 200 books in the CBKA Library, which can be found at Central Library, Grand Arcade, Cambridge. The books are stored as part of the Cambridge Collections and are available to borrow for all current CBKA members. The updated book list is on the website. The library includes many books that are useful to anyone wishing to take any of the BBKA modules or the Basic Assessment, or to anyone interested in furthering their knowledge of any aspect of beekeeping. Please do get in touch if you have any questions about the book collection or if you wish to suggest new titles for us to purchase and add to the collection.

Alison Goodfellow

Examination Report

CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. Sue Snape who has passed her Basic Certificate with a Credit.

Events Coordinator Report

THE CBKA ATTENDED nine Fairs and Shows during 2024, where volunteer members experienced great interest from visitors keen to learn about bees and beekeeping. The year started with the CBKA display of honey, honeybees and other pollinators, taken to the annual two-day Cambridge Natural History Conversazione on Friday/Saturday 19/20 April. This display of research and continuing work on fauna and flora in the local area is held in the Zoology Department New Museum Site.

Reach Fair was granted a charter by King John in 1201 and is held on the May Bank Holiday; Monday 6 May in 2024. The displays of music, dancing, Morris men, craft and charity stalls, along with fairground rides, is opened by the Cambridge Mayor when newly minted coins are thrown to the crowd of visitors. The warmer weather meant an observation hive could now be stocked and this always proves popular with visitors, bringing many questions and increased honey sales. Our unending thanks to Pam Fearn and Peter Bates for acting as perennial leaders for this event.

The Cambridgeshire County Show was held on 1 June at a new location in Abbots Ripton near Huntingdon. This Young Farmers event promotes British food and farming with livestock, rural crafts, competitions and trade stands. The bee display was taken to Oakington Garden Centre on 21 June and this was followed by a similarly small event at Offord Cluny. Grateful thanks go to Philip Turon for ably leading these three events near Huntingdon.

The CBKA Honey Show at the Cambridge Country Fair at Stow-cum-Quy was over the weekend of 10/11 August. This is a massive organisational feat and CBKA's heartfelt thanks go to Pam Fearn and Sandra Chapman for the superb management. All judges, exhibitors and the large team of volunteer helpers are thanked for their vital work.

Saturday 7 September CBKA were at Stourbridge Fair, organised by Cambridge Past Present and Future at the Leper Chapel in Cambridge. This fair started 800 year ago and had craft displays including willow-weaving and wood-carving, storytelling and dancing, with many participants in medieval dress. The fair is formally opened by University dignitaries, features fascinating history tales, and the refreshments sold inside the chapel included superb cakes. Thanks go to the Wandlebury Warden for taking our marquee and to Ben Brard for leading and transporting the rest of the equipment

to this delightful event. Huge thanks to Peter Dawson for producing large quantities of CBKA Bourn and Impington honey plus creating the Observation Hive for this and many other shows.

Gransden and District Agricultural Society's Annual Show epitomises a real country show with classes for horses, rare breeds, cattle, sheep, goats, poultry, dogs and produce. Set to be held on 29 September, torrential rain on the night before left the show ground flooded so this year's event was cancelled on the morning of the show. Urgent phone calls luckily caught Peter Dawson and Roy Cross on their way to stock the observation hive and sadly all volunteers had an unexpectedly free day. Many thanks go to Derek Blatch for his work in jarring honey and fetching the equipment from the Wandlebury Store.

The jars of honey did not stay unsold for long as Susan Wilkie organised the CBKA stall at St John's Ecofest, held at the church in Hills Road, Cambridge on 12 October, and also ran the half-term event at Darwin Nurseries Apple Day on Tuesday 29 October. Despite being too cold to provide an observation hive, practically all the honey jars were bought by families.

Many CBKA members took on extra roles to ensure the smooth running of our stalls and honey sales this year, with these nine shows providing total takings of £5,216. The vast majority of this resulted from the sale of CBKA honey, which helps boost the funds for running the CBKA and our teaching apiaries at Wandlebury, Impington and Bourn. This could not happen without our teams of volunteers for each show, and so grateful thanks go to all for their input and time. From the honey sales at each event, 10% of profits are donated to the host show organisation in lieu of a stall fee, and we further fulfil the main aim of our charitable status to promote the craft of beekeeping to a wider audience. The events accounted for the sale of 931 jars of honey, with the vast majority being 1lb jars.

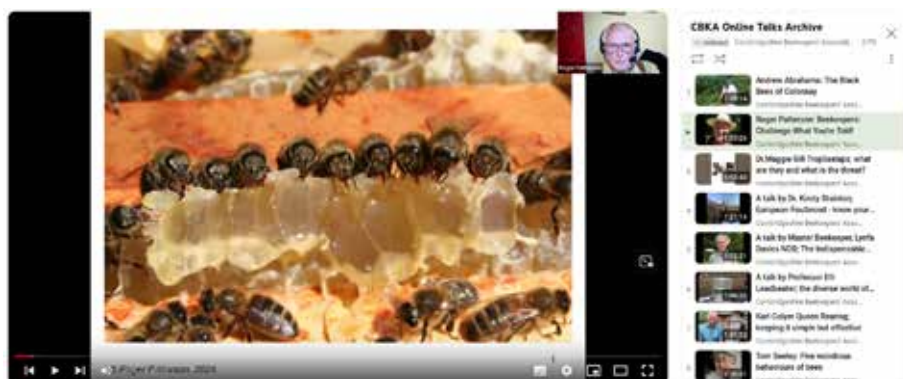
Stephen Poyser continued to monitor honey amounts and provide jars of CBKA honey for the shows and will be sorely missed as he retires. Hazel Bickle has developed an allergy to bee stings, and so has had to stop beekeeping. Organising the fairs and shows has been fun most of the time and certainly felt a way of giving back to CBKA for the joy of beekeeping. All best wishes to those taking on the various roles as we hand on the baton.

Hazel Bickle and Stephen Poyser

A year of talking about bees

DURING 2024, THERE were 15 talks offered, with audience numbers of between 160 and 330. Themes including beekeeping in ancient Egypt, the future threat of *Tropilaelaps*, how to prevent swarming, queen rearing and preparing nucs, were covered, as well as Tom Sealey sharing his beekeeping expertise. Our audience is very international, with regulars zooming in from the USA, Canada, many EU countries and most counties in the UK. One of our regular audience members commented recently *“I so much enjoyed the presentation. You and your team are doing a great job in securing unique and only-place-in-the-world locations for specific bees. The CBKA is top shelf when it comes to unique and extraordinary presentations!”*

The One-Day Seminar in March brought experts together to discuss Future Challenges: the impact of climate change on bees and beekeepers' behaviours. More than 70 people attended to hear the excellent presentations; Dr Maggie Gill, Professor Giles Budge, Karl Colyer, and Diane Drinkwater all spoke about pests and diseases, and ways of managing our hives to facilitate healthy colonies that are more likely to survive these challenges. It was a fascinating day and a great opportunity to meet and talk to other local beekeepers. The stalls were busy, with lots of interest in the mead, artisan soaps, and Northern Bee Books, and all doing a good trade. Being in St John's College for the day was a treat in itself.



Accessing the talks programme

If you've not caught up with the talks, you can find most of them in the online talks archive listed in the members services area of the CBKA website, as shown in the picture on the previous page. The archive is a rich resource of technical information and interesting related topics. The associate membership has grown significantly as people have supported the talks programme, and these additional fees cover most of the costs.

The talks for the current programme are being advertised on the CBKA website, and via Mailchimp, Eventbrite and TicketTailor. If you book through TicketTailor, using the links in the Mailchimp newsletter, there is no charge for the free tickets; however, Eventbrite charge a booking fee even when the ticket is free. Therefore, do make sure you open your Mailchimp newsletters and add it to your contacts list so that they don't reside in junk/spam. Remember to check your email for the Zoom link sent out to all ticket holders, and allow time to register with Zoom before joining at the start of the talk.

The working group that runs the talks programme are keen to recruit new volunteers. It is a good way of being involved with the CBKA, without joining the committee. The working group currently consists of Lal Goodfellow, Susan Wilkie, Nynke Blömer, Robin Lea, Sally Knowles, Heather Lloyd Jones, Jaquie Finn and Alison Turnbull. We meet about four times a year in a pub. You can get in touch with us by email at talks@cbka.org.uk. We would love to hear from you, whether you want to join in, or if there is a particular speaker or subject you'd like to request, so please do get in touch!

Alison Turnbull, CBKA Talks Coordinator

Annual Prizegiving Dinner

THE 2024 ANNUAL Prizegiving Dinner took place on Thursday 5 December, at Cambridge Regional College. Once again, the students at the College cooked an excellent meal for the 50 beekeepers and partners who attended.

It is always a pleasure to catch up and swap stories with so many friends in such a pleasant and relaxed environment. It is probably the only opportunity at the end of the year to hear how others' bees performed during the season, what worked and what did not, and what plans members have to do things differently in the year ahead.

It is also of course our opportunity to celebrate the prize winners from the Honey Show. I am grateful to all of the prize winners who were able to attend in person to collect their trophies, and to Sandra Chapman, the Honey Show Secretary, for her hard work in organising and preparing all of the trophies for the evening.

If anyone would like to get involved in organising the 2025 Annual Dinner then please let me know.

Peter Connor



AGM Minutes

Minutes of the CBKA Annual General Meeting, held on Sunday 14 April 2024 at 2.30pm at Storey's Field Centre, Eddington Avenue, Cambridge CB1 1AA

Apologies and Chairman's Introduction: Apologies were received from Professor Glover, Daniel Zeichner MP, Alison Turnbull, Andrew McKeown, Peter Dawson. The meeting was quorate with 34 voting members attending.

Chairman's report: Please see the 2023 CBKA Yearbook for all Committee reports. Paul thanked all the CBKA members who had volunteered to help the Association in the past year. The Association has a substantial fund for buying CBKA's own apiary which remains difficult to find.

Minutes of the 2023 AGM were approved without a formal vote.

Treasurer's report, including presentation of the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023: See the 2023 CBKA Yearbook for a full report from the Treasurer. The Association continued to make over £5,000 during the year and the bank balance remained healthy.

Election of Trustees: In accordance with CBKA's constitution, one third of the Association's Trustees must step down at the AGM and, if so willing, offer themselves for re-election. This year, the following stepped down:

- Chair – Paul Schofield stood down from the committee and did not seek re-election.
- Vice Chair – Doug Brown stood down from the committee and did not seek re-election.

Elections took place for the following positions (all duly elected):

- Editor – Peter Bates stood down as editor and stood for re-election. Proposed by Peter Connor, seconded by Alison Goodfellow.
- Chair – Peter Conner was nominated, proposed by Sally Knowles, seconded Hazel Bickle.
- Vice-Chair – Sally Knowles was nominated, proposed by Alison Goodfellow, seconded by Philip Turon.
- Secretary – Jonathan Baynes was nominated, proposed by Philip Turon, seconded by Susan Wilkie.

The position of Treasurer was open, following Peter Connor's election as Chair. This post remained unfilled because no one was nominated. A treasurer would be sought from the CBKA membership as a matter of urgency.

Election of up to six Committee Members: In accordance with the CBKA's constitution, the Association's non-trustee Committee Members must step down at the AGM and, if so willing, offer themselves for re-election. The following Committee Members had indicated their willingness to stand for re-election: Alison Goodfellow, Philip Turon, Alison Turnbull.

Further nominations were received from Nynke Blömer, David Edwards, Richard Strugnell.

- Alison Goodfellow, proposed by Peter Connor, seconded by Sally Knowles
 - Philip Turon proposed by Jonathan Baynes, seconded by Peter Bates
 - Alison Turnbull proposed by Jonathan Baynes, seconded by Alison Goodfellow
 - Nynke Blömer proposed by Alison Turnbull, seconded by Alison Goodfellow
 - David Edwards proposed by Sally Knowles, seconded by Stephen Poyser
 - Richard Strugnell proposed by Sally Knowles, seconded by Peter Bates
- All carried by the meeting and duly elected.

Election of CBKA President: Bill Clark – was re-appointed as President.

CBKA Vice Presidents: Professor Glover, Daniel Zeichner, MP, and James Littlewood were reappointed.

Honorary Members 2023: The new chair, Peter Connor, announced that the Committee had proposed that Roy Cross and Paul Schofield were awarded Honorary Membership for their many years of service to CBKA.

Roy Cross has worked tirelessly at the Impington Apiary as Assistant Manager and Manager, and helping with the Beginners Courses, in particular with the practical sessions.

Paul Schofield had held the posts of Editor, Vice-Chair and Chair for two terms.

Their medals are to be presented at a future date.
Both Roy and Paul were thanked and applauded for their efforts
The proposal was accepted by the meeting unopposed.

AOB and questions for the Committee: A question was raised as to why the membership had increased so dramatically over the past year compared to 2022. The Membership Secretary, Martin Kendall, explained that much of the increase was in Associate Membership because of the enthusiasm for the Online Talks Programs. There was also a change to the year start date and this could have caused an accounting anomaly for 2022.

The seasonal bee inspector (SBI), Jack Silberrad, stressed that not enough beginners were registering on BeeBase. Although registration was promoted at the Beginner's theory classes, Stephen Poyser suggested that more could be done at the practical sessions to remind the Beginners again to register, and particularly when they pick up their first bees. A comment was made that proof of registration might be made mandatory before any bees were handed over to beginners.

Meeting closed at 3.30pm.

Treasurer's Report

For the year ended 31 December 2024.

I AM PLEASED to report that the Association had another successful year, fulfilling its charitable objectives and generating a surplus of approximately £5,200 (compared to c. £5,100 in 2023) for future activities. During 2024, the Association has undertaken a wide range of activities, and that is only possible due to the efforts of the many volunteers who so generously offer their time and efforts to support our training activities and attend events. I would like to thank them all for their enthusiasm and hard work.

Summary of income and expenditure for 2024: The following table summarises the income and expenditure in 2024, together with the equivalent figures for 2023, categorised by each source of income and its associated costs, with further detail on each set out in the narrative below the table.

		2024			2023		
		Inc. £	Exp £.	Net £.	Inc. £	Exp. £	Net £
1	From / on behalf of members	15,785	(10,258)	5,527	16,756	(11,635)	5,121
2	Educational activities	7,593	(8,259)	(666)	7,083	(6,275)	808
3	The sale of products	6,609	(3,148)	3,461	5,124	(2,684)	2,440
4	Other income, including GiftAid	4,534	-	4,534	2,981	-	2,981
5	Running the Association's apiaries	-	(3,790)	(3,790)	-	(3,971)	(3,971)
6	Running the Association	-	(3,858)	(3,858)	-	(2,234)	(2,234)
7	Grants to research organisations	-	-	-	-	-	-
		34,521	(29,313)	5,208	31,944	(26,799)	5,145

Income: The CBKA derives its income from the following sources:

1. **Members' subscriptions and donations.** The largest source of the CBKA's income is members' subscriptions and donations. The total received from members, including amounts they paid for additional BDI insurance and donations towards research, was c. £15,800. This total was c. £1,000 lower than the year before, which had included £900 of members' subscriptions for Beecraft that had no equivalent this year because members subscribed directly with Beecraft. Total subscription income increased by c. £500 compared to 2023, with a slight reduction in Ordinary and Partner members being more than compensated for by additional Associate members; there was no change in membership rates during 2024. However, donations received from members with their subscriptions were c. £500 lower than in 2023.

2. Educational activities. The second largest source of income for the CBKA is normally its educational activities, comprising the Beginners' Course and the One-Day Seminar, plus other events, such as the Bee Disease Day, coach trips and the Annual Dinner.

The Beginners' Course was once again a great success, while the One-Day Seminar and the Annual Dinner were both well attended with ticket sales of £2,900 and £1,600, respectively.

3. The sale of products. The public's demand for high -quality honey, when it is available, remains strong. Despite poor weather resulting in the cancellation of the Gransden Show, one of the larger shows we normally attend, income from the sale of honey, both on behalf of members and that from the Association's apiaries, increased by £1,200 compared to 2023. This was supplemented by the sale of some surplus equipment for c. £500.

4. Other income. Other income is primarily GiftAid, which remains a very welcome supplement to the Association's income. It effectively funds the day-to-day administrative costs of running the Association, enabling the Trustees to channel all of the income from members and the Association's other activities into its charitable activities. Therefore, I encourage all members who are able to allow us to take advantage of GiftAid to do so on their membership renewal forms. Other income also includes interest from our cash reserves, which totalled nearly £900 this year, as the Association benefited from higher interest rates.

Expenditure: Expenditure during the year related to the following:

1. On behalf of members. The majority of the subscriptions paid by members is paid across to organisations such as the BBKA and BDI. In 2023, this also included c. £900 paid on members' behalf to Beecraft. Bank fees for processing members' payments were flat at c. £400.

2. Educational activities. Expenditure on educational activities relates primarily to room hire and speakers' fees for the Beginners' Course and our talks programme, together with the cost of the One-Day Seminar and the Annual Dinner. For the first time, in 2024, c. £800 went on traps for yellow-legged hornets.

3. Products for sale. Costs associated with the sale of products primarily comprise the purchase of honey from members, the cost of jars and labels for the Association's honey, and the cost of attending events, especially the Honey

Show. The increase in these costs in 2024 was primarily due to increases in the costs of holding the Honey Show.

4. Running the Association's apiaries. The total cost of running the Association's apiaries at Bourn, Impington and Wandlebury, was broadly the same as 2023, although the Association did spend c. £800 on roofing material for the shed at Bourn. The Association's apiary managers and their teams do a wonderful job of managing the apiaries and supporting the teaching and training that we do. I would like to thank them all for their hard work once again in 2024.

6. Running the Association. A significant proportion of the costs of running the Association used to be printing and postage, including this Yearbook. These have been falling for a number of years as communication has moved online – with a corresponding increase in website and related costs. In particular, the Association has reached a size where it is required to pay for a number of IT services and tools, which used to be free when it was a smaller organisation.

As noted above, GiftAid and other income currently funds these activities, and the Trustees constantly seek to minimise the administrative costs of the Association. However, inflation has increased the vast majority of our costs as it has for so many others.

7. Research grants. The Association has previously contributed to the funding of a specific PhD student, in conjunction with other local associations as part of the East Anglia Research Student ('EARS') scheme. However, the individual expected to start their PhD last year deferred the start of their course and so funding for that specific project was not drawn down. At the same time, there has been a change of personnel in other associations involved in EARS. Philip Turon of the CBKA has kindly volunteered to take on the management of a revived EARS scheme, and we expect to resume funding research once a suitable project has been identified.

Reserves: The surplus for the year has increased the Association's reserves to c. £90,000. The majority of the Association's assets are held in cash, and the closing cash balance was c. £83,000. The Trustee's policy is to hold sufficient reserves to protect the Association from potential reductions in its future income, whilst also generating the initial funding that would be required to establish a centre of excellence for beekeeping in the Cambridge area. The

level of reserves is reviewed regularly by the Trustees to ensure that they are adequate, but not excessive, for the Association's current and forecast activities, whilst noting that the costs of a centre of excellence cannot be estimated reliably until a suitable location has been identified and additional funding may be required in future to realise this longer-term ambition.

Outlook for 2025: The Trustees expect the recent level of income to be maintained, because the number of members is expected to be consistent with 2024, and we plan to run the same courses and events as we did last year. However, costs are expected to increase as inflation impacts all parts of the economy, and the Trustees intend to invest in equipment to help tackle the increasingly imminent threat of the Asian Hornet. The Trustees therefore expect a more modest surplus, if any, for 2025 as a whole. The Association is fortunate that it has sufficient reserves to enable it to fulfil its charitable objectives for the foreseeable future.

Appointment of new Treasurer: Having served as the Association's Treasurer since April 2018, and having been elected Chair of the Association at the AGM in 2024, I have been seeking a replacement as Treasurer to ensure that this important position receives the attention it should. I am delighted that Jane Hamilton has kindly stepped forward to take on the role of Treasurer. Jane was co-opted as a Trustee and member of the Association's management committee with effect from 1 January 2025, and will be standing for election as Treasurer at the 2025 AGM.

Peter Connor

Beekeeping 1983 to 2025

WHEN I CONFIRMED I was reluctantly ceasing beekeeping in early 2025, it was suggested I write about the changes I have seen during the period I have been keeping bees. My introduction to beekeeping was in 1969 by Harrison Ashforth (who invented the Ashforth Feeder). He was my poultry lecturer at agricultural college, but it was obvious he preferred bees to poultry when listening to his lectures.

Subsequently, in late 1982 I was given two hives of bees by a farm worker on the Trumpington Estate who had become allergic to bee stings. So, in the winter I moved the hives, on a wheelbarrow through Trumpington, to my garden and enrolled on the CBKA Beginners Course in the spring of 1983. It was held at Chesterton Community College, there was approximately 12 of us on the course, and the tutor was Bob Lemon who started by informing me (and the others) that I had probably killed the bees by disturbing them during their transport and it was certainly not the way to start trying to keep bees. However, by beginner's luck the hives survived and the hobby grew from there to such a degree that I moved the hives onto the Trumpington Estate and the apiary grew to 20 hives that did very well and produced plenty of honey.

When I first had bees there was no mention of *Varroa*, Asian hornets, open-mesh floors, climate change or other pests potentially on the way to Britain. Yes, we had wax moth, European and American foul brood (EFB and AFB), and *Braula* Mite to contend with, but the incidences of AFB and EFB around Cambridge were relatively small, with outbreaks normally in the proximity of commercial honey importing and processing facilities to the north and south of Cambridge.

The season of spring tended to start later than now and the oilseed rape flowered later than now. This meant the bees had a chance to build up their numbers before the main flow of nectar started, so yields of honey from good hives adjacent to fields of oilseed rape were often in excess of 100 lb each. In my opinion, the earlier flowering of the crop, and possible genetic modification from insect pollination to wind pollination, has resulted in significantly reduced honey yields, even before the recent reduction in acres of the crop.

The number of people keeping bees (as hobby beekeepers) has certainly increased in the last 41 years, although the numbers of equipment manufacturers and suppliers have definitely reduced. In my early days of

keeping bees, the chemicals used in agriculture were not as specific as they are now. Hive losses were often attributed to agricultural chemicals and/or aerial spraying being responsible, whereas now the chemicals used by gardeners can often be the cause of bee mortality; these chemicals are still in use, and even if not purchased for many years, they are still lurking in garden sheds, with the users being ignorant to the fact they are illegal and if used are difficult to trace back to the user.

Equipment has changed, with tin plate equipment and 28 lb honey tins (lined with a plastic bag) being in common use in the 1980's, but subsequently replaced with food-quality plastic extractors and tubs. National hives were in use, but I was not aware of 14 x 12 brood boxes being available, and although many "new" hives or modifications to equipment have come along many of them are merely reinventions of something or are similar to what had been developed many years previously.

The average size of a dwelling's garden has certainly reduced over the last 41 years and, as a result of there being more hobby beekeepers, many of them live with a garden that cannot easily house an apiary of three or more hives. Hence the need for more beekeepers on allotments or ones with hives kept on farms, which (although easier to manage) are not as convenient for keeping an eye on or undertaking quick inspections or manipulations.

There is no doubt that beekeeping has been a major part of my life and it has brought about many friendships, a wealth of knowledge and some truly memorable times. Not all good, as I recall standing in a car park at Ely, manning the CBKA stall whilst freezing cold, with snow flurries blowing around us and no members of the public to be seen. However, those are compensated by other good times, such as when moving hives of bees to borage fields in Essex at 5.00am on a wonderful early July morning, whilst having to share the field with a herd of Roe deer, four hares and a fox, all going about their business without needing to bother about a car full of hives being unloaded at the other end of the field.

The one constant during my time as a beekeeper is that if you and your bees can produce a quality product, it will sell, enabling you to finance your hobby. And perhaps now we can advertise the reduced food miles it has (if we do not advertise the significant number of miles the bees have flown to produce the honey!).

Stephen Poyser

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Committee

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Apiary Manager (Wandlebury): Vacant

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Beginners' Course Coordinator: Peter Connor
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One-Day Meeting and Talks Coordinator:
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Wandlebury Equipment Loan: Vacant

Webmaster: Martin Kendall
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President: Bill Clark

Vice Presidents: MP for Cambridge City, Director of the University Botanic Garden, the Bishop of Ely, the Chief Executive, Cambridge PPF.

National, Regional & Seasonal Bee Inspectors

Head of National Bee Unit: Kate Wilson
0300 3030094; kate.wilson@apha.gov.uk

BeeBase Manager: Adam Parker
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National Bee Inspector: Andy Wattam
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Authorised BI: Jack Silberrad
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For a full, up-to-date list of Bee Inspectors, look at BeeBase: www.nationalbeeunit.com

Front cover: 'Chim, chim, a bee'. These bees had set up a home in an ornamental chimney - under a flower pot. They'd been there for a couple of months but were getting a bit busy so the owner now needed them to move on. Each fin was carefully cut away from the sides using a long kitchen knife. The comb was put into frames, held in place by rubber bands. Queenie was on the second comb, and was caught, marked with a green dot and caged to attract her offspring into their new hive. Victoria Darville, winner of the Joan Hall Frame for Best Photograph, Honey Show 2024.



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CAMBRIDGESHIRE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

		2024		2023
		Accumulation Fund	Research Fund	Total
		£	£	£
INCOME	<i>From members</i>			
	Subscriptions	13,740		13,740
	Donations	674	837	1,511
	CBKA Newsletter	-		-
	<i>Amounts collected from members for CBKA activities</i>	<u>14,414</u>	<u>837</u>	<u>15,251</u>
	Additional BDI cover requested by members	534		534
	Members' subscriptions to Beekeepers' Quarterly and Beecraft	-		-
	Total amounts collected from members	<u>14,948</u>	<u>837</u>	<u>15,785</u>
	<i>From educational activities</i>			
	Beginners' training course	3,063		3,063
	Try-a-hive	-		-
	Improvers' training course	-		-
	One Day Seminar	2,932		2,932
	Other courses and events	<u>1,598</u>		<u>1,598</u>
		<u>7,593</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>7,593</u>
	<i>From sale of products</i>			
	Honey (on behalf of members)	1,354		1,354
	Honey (from CBKA hives)	4,754		4,754
	Polo shirts, badges and ancillary items	<u>501</u>		<u>501</u>
		<u>6,609</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6,609</u>
	<i>Other income, including GiftAid</i>	4,398	136	4,534
	Total income	<u>33,548</u>	<u>973</u>	<u>34,521</u>
EXPENDITURE	<i>On behalf of members</i>			
	BBKA membership	(8,545)		(8,545)
	Bee Disease Insurance	(1,306)		(1,306)
	Beekeepers' Quarterly and Beecraft			-
	Bank processing fees	<u>(407)</u>		<u>(407)</u>
		<u>(10,258)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(10,258)</u>
	<i>On educational activities</i>			
	Beginners' training course	(1,822)		(1,822)
	Asian hornet traps	(771)		(771)
	Improvers' training course	-		-
	One Day Seminar	(3,122)		(3,122)
	Other talks, courses and events	<u>(2,544)</u>		<u>(2,544)</u>
		<u>(8,259)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(8,259)</u>
	<i>On products for sale</i>			
	Honey from members	(982)		(982)
	Preparing and packaging honey from CBKA hives	(595)		(595)
	Polo shirts, badges and ancillary items	(126)		(126)
	Cost of running the Honey Show	(1,129)		(1,129)
	Cost of attending third party events	<u>(316)</u>		<u>(316)</u>
		<u>(3,148)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(3,148)</u>
	<i>On running the Association's apiaries</i>			
	Maintenance	(3,354)		(3,354)
	Capital expenditure	<u>(436)</u>		<u>(436)</u>
		<u>(3,790)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(3,790)</u>
	<i>On running the Association</i>			
	Insurance	(692)		(692)
	Printing and stationary	(702)		(702)
	Room hire	(295)		(295)
	Other costs	<u>(2,169)</u>		<u>(2,169)</u>
		<u>(3,858)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(3,858)</u>
	<i>Grants to research organisations</i>	-	-	-
	Total expenditure	<u>(29,313)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(29,313)</u>
NET INCOME		<u>4,235</u>	<u>973</u>	<u>5,208</u>

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

(Registered charity No. 1183601)

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2024



		2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
Stock	CBKA badges and medals	437		405	
	Jars and other packaging for honey	327		478	
	Stock of polo shirts and fleeces	1,054		124	
	Wax for processing	-		-	
	Stock of Try-A-Hives	-		-	
	Manuals for beginners	543		158	
			2,361		1,165
Receivables	Prepayments	-		-	
	GiftAid receivable	5,316		4,859	
	Prepaid Wandlebury licence	150		150	
			5,466		5,009
Cash	Cash at Lloyds Bank	6,407		7,967	
	Lloyds Bank Deposit Account	75,907		75,013	
	Float for Cambridgeshire Apiaries events	250		51	
			82,564		83,031
Total assets			90,391		89,205
Less creditors	BBKA subscriptions paid in advance	-		-	
	BDI paid in advance	-		-	
	BKQ subscriptions paid in advance	-		-	
	Beginner's Course fees paid in advance	-		(3,917)	
	One Day Seminar fees paid in advance	-		-	
	Provision for possible charge for Wandlebury	-		-	
	Key deposits for Impington Apiary	(20)		(20)	
	Other accruals	(749)		(854)	
			(769)		(4,791)
Net assets			89,622		84,414
Represented by					
Accumulation fund	At the beginning of the year	80,466		76,424	
	Excess of income over expenditure during the year	4,235		4,042	
	At the end of the year		84,701		80,466
Research fund	At the beginning of the year	3,948		2,845	
	Donations from members during the year, gross of GiftAid	973		1,103	
	Grants made during the year	-		-	
	At the end of the year		4,921		3,948
Total Funds			89,622		84,414

Note to the Accounts.

CBKA's accounting policy is to write off against any surpluses, the cost of all capital purchases at the time of acquisition. As a result, the Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024 do not show the value of CBKA's fixed assets. In 2021, the assets of CBKA were checked and valued at current prices and CBKA's buildings and contents insurance was updated accordingly.

Apiary shed- Wandlebury	£7,948	£7,792
Apiary sheds and outbuildings Impington and Bourn - at each location	£5,071	£4,972
Apiary tools, equipment and accessories - at each location	£41,211	£40,403
Apiary hives and bee colonies (excluding disease - covered by BDI) at each location	£9,510	£9,324
Trailer, PA equipment and other assets	£19,934	£19,543

Peter Connor
Chair

Auditor

I have examined the Accounts of Cambridgeshire Beekeepers' Association and from the records made available to me, I certify the above Balance Sheet and attached Income and Expenditure Account represent a true and fair view of the Association's financial affairs for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Mark Cooper

Mr M Cooper



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CAMBRIDGESHIRE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

CAMBRIDGESHIRE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2024

		2024		2023
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	Members' subscriptions to Beekeepers' Quarterly and Beecraft	-		-
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		<u>(3,858)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(3,858)</u>
	<i>Grants to research organisations</i>	-	-	-
	Total expenditure	<u>(29,313)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(29,313)</u>
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(Registered charity No. 1183601)

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