

# WARWICKSHIRE BEEKEEPER

November 2019



**MEET B.  
THE WORLD'S FIRST  
BEE INFLUENCER**



## Letter from the Chairman

**D**ear members,

The active beekeeping season draws to its close for another year and we hope we have prepared our bees for what ever the forthcoming winter conjures up. With varroa treatments done, brood boxes full of stores, mouse guards on and woodpecker screens in place we can only wait now to see which hives come through.

Anthony Williams raised the question at the Honey Show lectures ‘What do we consider to be an acceptable winter loss? 10%? 20%? 30%??’ My own view is 10% or less amongst my own colonies, but others may have different expectations based on their practices. Anthony is the COLOSS coordinator for England and through an annual survey, he gathers the detailed data from individual beekeepers from which he then produces reports for the International COLOSS team. The reports are reference material for many research projects investigating bee health.

Many who heard his talk suggested WBKA beekeepers could provide him with our data and in return he agreed to give us a Warwickshire report. The survey will be carried out in the spring but before you turn the light off in your bee shed this autumn can I ask you please to make sure your records are complete and put in a safe place as you will need to refer to them when you complete the survey next year.

**With Regards,  
David Blower**



*Laurustinus*



## Editor's Letter

*With most honey shows now completed and volunteer activities at festivals, fairs and apiaries slowing down, it is time for everyone to settle indoors.*

*Our bees should now be tucked away, stores as full as possible, mouseguards installed, with insulation if necessary, and given some space to prepare for winter.*

*We, the beekeepers, should be refraining from opening the hives unnecessarily, extracting the honey we didn't have time to extract before and re-evaluating our suits, tools, spare parts and most importantly, our knowledge.*

*What did our bees teach us this year? What mistakes have we made? What was their health at the beginning and now, at the end of the season?*

*Our season continues, with lectures, talks, books and YouTube videos that we may engross ourselves in to try and making that little more sense of the world around us and our bees.*

**Katerina Prokopiou**

**Do you have an  
idea, story or  
wonderful  
photographs  
to share?**

**Please share them  
with your Editor  
at  
[wbeditor@wbka.  
org.uk](mailto:wbeditor@wbka.org.uk)**

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### **Please Note**

*Items appearing in WB are not necessarily the view of either the editor or Warwickshire Beekeepers Association*

## ON-LINE AND IN COLOUR

Log In at [warwickshirebeekeepers.org.uk](http://warwickshirebeekeepers.org.uk) to view this newsletter and many others

Please contact your Branch Secretary to obtain the password



# What's On 2019

## November

**5 19:30 Branch Meeting and Talk, Nuneaton & Atherstone**

*'A few Extra Queens'* by David Blower

Hatters Space Community Centre, Nuneaton

**5 Social Evening, Sutton Coldfield**

Park House,  
Sutton Park

**11 19:30 A Beekeeper at Sea, Solihull**

*The talk will be delivered by Stephen Sidaway*

Methodist Hall,  
Blossomfield Road,  
Solihull B91 1LG

**TBC 19:30-21:00 Branch Meeting and Talk, Coventry**

*'Hornets'* by Margaret Murdin  
All Saints Church Hall,  
Allesley, Coventry,  
CV5 9EQ

**21 Good for All, Sutton Coldfield**

*The talk will be delivered by Leigh Hunt*

Erdington Methodist Centre

**21 Members' Meeting, Warwick & Leamington**

*'Queen Rearing'* by Ged Marshall  
Kingshill Nursery

## December

**3 Social Evening, Sutton Coldfield**

Park House,  
Sutton Park

**3 19:30 Christmas Noggin and Nutter, Warwick & Leamington**

Hatters Space Community Centre, Nuneaton

**TBC 19:30 Christmas Party, Coventry**

*Our yearly Christmas Party and Quiz*  
All Saints Church Hall,  
Allesley, Coventry,  
CV5 9EQ

## 60th Annual Delegate meeting for the BBKA

10:30 11 January 2020,  
Myton School, Myton  
Road, Warwick, CV32 6PJ

All members are invited to attend the meeting. Please be advised that there are limited spaces available due to fire regulations, and so attendees will be on a pre-registered, first-come, first-served basis.

Advanced registration can be done on written application to [gen.manager@bbka.org.uk](mailto:gen.manager@bbka.org.uk)

This year there are 6 vacancies for the position of Trustee.

The deadline for receipt of Trustee propositions has now passed (18th October 2019).

President election is due at the 2020 ADM.

For the Examinations Board there are three vacancies for 3 years each.

Propositions from our members will be taken forward by WBKA.

Forms are available on the BBKA website for propositions, Examination board position application, Trustee nominations, Association Delegate nominations.



### 9 Old Beekeeping Videos, Solihull

Videos and Nibbles

Methodist Hall,  
Blossomfield Road,  
Solihull B91 1LG

### 11 Christmas Meal, Sutton Coldfield

Park House,  
Sutton Park

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# All in a month

## RUGBY

The branch apiary has offered hands-on training and education throughout the year for new Beekeepers.

*For the success, we would like to thank all the volunteers that have supported the training events and worked on maintaining our apiary.*

The County Honey Show and interesting lectures were attended by a number of the branch members. It was an excellent opportunity to see the County standard of exhibits and experience the protocol associated with such an event.

Rugby was represented by a small number of our members exhibiting items, and so were delighted to be awarded up to 14 prize cards amongst them.

Do consider attending or exhibiting next year; it is certainly an experience not to be missed!

Meanwhile we are on the brink of our own Honey Show at Rugby and the much anticipated results will be announced in our section in December's newsletter.

Please, do keep alert for signs of Asian Hornets in your apiaries and distribute the Hornet identification posters accordingly. For further copies, please contact the committee members).

**Gail Plester**

## NUNEATON & ATHERSTONE

As autumn unfolds, we have been fortunate to have had 2 interesting and helpful indoor sessions. First of all, our September session saw Dave Bonner passing on numerous useful tips and techniques on the topic of "Preparing Honey and Wax for the Show Bench". Although intended primarily for those contemplating taking their first steps in showing, Dave's presentation was also useful for those wanting to improve their general honey preparation skills. Although admittedly starting from a modest base within the branch, Dave's enthusiasm caught on and the County Show saw a doubling of members being involved, the branch edging its way up the results table and moving out of the relegation zone. Next year – who knows?

Our October session had a more theoretical slant and we were entertained by Stuart Roberts' talk on "Botany for Beekeepers". Stuart's presentation was wide-ranging and reflected his considerable knowledge of the topic. Some of the actions of, for example, the orchid bee and its "after the watershed" activities to enhance pollination were as surprising as the final quiz was taxing. The grey matter certainly was stretched for most of us.

We look forward to a winter of similarly educational and provoking presentations.



May your supers be full, your swarms few and the Sun always shine on your apiary.

**John Twidle**

## SOLIHULL

At the apiary, we have now completed varroa treatment, smaller colonies have been united, all have been fed, and with mouse guard securely on they are all now settled in for the winter. Some may even be wearing a bee cosy to help them get through to spring.

Sunday turned out to be a warm, sunny and productive day as 25 members gathered to tackle the tasks that the team had identified for the annual apiary clean up. Members trimmed the grass areas, and tidied the brambles and hedges. Others cleaned queen excluders and crown boards, and oiled the hut, nuc boxes, hives and their stands. Also, a small group tidied up the wild flower area and planted bulbs around the tree. The day would not have been the same without the delicious refreshments provided by Mandy and Denise.

*Further thanks must also go to the apiary team for their commitment and efficiency this year, without which our summer meetings would not have run so smoothly.*

Following success at our local honey show, Rachel & Roger Taylor and Maggie Tavilla went ahead to win further awards at the WBKA Honey Show. Rachel & Roger received a Commended for their beeswax blocks (Class 15) and a Very Highly Commended for their honey cake (Class 17). Maggie's six jars of honey (Class 10) were awarded the National Honey Show Blue Ribbon Award for best exhibit in the Honey Show. Furthermore, she achieved 2nd place in the Novice Light Honey (Class 27N).

Our first indoor meeting was well attended. Celia gave us some food for thought with her lecture, "Nuc It"; quite a thought-provoking title. During the course of the evening, Celia explained how we could incorporate the nuc into our bee keeping, such as using it as a starter colony or a home for the mating queen. It could also be used to introduce queens to new colonies in addition to it being a queen conservation unit. It's a perfect unit to use as part of a swarm control strategy and ideal for making up observation hives. We were also reminded of the essential properties beekeepers should consider before purchasing a nuc of bees: buy locally; seek out good-tempered bees, which are free from disease; healthy, clean, comb;



All work was completed thanks to our wonderful volunteers

# The month continued...

sufficiently strong; the correct mix of bees & brood; and most importantly, the young marked queen!

Please note that our indoor meetings take place on the second Monday evening of the month at the Methodist Hall, Blossomfield Road, Solihull B91 1LG, unless otherwise stated.

**Channy Collins**

## **BIRMINGHAM**

Our First Winter Meeting - Lapal Canal Trust.

We had a very interesting talk from Hugh Humphrey, CEO of The Lapal Canal Trust, regarding the progress of restoration, and trials and tribulations of reinstating the Lapal Canal (Dudley No. 2). As this is an area very close to where I live, I found it fascinating and can't believe there will be a Marina! The Canal will link Selly Oak to California (3 miles of canal) which will connect up to other canals to make a circular route around Birmingham! Great for Gongoozlers, wildlife, walkers, runners and tourism, linking up with heritage sites in the Selly Oaks area.

**Sam Walker**

## **WARWICK & LEAMINGTON SPA**

The hot news this month is the first session open to our members of our new bulk frame cleaning facility. Normally, one of the least inspiring winter beekeeping activities, frame cleaning has been transformed, for the

ten members who brought their sticky, yucky frames in on a Sunday afternoon. Within their 30-minute time slot, the beekeepers were able to clean multiples of 15 frames at a time, as they were immersed in our purpose made, 2-compartment, frame cleaning and rinsing tank. Certainly, a welcome alternative to filling the house or garage with steam, as the Burco boiler struggles, and treading on a now slippery floor to transfer the frames to the rinsing bin and subsequently spreading them out for drying.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Clive Joyce whose brainchild this was and for driving this project to completion.

Equally enthusiastic were the attendees of our September taster day where, even the weather put on a good show for the hive opening session, to match that provided by our team of presenters and helpers.

Our programme of public displays reached its conclusion this month after 19 such events throughout the summer. You would think the shows committee would now rest, but in the contrary: it is now the time for review and planning for next year and, of course, budget bids.

*A huge thank you to both, the shows' committee and the members who give so freely of their time, expertise and bonhomie to make these events so popular and such fun.*



## BIRMINGHAM HONEY SHOW AWARDS

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• The Honey Pot (Novice Honey Class1N)	<i>Sarah Hopkins</i>
• The Highbury Cup (Best Novice—most points scored by Novice)	<i>Diana Phillips</i>
• The City of Birmingham Challenge Cup (most points awarded in the Open Classes)	<i>Sharif Khan</i>
• The EWT Morris Memorial Bowl (runner up with most points in Open Classes)	<i>Norman Short</i>
• The Birmingham & District Challenge Cup (most points in the Members Classes)	<i>Sharif Khan</i>
• The South Birmingham Cup (runner up with most points in Members Classes)	<i>John Gale</i>
• The Haden Cup (best honey for sale)	<i>Sharif Khan</i>
• The C.L. Ballard Cup (cut comb)	<i>Sharif Khan</i>
• The W.C. Hart Cup (comb for extraction)	<i>Ray Bowers</i>
• The Mrs Mann Cup (sweet mead)	<i>Sharif Khan</i>
• The C.W. Dutton Cup (dry mead)	<i>Sharif Khan</i>
• The George Handley Bowl (honey cake)	<i>Bryan Toft</i>
• The Birmingham Post & Mail Challenge (gift class)	<i>Sharif Khan</i>
• The George Kershaw Trophy (photography)	<i>Bryan Toft</i>
• The Stan Dolphin Trophy (jar of honey and block of wax)	<i>Diana Phillips</i>
• BBKA Blue Ribbon awarded by the Judge (best in show)	<i>Sharif Khan for Class 4 Dark Honey</i>

# The month continued...

As honeybees have no nose, how then do they smell? This question was expertly and entertainingly addressed by Celia Davis's talk "Silent messengers. The role of pheromones in the honeybee colony". Whilst we knew such substances existed, little did we realise the vital roles they play in accounting for bee behaviour. Many thanks to Celia for a fascinating talk.

The launch of a snazzy new format for Bee Talk, our Branch Newsletter - the inspiration of our recently appointed editor, Tanya Weaver, - has been received with much enthusiasm by members. The next issue is eagerly awaited.

*Ivan A Perry*

## SUTTON COLDFIELD & NORTH BIRMINGHAM



Dave Bonner, a Master Beekeeper, ex bee inspector and project manager with Bees Abroad shared with us his work with the charity "Bees Abroad". He has been working with Charities in Uganda

for 10 years.

He had three aims for the talk:

1. give us information on Bees Abroad;
2. entertain us while giving the talk;
3. raise funds for Bees Abroad.

On all three of his aims he was successful. He gave information on how the charity's work fundamentally helps families and communities. The most obvious benefit is that the honey produced is a valuable commodity and as such, is worth selling for profit. Additionally, beekeepers are taught how to utilise wax (previously considered a waste product) in the production of value-added goods for further sales. He moved on to explain the benefits of beekeeping not only for the beekeepers themselves, but also for the local community by pointing out other aspects such as the pollination service bees provide to the wider environment.

The talk was entertaining, with stories of his experiences and the practical results he has seen over his and his wife's, Cathy, 10-year efforts.

It was an uplifting talk, one which was very seasonal and poignant as we approach the season of giving and looking after out for our fellow man.

*Jitesh Patel*

# County Honey Show

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This year the County Honey Show took place under the supervision of our Show Secretary Ruth Mosley and a team of volunteers drawn from each Branch. As last year, the new venue continued to be successful with ample space for both setting up and registration ably co-ordinated, using the on-line system developed by Pete Barclay and Tristan Moore. I must say that, with numerous entrants collecting their display labels, coupled with several late entries and alterations, there might have been the potential for chaos to ensue. However, Pete and Tristan dealt with everything calmly and professionally so that the whole process was seamless.

The judging team of Sue Carter, Bill Fisher and Joyce Nisbet executed their duties efficiently and were complimentary about the quality of entries, many of which would not have been out of place in the National Honey Show classes. As last year, the Novice classes were judged by Sharif Khan and Douglas Nethercleft and entrants were encouraged to be present for the judging and receive feedback from the judging team. Hopefully the entrants will now be in a position to challenge Sharif in the future.

While the judging took place, entrants had the options of attending any or all of the three first-rate lectures (completely free), browsing through the books on display from Northern Bee Books, picking up end-of-season bargains from Simon The Beekeeper or chatting with colleagues over refreshments provided by Stoneleigh Park staff. I must admit that my wallet was considerably lighter at the end of the day due to the reading matter I picked up and resources I bought from Simon.

The lectures were both fascinating and educational and all added to the beekeeping knowledge of those present. Dr Antony Williams gave an informed overview of the recent UK winter hive loss surveys (COLOSS) and how they compared with other results across Europe; Dr John Chambers gave a convincing series of arguments against the damaging potential of importing honey bee stocks and how we can improve our local stock while Joyce Nisbet covered some of the tips and tricks involved in preparing colonies so as to maximise the early season honey crop from oilseed rape.

I would encourage all County Members to consider attending next year's event even if showing is not for you (but you never know unless you try although do be warned – it can become addictive).

**John Twidle**

***Nuneaton and Atherstone Member of the County Honey Show Committee***



## Chronicles of a Novice Beekeeper

This past Spring only one of my two colonies overwintered successfully. This year I'll be heading into winter with 5 colonies (4 hives and 1 nuc). Because I've had more colonies to work with, I've been able to learn about different colony characteristics, which has been fascinating.

*One colony* is exceedingly generous in their use of propolis throughout their hive. It's a bit annoying during inspections but I usually leave this colony last when inspecting, as the tool gets so mucky and it is difficult to clean off properly on site.

*Two colonies*, in spite of being wild bees, have beautiful temperaments and one of these colonies are very rapid comb builders. (Fingers crossed both these colonies overwinter successfully!).

*The Kamikaze Colony* has settled down in temperament a little bit. This colony was prolific in terms of drawing out foundation, building up the population and in honey production. I relied heavily on them to build up each of the other colonies in my apiary at some point during the season. In fact, this colony has probably drawn out the equivalent of an additional brood box and replenished its population after my repeated plundering of its brood frames. It has also provided me with two daughter colonies (the propolis one and one of the gentle tempered colonies).

*The final colony* is also a bit on the mean side but quite a good colony all the same. They were not impressed when I tried to put the mouse guard on a couple weeks ago and came pouring out the front entrance at me...scary! It was difficult to maintain presence of mind to complete the task and not panic and run away!

The colonies have been taking in quite a lot of syrup to boost their stores for winter and, upon hefting, they all felt satisfyingly heavy.

At the allotment AGM I was able to give a summary on how the bees did this year and to thank everyone for their support and for having the bees and me.

**Denali Enns**

Aster



## Honey-roasted Swede Soup with chilli and cumin

**SERVES 4 PREP 10 mins**  
**COOK 1.5 hr EASY**

### INGREDIENTS

1 large swede, peeled and cut into large chunks  
2 tbsp olive oil  
1 tbsp clear honey  
1 tsp cumin seed  
1 large red chilli, deseeded and chopped  
1 onion, 1 carrot, 2 sticks celery, finely chopped  
1.25L vegetable stock

### TO SERVE

Small bunch coriander, chopped  
Double cream

*“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness” calls for a hearty soup in my house. I always use the inside of my Halloween pumpkin for soup with a spicy kick on Bonfire night; this has a similar spice vibe. Enjoy with crusty bread.*

1. Heat oven to 200°C/180°C fan/Gas 6. Toss the swede in olive oil in a shallow roasting tin, then season. Roast in the oven for 35-40 mins, tossing occasionally, until the swede is golden and soft.
2. Meanwhile, in a large pan, gently fry the carrot, onion and celery until translucent and soft.
3. Stir into the swede, honey and cumin seeds, and continue to roast for 10 mins until just starting to catch. Remove and stir in the chilli. Add the swede to the pan with the other veg and stir in the stock. Bring to the boil stirring frequently and taste for seasoning – add salt and pepper as required.
4. Once all flavours are combined, remove from the heat and allow to cool and blend into a smooth soup. If too thick add some hot water. Serve in deep bowls swirled with cream and scattered with chopped coriander.

**ENJOY, DENISE**

# The Dirty Dozen and Clean Fifteen

Many people, including beekeepers, have long been concerned about the effects of pesticides (insecticides, herbicides and fungicides) used in agriculture on pollinators and the wider environment. However, relatively little is said about their impact on our food.

Recent research shows that pesticides can often leave detectable traces of chemicals, known as “residues” in, or on, our food. The residues detected on a food item will depend on which pesticides have been used and how persistent they are or, put another way, how long they take to decompose.

Driven by health concerns, the government monitors residue levels in food consumed in the UK. PAN UK (Pesticide Action Network UK) has analysed and compiled the most recent five years of government data and turned it into a handy list you can stick on your fridge or in your back pocket when you go shopping. A fully organic diet can be difficult and expensive to achieve but this ‘Dirty Dozen and Clean Fifteen’ list can help you to work out which produce to prioritise.

Sadly, the majority of produce with high concentrations of pesticide residues is also the pollinated kind and hence, highly impactful to bees and other pollinators.

For more information visit:

<https://www.pan-uk.org/dirty-dozen-and-clean-fifteen/>

*Adapted from the Lune Valley  
Community Beekeepers*

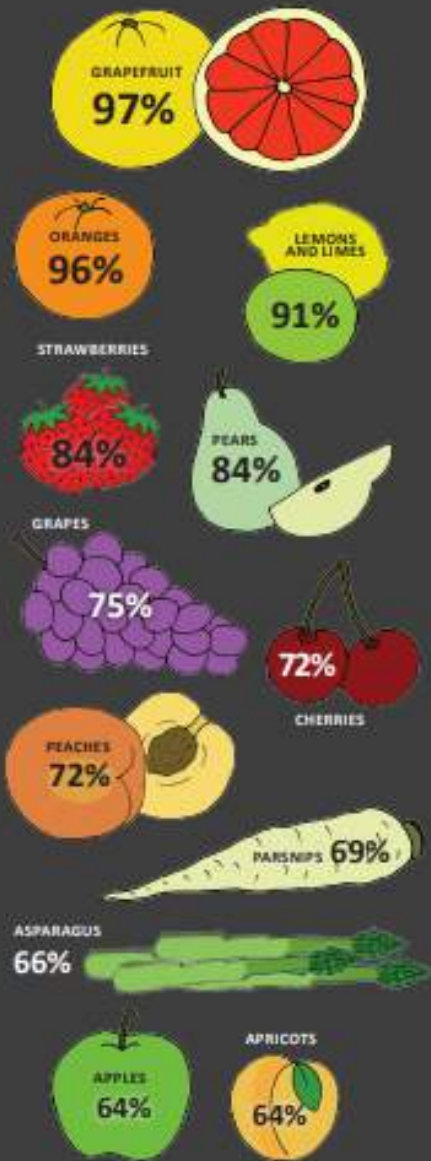


Cosmos



# DIRTY DOZEN

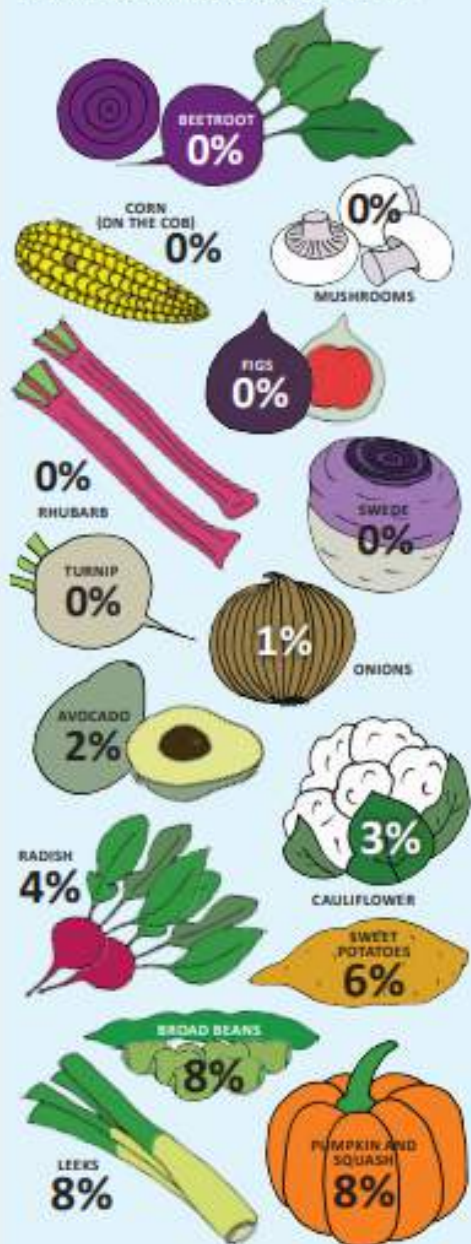
% OF PRODUCE WITH MULTIPLE PESTICIDE RESIDUES\*



\* Based on 2012 - 2017 data for multiple residues published by The Expert Committee on Pesticide Residues

# CLEAN FIFTEEN

% OF PRODUCE WITH MULTIPLE PESTICIDE RESIDUES\*





# The World's First Bee Influencer on Social Media

You can find the camera-loving **B.** posing for Instagram ([@bee\\_nfluencer](#)) on a lush French beach, taking a selfie with a flower, or even peacefully demonstrating for the rights of bees. She answers questions about her favourite musicians like Beethoven and Beyonce, her best friend Beetie and about her ambitions for the future.

With 116,000 followers, B. is the face of #BeeFund, an initiative by Fondation de France (leading philanthropy network in France) and is raising funds through paid partnerships, solely for #BeeFund. B. is then able to select and sponsor projects that support the fund's 3 pillars of action:

- ◆ **Financing the conversion of farmers to pollinator-friendly techniques**
- ◆ **Rebuilding bee habitats**
- ◆ **Demonstrating the impact of pesticides on pollinators**

If you know any company that aligns with B.'s ideals and goals, why not encourage them to partner up with the influencer? If not, just follow this imaginary bee for fun and humorous posts that brighten up your day and thus increasing B.'s exposure and potential to support great projects.

For more information on the fund, go to <https://beefund.fondationdefrance.org/>

*Katerina Prokopiou*



Photos from Instagram ([@bee\\_nfluencer](#)), Fondation de France

## EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

Several Smith hives for sale. Some in great condition and others in need of TLC

Contact David Peckham

 Shipston-on-Stour

 01608 663762

 [dpeckham7@icloud.com](mailto:dpeckham7@icloud.com)



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### CAVEAT EMPTOR

Be aware that Warwickshire Beekeepers Association is not responsible for any goods or services advertised in Warwickshire Beekeeper or on the website. Anyone purchasing bees or nuclei should satisfy themselves that they are disease free and that they are aware of the provenance of any queens.

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## ***BDI Representatives***

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Copy Date for next Issue **21 November 2019**