



# Somerset Beekeepers' Association



## NEWSLETTER

January 2018 no.132



Happy New Year to everyone. Let's hope it's a good one for bees and beekeepers.  
The next edition will be April. Please send copy to me by 15<sup>th</sup> March  
Email: friend.elizabeth@gmail.com.



### Letter from the Chairman.

While for beekeepers the autumn is a time to reflect on the previous season and start the exciting prospect of looking ahead to next year, for your SBKA officers it is a time of getting business in order. Our treasurer Christina Kennedy has the most onerous role on the accounting and regulatory front in order to meet the Charity Commission's requirements. This starts with the extraordinarily complex job of consolidating the accounts from our 12 Divisions, all of whom have, to date, reported slightly differently. It has taken expert understanding of the regulations, gritty determination and weeks' of hard work to complete the reports and accounts. In addition, even a small charity like ours is required to have a raft of policies in place; Christina has drafted the following which your delegates will consider at the Council's first meeting in the New Year.

- Risk Management Policy
- Investment Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Policy for Managing Volunteers
- Policy for Handling Complaints
- Policy for paying staff – possibly the only one which is not applicable!

In the New Year she will be addressing the changes in the Data Protection Act to make sure we are compliant. It is undoubtedly good for the work of charities to be reviewed in the pursuit of transparency and efficiency, but it is certainly onerous for an organisation of our size and where all officers work on an entirely voluntary basis.

Other activities have included writing a briefing note about our recent season to our five MPs noting:

- Somerset reported the highest incidence of European Foul Brood (EFB) which underlines the necessity for the bee inspectorate
- The worst honey crop for 50 years
- The real and imminent threat Asian hornets pose to our honeybees and other insects
- Welcoming of the government's decision to support a total ban on neonicotinoids

Finally, we are exploring if there is a place for advertising/sponsorship/partnership on our website. Historically advertising has been confined to our Year Book but the new website enables us to develop sponsorship and partnership relationships with a wider business base. It's very early days and I will report back on progress.

And that just leaves me to wish you a very successful beekeeping year for 2018!

Anne Pike [chairman@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:chairman@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk)

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**SBKA members are invited to a Joint Meeting with East Devon BKA**

**Thursday 11th January 2018, 7.30pm**

Roger Patterson: 'Dead Bees Don't Buzz - Surviving the Winter'

Whitchurch Canonicorum Village Hall Nr Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RF



### **SBKA Lecture Day**

**Saturday 17 February 2018**

**9.00am -5.00pm**

at **Edgar Hall, 8 Cary Court, Somerton Business Park, Somerton TA11 6SB**

**\*If you haven't already booked your tickets please do so ASAP  
£5 to include refreshments. Please bring a packed lunch.**

**Programme:** There are lectures by Ged Marshall, Michael Keith-Lucas, Jeremy Owen and Pam Hunter. Details on the SBKA website and in the last SBKA newsletter



### **SBKA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**10<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

hosted by Wedmore and Cheddar Division at  
**The Isle of Wedmore golf course, Lascot Hill, BS284QT**

**The cost of lunch is £9.50 including coffee.**

Tea and coffee will be available throughout the day priced at £1.20 per cup.

**Main courses:** Roast Beef with Yorkshire pudding and gravy

Chicken Breast in a wild mushroom and tarragon sauce

Roast Pork with stuffing and crackling served with gravy

Fillet of Salmon with a light Mustard and Cream sauce

Mushroom and Hazelnut Nut Roast

All served with roast potatoes and seasonal vegetables

**A two course meal will cost £15.00 and a three course meal £18.00**

**Starters** are: Homemade Vegetable Soup served with a crusty bread roll

Farmhouse Pate served with melba toast, garden salad, and onion chutney

Prawn cocktail and garden salad served with wholemeal bread and butter

**Desserts** are: Individual Trifle served with shortbread fingers

Spiced Apple Crumble and custard

Red Velvet Fudge Cake

Baked vanilla cheesecake with mixed berries

Chocolate sauce and Vanilla Ice-cream

Cheese and biscuits.

Please send menu choices and cheques made out to SBKA by the end of February to Elizabeth Friend, New Tynning, Stone Allerton, Axbridge, BS26 2NJ



## BBKA Spring Convention 2018

Next years convention will be held on  
Friday 13th April to Sunday 15th April 2018  
at Harper Adams University , Newport, TF10 8NB

According to the BBKA website, full details will be available online in January

## SBKA Special Lecture

25 April 2018

at Edgar Hall 8 Cary Court, Somerton Business Park, TA11 6SB  
**Margaret Thomas, CSP, NDB** will be speaking on the subject of  
***"Swarm Control for the Busy Beekeeper"***.

## Royal Bath and West Show

**30 May – 2 June**



Preparations are underway for the 2018 Show, the dates of which are as above. Without your help and enthusiasm it would be impossible to maintain the high standards set in the Bee & Honey Marquee so please put these dates in your diary now.

If you can help with setting up and/or stewarding, please contact me as soon as possible on 01373 464736 or email me at [tredg@talktalk.net](mailto:tredg@talktalk.net). The rotas are normally due for submission to the Show Committee in April, so an early reply will be very much appreciated.

*Ken Tredgett*

Tickets are available online at <http://www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show>  
**Or why not offer to help with stewarding and get a free one!**

## PAST EVENTS



### Somerset Beekeepers Annual Lunch 15 October 2017

Suzy Perkins reported at the last Council meeting that the lunch had been very successful and she will be organising another in 2018, so watch this space!



### National Honey Show

Reports back from the show were that it was an excellent event. Congratulations to Christine and Mark Gullick on their success in winning two firsts at their first time at the show.



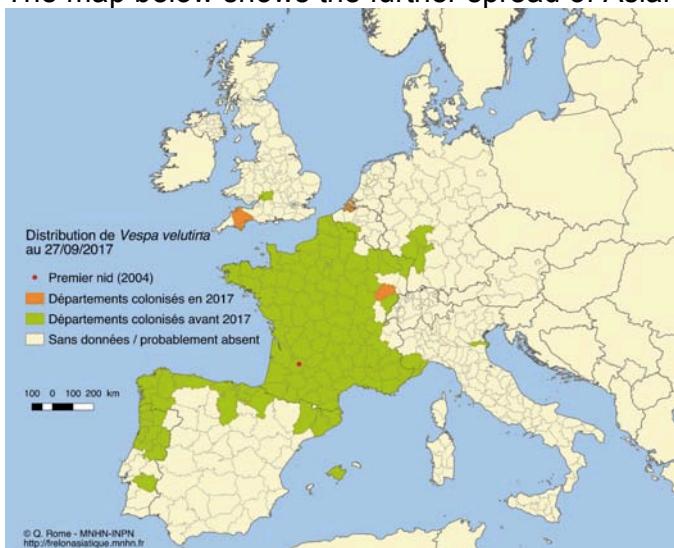
Mark being presented with his award by HE Orville London, High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago



### Hornet Alert

If you have not registered with BeeBase then please do so, in order for them to be able to contact beekeepers in any infected area. Their website is [www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com)  
E: [nbuoffice@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nbuoffice@apha.gsi.gov.uk) or, T: 0300 3030094  
See below for the Bee Unit annual report

The map below shows the further spread of Asian Hornet in 2017 (marked in orange)



## NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

*Ed: My thanks to all the contributors*

### BURNHAM NEWS AND REVIEW

The popularity of beekeeping in the Burnham area shows no signs of slowing down. Despite the variable weather the division held five very successful themed apiary meetings throughout the season. Members who hosted the meetings demonstrated a variety of beekeeping methods and ideas. The highlight of these meetings was the excellent teas which everyone enjoyed this may have had a lot to do with the very high turnout. It is hoped to carry on with this winning formula throughout the 2018.

Over the winter months the division had number of speakers and demonstrations on such issues as the Asian Hornet and Wax preparation which complemented our successful Beginners Course.

The highlight of the year was the divisions AGM and Honey Show judged by Bridget Knutson.



Congratulations to all members who were awarded certificates and in particular Juliet Hounsell who won the Stan Woodbury Novice Cup, the Wooden spoon for baking and the Ray Reddish Cup for the best exhibit in show presented by Ray Reddish's widow. Christine and Mark Gullick won the George Marsh Cup for most points in show,

readers may be aware of their recent successes at local and National Honey shows.



The division's programme for 2018 season will be published shortly and will include a Beginners Course and possibly an elementary Microscopy workshop using the equipment recently purchased in part from a grant from the SBKA Cannington Fund.

### Central

This year, Central Division is to hold additional divisional meetings over the winter months. Topics to be covered will include: candle making, selling honey, wax and other hive products and preparing exhibits for showing. The confirmed dates will be published on the website. There has been a lot of interest shown in our 2018 Beekeeping for Beginners' Course, which starts in February 2018, with already a confirmed take-up of over half the available places.

### Wedmore and Cheddar

We had an excellent AGM with a very "Interesting" mead tasting courtesy of our very own award winning mead maker, Bridget Knutson.

Plans are underway for the 2018 programme and we are running a beginners course starting in February.

## From our own correspondents in Central Division

### Low Tech. Solutions from Nick Potts

Having been one of the fortunate few to have honey for extraction this year I feel I should share a low tech. way of keeping the peace, should, as mine is, your extraction room be the family kitchen.

As we all know, when extracting honey there is a propensity for it to spread away from where we are working. It has an uncanny knack of appearing on door knobs; taps; kitchen equipment, in fact anywhere where we haven't been....or so we think. It is a silent creeper which, if not discovered in time, can cause even the most placid of households to "melt- down" quicker than a beeswax candle.

I extracted, this year, more than usual (this is not a brag as the bar had been pretty low over the last few years) and I did this during September when the evenings were warm and summer still lingered, remember that? Anyway, having extracted the honey whilst my wife was out shopping I cleared up, washed up, washed down, wiped down.....you get the drift, and by the time she came back everything was clean, honey free...

That evening, I was about to toddle off to bed when I thought I ought to check the back door to ensure it was locked. It had been a warm evening and I was dressed but had no shoes or socks on....you know what's coming. I checked the back door and felt a small sticky adhesion to my foot. I immediately knew what it was and, as I was one side of the kitchen in the dark and the light switch was the other I hopped, in the dark, across the room to turn the light on and check the offending foot. Sure enough there was a tiny, insignificant (in my view) blob of honey which had somehow got to the floor by the back door. (I thought it was insignificant but I'm sure it would have caused much mopping and recrimination had I not located it).

In future, when I extract honey and have cleared up everything I shall now walk round all the kitchen/extraction room bare foot and locate any of the sneaky, sticky blobs before someone else finds them.

And Paula Carnell writes

Last week I was informed by a farmer that one of my hives at an orchard had been blown over. This colony was a swarm that had moved into an empty warre/ Langstroff hive I'd been given with a small weak colony several years ago. I'd placed it empty on an orchard in May and a swarm moved straight in within a couple of weeks. When I checked in September they were doing well, with plenty of stores and no signs of varroa.

On the phone call, the farmer said he'd put it back together again but I naturally rushed over in the closing light of Saturday to check it out. When I got there I was devastated to see that the Warre hive with a Langstroff outer box, WBC style, had been completely blown over , including the stand, and the two inner warre boxes were placed on top of each other next to the outer 'lifts'. I didn't stop to take photos, but as quickly as I could, re assembled the base, entrance, adapted crown board that positioned the warre boxes and placed them back on the stand. As I stood back before replacing the lid, I noticed an unusual pitch of buzzing. I had lifted the two warre boxes together, seeing a lot of comb in the lower one and didn't want to expose them to anymore cold than necessary. Anyway, the buzz was worrying me so I removed the top box, empty of comb and looked into the lower one.

I was then horrified to see that the lower box was upside down! The poor girls had been hanging upside down from their comb since the wind had blown over the hive or when the farmer moved the boxes!

I apologised to them and quickly reverted the box so that the bars were on the top. and covered it with the canvas cloth I found still attached by propolis realising that I didn't now need to replace the second, empty box. Their comb was hanging below the box and into the Langstroff cavity of the entrance lift. Their buzz returned to a familiar content one and so I replaced the remaining Lifts and the insulated roof. I then strapped the hive to the stand, happier that it was now shorter and more secure.

With the temperatures so low and such a bitter wind I was delighted that these bees had survived what must have been a terrifying ordeal for them and still had a healthy supply of honey in their stores.

I have just completed my blog post about the Honey Sensory Analysis course I attended in Bologna in November <https://www.paulacarnell.com/bees/honey-sensory-analysis-course-part-1/>

## **South West Region Annual Report 2017**

### **National Bee Unit**

#### **The 2017 Season – An Overview**

The 2017 season has not been the best in terms of honey production with many beekeepers reporting a crop of less than 20lb per hive. However those beekeepers who took their hives to the heather this year were rewarded with an excellent crop.

The Bee Inspectors have had another busy season. With high levels of European Foulbrood (EFB) in Somerset, it was necessary for the two Cornish Seasonal Bee Inspectors (SBI's) Eric James and Hazel Vallis to spend time in the county helping to control the outbreak. In other parts of the region we have continued with our usual program of Foulbrood inspections; Apart from EFB in Somerset, the incidence of disease has been similar to 2016 with Cornwall having no cases of Foulbrood this season.

We have continued to deliver in partnership with the local Beekeeping Associations our 'Bee Health Days'. This season the Somerset Bee Health Day took place at West Buckland Village Hall and we were able to carry out demonstrations at the nearby Taunton and District Beekeepers teaching apiary at Heatherton Park. The Devon Bee Health Day was hosted by the Okehampton Branch, at Bow Village Hall near Crediton. We were grateful to the local beekeepers who allowed us to use their nearby apiaries for demonstration purposes.

The Inspectors also had a presence at the Somerset Lecture day in February, Avon's 'Spring Day School' in April and Cornwall's 'Bit of a Do' (BOAD) in September.

We have again been carrying out Exotic Pest Surveillance (EPS) inspections around risk points such as ports and airports to check for incursions of Small Hive Beetle (SHB), Tropilaelaps and Asian Hornet.

In addition to these inspections there are 17 Sentinel Apiaries around the region. This is where beekeepers that have an apiary near a risk point assist the National Bee Unit (NBU) by regularly monitoring their colonies for Exotic Pests and twice a year they send in floor debris samples to be tested. I am very grateful to the South West Sentinel Apiary Beekeepers for all of their help this season, they are an important part of the NBU's surveillance programme.

Part of our work each season is to monitor imports of queens and package bees from the European Union (EU) and Third Countries (Argentina, Australia and New Zealand).

Again this year we saw a large number of packages imported from Italy, some of which were bought by beekeepers in the South West (SW) region. These were inspected for SHB as they were decanted into hives and fortunately nothing was found (SHB was found in Southern Italy in 2014).

The SW Inspectors were again in the thick of it when Asian Hornet was found to be predating bees in an apiary in North Devon, details of which are below.

### **Update on Asian hornet and Small Hive Beetle in Europe**

Early this year surveillance for the Asian Hornet, *Vespa velutina*, was resumed and enhanced trapping was carried out in Gloucestershire and North Somerset following last year's discovery and destruction of a nest at Tetbury and individual hornets found in North Somerset. No further hornets have been found in those areas but an insect caught flying inside a large distribution warehouse near Glasgow, Scotland in March 2017 was confirmed as an Asian Hornet. It can only be assumed that this hornet had travelled all the way from southern Europe inside a container and flew out into the warehouse when goods were unloaded. This is a stark reminder that Asian Hornet (and other exotic pests) could arrive almost anywhere in the UK given the vast volume of traffic and goods arriving in the UK from across the channel and other countries where exotic pests are endemic. The Scottish incursion could well have been a mated queen emerging from hibernation and if released into the open, may have been able to establish a nest. All beekeepers are advised to monitor for Asian Hornet using a suitable trap. These can be home-made and there are links to a leaflet (and a YouTube video) describing how to make one on BeeBase (see <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=208> ) Monitoring traps are advised in areas away from a confirmed outbreak as regular inspection will allow other beneficial insects to be released unharmed. Further sightings of Asian Hornets have been confirmed this year on the Channel Isles. In Jersey a primary nest was discovered in a bee hive quite early in the year, several more nests in various stages of development have been found there and were destroyed throughout the season.

Many reports of possible sightings in the UK have been received by the Non-Native Species Secretariat (NNSS) and the NBU during the year. However only one in late September near Woolacombe in North Devon was identified as an Asian Hornet. Once a positive confirmation was made, the NBU Contingency Plan was activated and Bee Inspectors deployed in the area. Aided by lessons learned last year during the outbreak in Tetbury, the nest was quickly discovered and destroyed. The nest wasn't in a typical position, high up in a tree as in Tetbury, but hidden within a tall hedge. Cutting away the cover revealed a nest of about 50cms diameter. Surveillance in the area after destruction of the nest has shown no further hornet activity.

Leila Goss the SBI in North Devon is an expert with a sweep net, having worked at Exeter University studying bumble bees. Below is an Asian Hornet that she captured that was sent up to the NNSS for identification purposes at the beginning of the North Devon outbreak. Initial laboratory examination and analysis of the nest indicate that this was a fresh incursion from the French Asian Hornet population and not directly related to the nest discovered in Tetbury last year. DNA tests on the brood show that reproduction had reached the stage of drone eggs only. As with other *Vespa* species, drones are produced before gynes (virgin queens) and so we can be fairly certain that this nest was destroyed before it reached the stage of releasing queens capable of setting up new colonies next spring.

Please check BeeBase News items for regular updates and the dedicated page at <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=208> for further information including the Asian Hornet id. sheet, videos and useful links. Any suspect sightings of the Asian Hornet should be reported to the Native Species Secretariat at [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk) and the NBU office or your Regional Bee Inspector.

**Ed: There is more information in the report including the following:  
important information about Small Hive Beetle, changes in EU legislation**

### **Imports 2017**

Import or export of bees, (including queens, packages and colonies) is permitted only if accompanied by an Official European Union (EU) or Third Country health certificate issued by the competent authority where the bees originated. It is a **legal** requirement that you notify the **National Bee Unit** of imports of bees from outside the UK. See Beebase for how to do it.

### **Varroacides**

It is perhaps worth mentioning here that there have been some additions recently to the Varroa treatments available in the UK. The list of those registered and approved for use by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) is available on their web site (<http://www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/ProductInformationDatabase/Default.aspx> )