



1906

Centenary Year

2006

# SBKA Exmoor Division

Newsletter: May – June 2023 edition

## Possible Asian Hornet sighting in Somerset

*Vanessa McDonnell writes*

This morning I had a phone call from Leigh Sidaway at the BBKA asking me to check out an unconfirmed sighting of an Asian hornet at West Bagborough, that the National Bee Unit thinks should be checked out.

I spoke to the lady who reported it and sent her some information. The insect flew into her house through an open window and landed on a bookcase. She had a good sighting of it but it went out when she went to get a camera, so there is no photo. She is familiar with our native European hornets and is confident that this was not one of them.

Although I live only a few miles away, the sighting is clearly in the Quantock division's patch so I spoke to them and also to Lynne Ingram. As it happens, Lynne was going to be in the area anyway so she has set up a monitoring trap there this afternoon. I had said that if she / Quantock could not follow up, we would do our best.

**Please can you all be vigilant** and keep an eye on your traps or likely forage that Asian hornets might visit - really anything you might see a wasp on at this time of year. They won't be bothering bees yet, but, setting up nests as queen wasps are also doing now. I have seen wasps hunting insects as protein sources, as well as on flowers.

Many thanks,  
Vanessa

Vanessa

### EXMOOR DIVISION BEEKEEPER'S PROGRAMME

2023

May

Sat 20 Bea Tea at Lance Moir, Catford Cottage., Escott, TA4 4JQ At 2.00 p.m.

June

Sun 18 Bee Tea and talk (?) at Rowe Apiary, Eleanor Burgess on *Reading the Hive* (if available).

July

August

Sun 6 Porlock Details to follow

Fri 18 Dunster Show Details to follow

November

Sat 4 Exmoor Honey Show

Other possibilities for the future

A talk by Bridget Knuttson on preparing honey for show. (*Fingers crossed*).

*Future announcements may either appear here in the newsletter, or particularly an email from the Secretary, Caroline Ralph.*

Items for publication are most welcome.  
[ebkanews.eastaugh@btinternet.com](mailto:ebkanews.eastaugh@btinternet.com)

### I make no apologies for this

I make no apologies for reprinting two items that you should have received and read.

The first is that of the Asian Hornet sighting and the second is that of the Foulbrood Study. Both of which are very pertinent for this month. I reprint because I know many people will scan their emails and don't actually read them. So I will be surprised and highly delighted were you to be reading this.

So this is NOT duplication it is RE-INFORCEMENT as all the teachers among you will know.

### Swarms

I received a phone call regarding a swarm. Greg Bartnick is listed as our Swarm Contact 07976 952989. Should anyone call you about a swarm please let him know. If you are wanting a swarm, again let him know

John Eastaugh

# The EU is opposing imports of syrup-based honey, now flooding the honey market.

*The EU (which we voted to leave) are now opposing imports of adulterated honey from China and other importers from the far east and South America.*

*Extracted from the Financial Times*

Honey imported from China and other exporters including South America is having a detrimental effect on the EU bloc's €2.3bn honey market and driving down prices.

Slovenia is leading the way forward against *Honey Laundering*, as it is now dubbed, following a study last month, by the Commission, that found as much as half of the imports were basically nothing more than 'sugar water', stated an EU official. The fraud amounts to the addition of sugars, colourings and water and were therefore in breach of EU regulations.

These imports are being sold at a much lower price that EU beekeepers were being forced to reduce prices and so ruining their businesses. They further claim that the honey fraud is misleading the consumer and discouraging future beekeepers and affecting the role of the honey-bee in the environment and posing a risk to the bees' environmental role.

A beekeeper from Northern France, Yvan Hennion who keeps 300 hives, said "It is not real honey and it's making the price plummet". The twenty EU States, led by Slovenia are calling for tightening the rules on honey labelling and checks to make detecting fraudulent honey easier.

Four in five jars sold by supermarkets are blends, to bulk out honey from EU producers, so the call for proper labelling to state that the honey is a blend and state the country of origin, would be welcomed.

The Commission is wanting to increase the number of laboratories approved to assess

fraudulent honey and thereby improve detection rates.

A proposal at a meeting in April to label the honey indicating the percentages of honey coming from each country was rejected, citing operators cost constraints.

The majority of the adulterated honey comes from eight destinations which include China, Ukraine, Turkey and several South American states.

A study found that some 70 of 123 companies assessed, had exported honey suspected of containing sugar syrups made cheaper than genuine product. The UK too may be implicit in this, as our exports although low, are mainly due to repackaging.

Direct sales from Hennion's farm is being maintained, however the wholesale market is dropping, he charges at least €3.50 per kilo but imported honey can be bought for less than €1.0. All this is damaging the bee-based economy he says.

Stanislav Jas, a Finland based beekeeper and Chair of the working party for European farming groups Copa and Cogeca, said he was forced to sell more honey directly to the consumer than on a wholesale basis because of the fall in prices, while he was "happy" that the commission's proposals would improve transparency for the consumer. Jas said it "lacked ambition" to tackle fraud and support European producers. "The percentages are not there and they have not mentioned the fraud issue or laboratory testing." he added. "We are going to work with the council and the European Parliament to improve the proposal."

*The Financial Times*

Financial Times

Dear Members (*sent to each SBKA member*).

**You are invited to take part in this study into EFB throughout Somerset. Sixty test kits will be given out to delegates at the May Council meeting for distribution among divisions - 5 per division. If more test kits are required then they will be sent directly to the beekeepers.**

Hollie Pufal, from Newcastle University, is doing research on the spread of EFB throughout Somerset. She spoke at our 2023 Lecture Day. Hollie is now inviting Somerset beekeepers to take part in a study to test if EFB is spread through swarms. Assessing regional swarm collection and housing practices.

### **Invitation and brief summary of the purpose of the study**

We are interested in better understanding how different swarm management practices are deployed across your region, and what effect the different practices may have on the presence of *M. plutonius*, the causative agent of European Foulbrood.

### **What does taking part involve?**

We expect that those taking part will provide samples of about 100 adult bees from a swarm at three different time-points: 1) Upon collection of swarm; 2) Six weeks after housing the swarm; and 3) In September once the colony is established.

We are also asking participants to collect a sample of about 100 nurse bees from a colony neighbouring the housed swarm at the beginning and end of the study. There is minimal risk to the colonies of sampling ~100 adult bees but you must ensure that you do NOT sample the queen!

### **What information will be collected and who will have access to the information collected?**

We will ask you to complete a short questionnaire to gather information about your bee-keeping practices around swarm collect and to get an idea of your beekeeping experience. The questionnaire asks for swarm collection and housing locations so we can determine how far you collect swarms from and whether the location influences the likelihood of *M.plutonius* being present.

If you agree to take part in the research study, only the honey bee research team at Newcastle University will have access to any data you provide and it will only be used for the purposes of research to improve honey bee management. All data will be fully anonymised prior to presenting to any outputs, and not shared outside of Newcastle University.

### **Why have I been invited to take part?**

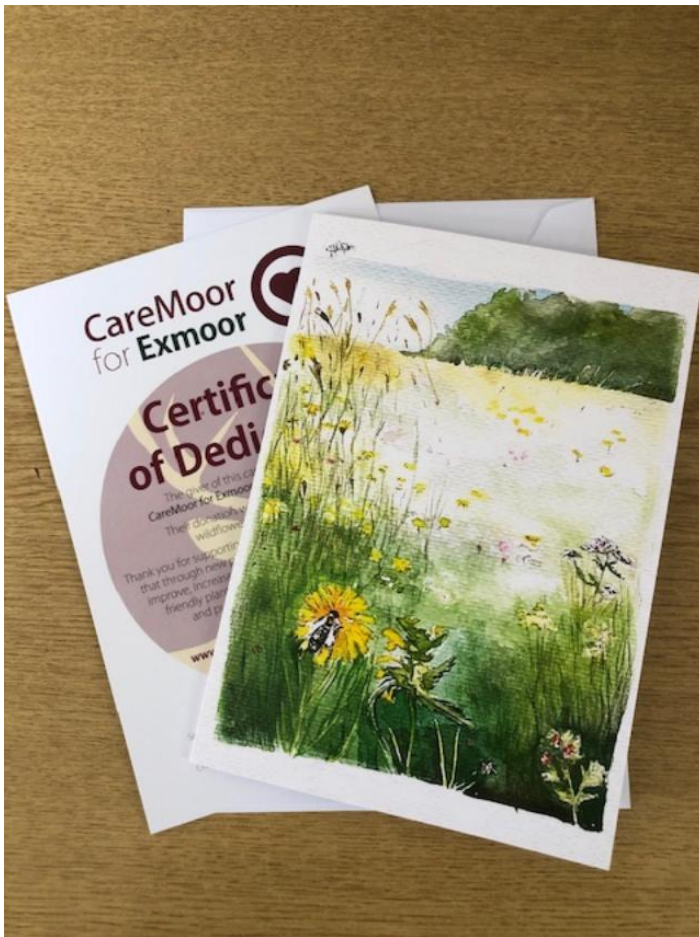
We provided sampling kits to your local Beekeeping Association and you were asked by them to take part because you have expressed an interest in collecting swarms.

### **What are the benefits of taking part?**

This study will help us better understand what methods people use in your region to house swarms, and which methods, if any may increase the risk of honey bee carrying *M. plutonius*, the causal agent of European foulbrood. As part of this study, we will return your test results directly to you as a free service for taking part. These results will be returned after the conclusion of field sampling.

With best wishes

Lynne Ingram



# Meaningful greetings cards

## Exmoor National Park Authority

We are promoting sales of our  
Sowing the Seeds donation Greeting Cards and  
Certificates?

All proceeds support our meadow planting.

## Katrina Munro

01398 322236 (Monday-Thursday only)

Sustainable Economy Officer

## Exmoor National Park Authority

01398 323665 (Switchboard)

[www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

[CareMoor - Protect Our Park \(exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk\)](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

These can be purchased via our Online shop (links below, £13 and £15 including postage) ) or at our National Park Centres in Dulverton, Somerset and Lynmouth. They are £12 in the centres. All proceeds support our meadow planting.

[Sowing The Seeds Dedication Card \(Personalised\) – Exmoor National Park Authority Shop \(exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk\)](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)

[Sowing The Seeds Dedication Card \(Blank\) – Exmoor National Park Authority Shop \(exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk\)](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)