



Newsletter May 2023

Committee members:

Tina Harley (President), Lionel Horler (Chair), Ken Jeanes (Vice Chair),
Mat Phillips (Treasurer), Anne Collyer (Secretary), Jane Jeanes (SBKA Delegate),
Tony Johnstone (Events Secretary), Jeremy Lee (Apiary Manager), Guy Clothier,
Dennis White and John Wood

Welcome to our May Newsletter. There is a busy summer programme so do please make a note of the dates and come along. There are also several opportunities for you to come and help with the stand to promote beekeeping to a new audience. Just let Tony know when you are available.

As ever, if anyone needs more information or has a question to ask, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will put you in touch with someone who can help.

Anne Collyer, Divisional Secretary SESBKA

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Lionel's May Bee Notes

For further information please contact Lionel: email lhorler934@talktalk.net

Our last two meetings have been well attended and both speakers, Eleanor Burgess, [Spring start up] and Catherine Fraser, [Pests and Diseases], were impressed with the attendance. It is so satisfying when the effort to organise these things is appreciated with a good turnout.

Our apiary is looking very smart now with cupboards and shelving inside and the lean-to and slabs down on the outside.

I am getting varying reports about the state of the bees around the division. Some are already talking about splitting a colony before it gets short of room and others think their bees are not building up as fast as they should. Normal beekeeping. I thought my bees were doing well until an inspection this week at one apiary when I discovered three apparently queenless hives. One did have unsealed brood and maybe some eggs, the sort of dilemma when the best thing is to wait another week and hope. But the other two will be combined with queen right colonies. Perhaps there is some truth in the theory of sprays affecting queen fertility.

The Asian Hornet has appeared again, this time in Kent, maybe brought across the channel on these strong winds we've been having. Everyone must be awake to this threat and report anything suspicious. We should all know what to look out for now. I think the yellow legs would be the clincher for me.

Asian Hornets 2023

Lynne Ingram Somerset Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT)



It's that time of year again when Asian Hornet queens are on the wing again and setting up their nests. There are huge numbers of Asian Hornets resident on the northern coasts of Europe – and it is very easy for them to be inadvertently transported to Britain. So far, this year in the UK, there have been 3 confirmed sightings of Asian Hornets, and at this time of year they will be mated queens. If we miss any AH queens, we will be at risk of nests being established in the UK.

5th April – an Asian Hornet was found in Northumberland in a box of cauliflowers transported from France

10th April - an Asian Hornet was photographed on the ferry between Poole and Cherbourg

10th April – an Asian Hornet was reported in Folkestone, Kent

MONITORING

It is really important that we are vigilant for any Asian Hornet queens that may have made it to Somerset. We strongly recommend the use of monitoring stations, rather than killing traps. This allows us to get the evidence of Asian Hornets that we need, without killing our native beneficial insects, in particular European Hornets.



The Veto-Pharma traps are adapted to include the wick stations inside. The wick pot containing the bait, also prevents all but the smallest flies etc. from getting down the side. The traps also have three 6mm holes drilled in them around the top to allow small insects to escape. They still require daily monitoring.

Asian Hornet queens will be searching for sugary foods to build up their energy, not preying on your bees. This means that all monitoring stations need to be positioned where you cannot help but see them and where you can easily check them daily - e.g. outside the kitchen window, or in a sunny spot in your garden. All beneficial insects must be released from monitoring stations daily.

Liquid bait

Use Suterra (now sold as Trappit wasp attractant). Get this from your AHAT Team leader or buy online (Pestfix.co.uk sells smaller bottles)

REPORTING

If you think you have seen an Asian Hornet, take a photo or video, and if you can, trap the insect in a container.

Report it to your Asian Hornet Team leader, and on the Asian Hornet Watch app.

Make sure you have the Asian Hornet Watch app on your phone, so that you can report any sightings. Make sure friends, family and work colleagues have it too. It has lots of useful information to help identify hornets.

Know your local Asian Hornet Team Coordinator, and let them know if you need help getting a photo or a sample, or contact Lynne Ingram, Somerset AHAT Coordinator on 07846165877 or

asianhornet@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

Lionel Horler is our AH Team leader so please contact him with any sightings or concerns.



If you have a smart phone, you can download the Asian Hornet Watch App. This is designed to record and help the early detection of Asian Hornet in the UK following the first confirmed record in September 2016. Asian Hornet is a non-native species within the UK and could have a serious impact on our insects including honeybees so early detection is important. There are a number of native insects in the UK that look very similar to the Asian Hornet, and are common and widespread. Asian Hornet Watch provides an identification guide to help check which species you have seen and an opportunity to record your sightings

News from the Apiary

Jeremy Lee, Apiary Manager

As I write this on the 27th of April, I have just seen on the news that this month has seen the coolest highest temperature for the month of April since 1986. The bees in turn also feel this and after five and a half months of cold wet weather, spring warmth still does not seem a reality. The apiary is pretty exposed and (as my car will attest to) very soggy. The oil seed rape is coming into full flower, but without some sustained warm weather, the nectar will not flow and the bees are yet to 'go crazy' for it. Saying that, a friend of mine to whom I gave bees to last year, lives at sea level on the south coast of Devon and his swarmed yesterday. Very different conditions to a cold, wet hillside in Somerset.

In spite of this, of the 13 colonies we had going into late winter, 11 seem to have come through. The cold has meant that we are yet to do any full inspections but quick peaks inside reveal brood in all of those and on the warmer days pollen is being taken into the hive - always a good sign.

The plans for this Saturday's (29/4) nuc building have been put on ice (quite literally) as the colonies are not strong enough yet and there is very little drone brood about. Instead, if the weather looks kind enough, we plan to do the first proper inspections of each and every hive. As a teaching facility, this is where a divisional apiary comes into its own. We can then make decisions on how many splits to make in a few weeks' time. Our landlords have also asked to buy some honey which has tweaked Brian's competitive interest and we can judge just how productive his peppermint green honey machine will be.

Other news, James and Brian's construction skills have been put to good use and we have a full water harvesting system. I have kept up my side of the bargain with a gas burco boiler, tea, coffee, biscuits and even a crafty bottle of sloe gin. If you need me, you know where to find me this summer.....

Don't forget you can log in and look at the apiary yourself via your smart phone.

The camera supplied by Agrisound (and paid for by Wise Energy) is live at Hook Valley. If you are interested try the below instructions although it's not for the 'tech averse'. It even works at night which is useful??

You can either download the Reolink app to your smart phone or install the same client browser on your laptop/pc/mac. The link below is for MAC/IOS - click the Windows link at the bottom of the webpage below for PC/Windows.

https://reolink.com/my/software-and-manual/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw7KqZBhCBARIsAI-fTKIFBPYjIj3v9jJstyUwuYSJSruXNa86TcnuXkN4CQIRM0RTVdM7jKkaArLWEALw_wcB

To add the camera to the client/desk top app press the plus sign where it says add camera

Device UID is 952700025317MWCT

username - admin

Password – wiseenergy

On the app scan the attached QR code and same login details.



2023 Programme Update

Tony Johnstone, Events Secretary tjmj67@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 07973341557

Hello Everybody,

Please find below the May programme update. As summer approaches we will be attending events to promote beekeeping which is part of the function of the BBKA and its members so please volunteer to help man our gazebo, if only for a few hours. Beginners are most welcome, expert help is always at hand.

As ever, I am always looking for new ideas and hosts. All suggestions are welcome so please contact me.

Saturday 13th May @ 2.30pm An Apiary visit to Lionel Horler's apiary. Chestnut Farm, North Barrow, BA22 7LZ

All members welcome. As well as inspecting his apiary Lionel plans to demonstrate a simple approach to Queen Rearing. If anybody needs to borrow a bee suit would they please give Lionel plenty of notice

Directions

Travelling from Galhampton to Sparkford on the A359 at the cross-roads (left to N. Cadbury) **turn right**, into Hearn Lane, down the hill and over the bridge. **Take 1st right**. The farm is **3rd property on the left**.

Go through the yard. Apiary is behind the hay barn. There will be no refreshments on the day but feel free to bring your own.

Saturday 27th May- 10.00am to 2.00pm. (Set-up from 9.00am) The Good Stuff Project Balsam Centre, Wincanton. BA9 9PA

An opportunity to take our gazebo and promote beekeeping and sell honey. **Volunteers needed please** even for a couple of hours. Beginners welcome. It really helps if we can have a set-up team and a pack-up team. Please let me know as soon as possible that you can help on the day.

New Date!

Thursday 1st to Saturday 3rd June The Bath & West Show

Please volunteer as stewards in the Honey Marquee for whole or half days. This is on our patch and we have taken over much of the organisation so we need to your help please. Beginners welcome- you will know more than the visitors and experts are on hand. 9.00hrs to 13.30hrs or 13.00hrs to 17.30hrs.

Please contact berniepm@btinternet.com

Saturday 17th June @ 2.30pm An Apiary Visit to Adam Morka's apiary in Bratton Seymour

Adam is a progressive beekeeper who has brought many interesting techniques with him from his native Poland. Further details to follow.

Saturday 15th July Commencing @ 10.00am. The SESBKA Annual Safari

Geoff Blay has kindly agreed to facilitate our event which is planned to start at our own apiary at **Hook Valley** followed by a visit to James Butt's apiary in **Milborne Wick** where we can enjoy our picnic lunches. Simon a local resident former gamekeeper and conservationist has promised to give us a talk on his work. Finally, to the **Lattiford estate**, home of both John Wood and Brian Magor. Brenda Wood has kindly offered to serve tea and cakes. Further details to follow.

Saturday 14th August @ 2.30pm An Apiary Visit to Mat Phillips' apiary in Marston Magna

Matt currently has four colonies. Further details to follow.

Sunday 27th August. 12.00pm to 6.00pm (Set-up 11.00am) Fun-In-The-Field, Fairfields, Castle Cary

A fun day for all the family, organised by local organisations and charities, to raise funds for the benefit of local charities, including ourselves. This is the third very successful event where again we can take our gazebo, and fulfil our obligation to promote beekeeping, and also, sell our honey.

Two teams of volunteers needed please. One to set up and one to pack-up. Please contact me.

New Date!

A Saturday in September @ 2.20pm

An Apiary visit to Pippa Shillington's apiary at Quarr Farm

Further details to follow

On A Date To Be Decided A practical Honey Preparation Session

Geoff Blay has kindly offered to hold a practical session where members can learn the skills of preparing and bottling honey for our Honey Show with the aim of increasing both the number of entries and quality.

Further details to follow

Saturday 14th October At The Market House Castle Cary The SESBKA Honey Show

With set-up on Friday 13th

Thursday 16th November @ 7.00pm At The Market House Castle Cary The SESBKA Annual General Meeting



Cinder Toffee Honeycomb

A James Martin recipe for those of us with a sweet tooth!



Ingredients:

400g castor sugar 2 tbsp liquid glucose
100ml runny honey Oil for greasing 1 ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

Method:

Place honey, sugar and glucose in a heavy-based pan with 100ml of water. Place the pan on the heat and bring to the boil. Using a sugar thermometer, boil to 160°C (a light caramel). Grease a large baking tray with oil. When the sugar mixture reaches the right temperature, remove from the heat, quickly add the bicarb and whisk in speedily. Working quickly, pour the mixture onto the tray – it will start to bubble up quite dramatically straight away! Leave to cool. When cold, break up into chunks and serve with ice cream.