



# YEOVIL BEE NEWS

## September 2018

Welcome to the newsletter of the Yeovil & District Division of the, Somerset Beekeepers' Association. See also our website: [www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk)

### **Next Meeting – Indoor Meeting**

**Richard Ball talks about**

**"Beekeeping in Malta"**

**7:30pm Tuesday 18th September**

**at The Ilchester Pavilion**

Richard spent several years in Malta and he talks tonight about his experiences there and the differences in bees and beekeeping practice in Malta.

Richard is a very experienced beekeeper and speaker. He has given several talks to us in the past. He was the RBI for the South West before becoming the NBI for the UK. He is currently Chairman of the Devon Apicultural Research Group.

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### **Directions**

The Ilchester Sports Pavilion is on Roman Road, Ilchester:  
Post code BA22 8NW.

To find the Pavillion from the A303; turn onto the A37 at the Ilchester turn off and take the first turning on the right (before Ilchester roundabout). This is Roman Road and the Pavilion is the first building on the left.

From Yeovil; take the A37 North towards Ilchester. Take the first exit at the Ilchester roundabout towards the A303. Take the next left turning left onto Roman Road. The Pavilion is the first building on the left.

## September Meeting: At the Quantock Divisional Apiary

A rather doubtful day took us to the Quantock Apiary near Bridgwater. The Apiary has about an acre of land, a triangle bounded by a road, a track and a copse which gives it plenty of shelter. The apiary is well spaced out and have a couple of dozen hives, some belonging to the division, some to the members and some are "rented" from the division for the year as a starter colony.

The apiary "shed" is a massive hut which is big enough to hold maybe 100 people for a meeting and a kitchen. They are currently building an extension to hold some of their equipment. They also have a few colonies indoors, shielded by a bee net (similar to a bee house) which enables them to manipulate a colony while the spectators are sat comfortably on chairs, protected from the bees but still with a great view of what is happening.

Ken Edwards explained how the division began about 10 years ago with only 10 members but now boast a membership of 150. As well as the bee house, they have several microscopes which they use for training their members for the Microscopy Exam.

The first demonstration for our visit was practicing marking queens using drones that were captured earlier - there appeared to be a dearth of drones at this time of year so we were a bit limited in numbers.

We then had a demonstration of how to estimate the number of Varroa mite in a colony. You capture about 300 bees in a jar. You sprinkle them with icing sugar. Stir them well to make sure they, and more importantly the mites, are thoroughly covered in sugar so that the mites lose their grip on the bees.. You then upend the jar on a sieve so that the sugar covered mites fall through and can be counted (see photo on next page). Easy! And can be accomplished in real time at the apiary if you have the right equipment with you!

And with the indoor bee house, this can be demonstrated right in front of you, no matter what the weather, sitting comfortably on a chair!

A thoroughly interesting and enlightning afternoon. Our thanks to the Quantock Division and all the members who came along to help.

**Nic**



## Quantock's Footnote

The Learning from our visit to Quantock apiary it is well worth our members going into every supermarket in the area and asking for the supermarket public liaison officer. Quantock have an arrangement to have all broken sugar bags put into a bin and given to them so that they can feed the bees in the winter.

So far I have written to the community Champion at one store to this effect but so far I have heard nothing. When I went into another store, I was told that all their spare food is collected up and sent to the worthy food banks.

So all our beekeepers can do something similar. Summon the manager and asked for the community liaison officer and see if they can donate some sugar to our charity's teaching apiary, reminding them that it is all run by volunteers!

**John**



**Icing the Varroa Mites**

## Coming soon ...

Event	When	Where	Details
Divisional Indoor Meeting	Tuesday 18th September	Ilchester Pavilion	Richard Ball talks about Beekeeping in Malta
Somerton Honey Show	Saturday September 22nd	Long Sutton Village Hall	The Somerton Honey Show: 1pm to 5pm
Divisional Indoor Meeting	Tuesday 16th October	Ilchester Pavilion	Jim Vivian-Griffiths talks about Dancing Bees
Joint Indoor Meeting with SW Division	Monday 29th October	Over Stratton Village Hall	Ged Marshall talks about Spring Management and Swarm Control

## Somerton Honey Show

Somerton hold their annual Honey Show on Saturday 22nd September. It is an afternoon only event and have additional attractions of craft stalls, artisan food as well as tea and drink stalls. It should be a nice afternoon visit,

And, of course, you could enter some of your produce as well. It is free!. They have several open classes for honey, beeswax, cakes and photos. It is easy to enter and I have attached the schedule and entry form to your email.

## Asian Hornet Information

You have probably heard about the latest sightings of the Asian Hornets in the UK. A really worrying discovery and surely just the start?

To keep up-to-date with the discovery and nest hunts, go to the SBKA home page for all the latest information from Lynne Ingram (a Somerset Master Beekeeper involved in the hornet hunt):

<https://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk/>

and also at the NBU web-site:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asian-hornet-fowey-nest-destroyed-as-two-new-sightings-confirmed-in-liskeard-and-hull>

This is actually "Hornet Week". It is the most likely time to spot hornets and the best time to eliminate nests before they spread several hundred more queen hornets into the neighbourhood.

So just stand by your colonies for 10 minutes as often as you can and look out for the "hawking" hornets and put out a hornet trap.

More information on the hornet traps at:

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadNews.cfm?id=122>

The home page of the SBKA site has links to all the latest BBKA and NBU news as well as a twitter feed. An excellent place to keep yourself up-to-date with all the latest beekeeping news! Access the link and try it now!

## The Shed of the Year

On a lighter note, you must read about this year's winner of "The Shed Of The Year". This is an eco-shed which is a haven for bees and lovely plants. Well worth a look at this link:

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/shed-year-2018-eco-friendly-13224645>

## Divisional Honey Extractor

Yeovil Beekeepers may borrow the Division's Honey Extractor, settling tank or Heated uncapping tray free of charge. To borrow the extractor or settling tank, please contact Bill Paterson on 07789 6930203 or [mailto:patterson\\_32@sky.com](mailto:patterson_32@sky.com) in good time to arrange a loan.

The heated uncapping tray can be borrowed from Nic Bard on 07877 284545 (or just reply to this email).

## From Your Chairman

Dear fellow beekeepers, thank you very much indeed for your letters of condolence and for those of you who actually came to the funeral of Deborah Gay Carnegie married for 47 years.

Life must go on and the apiaries must be kept tidy and you must attend your bees in your warfare against the wasps. We have some 50 jars all laced with blackcurrant jam which they seem to prefer to all other sorts of jam. Nonetheless, they are relentless and seem to know which hive is most related to them. I had one hive where the wasp are going in and just taking what they wanted and the honeybees did nothing at all to defend themselves even though they were quite strong. I was struck by the fact that honeybees evolved from wasps in the first place and wondered whether there was a connection somewhere. It is the only hive in the apiary where I have reduced them to a Horatio entrance which I read about once upon a time in a book. This has worked in absolute treat and I was watching them today and there is a circle of guard bees around this one solitary entrance and they attacked the wasps that are on their way and the inside guards only admit the honeybee that is on its way. I'm very pleased to have saved this colony.

I intend to fulfil my dream of reliving a childhood memory where we picked wasps off a windowpane by its wings and stuck a piece of cigarette paper to its backside, just enough that it can fly but big enough that we could follow it to its nest. We found that if we followed the direction it was literally a beeline and we always found the nest. Lately I haven't had the time but Bill Paterson and I are getting so fed up with the wasps we may fulfil this destiny!

All along the hedge line the Ivy is coming into flower and it was lovely today to see one or one or two the flowers out and the honeybees were already there in the lovely sunshine. I believe it is Ivy honey that is very unpleasant and it granulates very easily. I read somewhere that it tastes very like eating mothballs! I also know that the bees need to collect water in order to dissolve it but I expect there is enough condensation to do that in the winter.

Bill Paterson and I have been involved in filtering beeswax as there was an article in the Bee Craft Magazine. If you go onto YouTube you will find all sorts of articles about filtering beeswax using a slow cooker. Bill Paterson has managed to turn some exceedingly dirty black wax into something very presentable using a slow cooker. Do make a plan ready for next year's Divisional Flagship Event, The Yeovil show, and get your wax ready. Mead making is not difficult either and if any of you want any demijohns I have a good supply which you can have for nothing as well as those bubbly things and corks and suchlike.

Hornets have been very prevalent this year and I think it is the year of the insect as there are plenty of them. Do remember to check the colour of the tips of their legs and if they are yellow get cracking and tell the authorities.

Bee meetings are on their way and it is very rare indeed that I don't learn something new every time and I almost always find these meetings most enjoyable so do try and come.

Happy Beekeeping!

***John Carnegie, Chairman***

## How to Deal with Wasps in your Bee Shed

I had a major problem with wasps in my garage this year. They were no doubt attracted to the stacks of honey supers and made the most of the smallest gaps to raid the crop and attract yet more wasps! I had a cloud of hundreds of wasps in the garage which made it almost unusable by me. I had to leave the window open to let them out!

In the end, I had to take drastic action to reduce the numbers and installed a heavy duty electrical insect zapper. This proved almost too successful! It killed so many that I had to empty the tray and clean off the electrodes after 2 hours and thereafter every 12 hours! The slaughter continued until this weekend when the numbers have plummeted and I can now turn it off. I now only have honey bees in the garage!

It proved really successful in enabling me to once again use the garage and sort out the supers and clean and store the rest of my beekeeping equipment.

I was disappointed to have to kill all these wasps; but it was them or me! (Their stings took longer to dissipate than bee stings!)

**Nic**

## Divisional officers

<b>President</b>	<b>Nic Bard</b>	<b>01460 221698</b>	<b>Treasurer &amp; membership secretary</b>	<b>Sharon Blake</b>	<b>01460 242124</b>
<b>Chairman</b>	<b>John Carnegie</b>	<b>01935 851234</b>	<b>Librarian</b>	<b>Jacqui Taylor</b>	<b>01963 220329</b>
<b>Vice-Chairman</b>	<b>Marvin Collins</b>	<b>01935 426153</b>	<b>Newsletter editor</b>	<b>Nic Bard Nic_bard@hotmail.com</b>	<b>07877 284545</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Steve &amp; Marie Attrill</b>	<b>01935 475964</b>	<b>Mentor Liaison Officer</b>	<b>Vacant</b>	
<b>Divisional Web-Master</b>	<b>Neil Cook</b>	<b>neil.cook@noware.co.uk</b>	<b>County Delegates</b>	<b>Malcolm Blake Steve Attrill Andy Dobson</b>	

The Yeovil division secretary email address is : yeovilbee@gmail.com.

Please contact any officer with your beekeeping or organisation comments and suggestions.

Please send any suggestions, articles or comments or ideas to share with our other members in the newsletter directly to the editor at nic\_bard@hotmail.com.

Full details of our calendar, meetings, news and past newsletters are in the SBKA web-site and can be reached here:

<https://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk/yeovil.html>

## **Yeovil 2018/19 Programme**

### **2018**

- 18th September** - Richard Ball talks about Beekeeping in Malta
- 16th October** - Jim Vivian-Griffiths talks about "Dancing Bees"
- 29th October** - Joint meeting with SW Division at Over Stratton; Ged Marshall talks about "Spring Management & Swarm Control"
- 20th November** - Divisional AGM
- 1st December** - Division Christmas Social skittles evening

### **2019**

- 15th January** - Paddy Wallace from Quince Honey farm gives a talk
- 18th or 19th Feb** - Lecture Day speaker
- 19th March** - Pam Hunter gives a talk

April to August outside apiary meetings start at 2.30pm

Winter indoor meetings start at 7:30pm unless otherwise stated

Unless otherwise stated, all indoor meetings next season will be in the Ilchester Pavilion.

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