

The Newsletter



Volume no 24 Issue 10 November 2017

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



More Imminent than you think

With another nest having been discovered in North Devon (and destroyed) the onslaught of these harpies is becoming more and more threatening, and also more inevitable. On September 28th, a hornet was discovered in North Devon by a beekeeper who contacted the NBU, and all the Bee Inspectors in Christendom went charging off to Woolacombe to track down the nest, which they did and successfully destroyed it, but this photograph wasn't taken in North Devon.

It was taken in Roscoff on the northern French coast on October 6th. I was actually trying to photograph bees when this creature and several other Asian hornets made their presence known to me. They were feasting on the ivy where I had taken photographs several times before. Most importantly, they were 500 metres from the cross channel ferry 'Armorique', which was sitting in the ferry port. I swung the camera around to try and get a picture of the ferry. You can see the port building behind the white building, but the ferry, which had its back to the camera, is obscured by the large tree.



How long will it be before more hornets hop on the ferry?

Honey not fit for sale

At the last meeting of the Somerton BKA committee, it was brought to their attention that honey and other products were presented for sale at our Honey Show which were not in a fit condition for selling. Several samples had labels which did not comply with current labelling regulations and some products contained ingredients which could cause an allergic reaction. More minor problems were sticky jars and a lack of anti-tamper labels. It was agreed that at future Honey Shows and events held in the name of Somerton Beekeepers Association, no products will be accepted for sale that do not comply with current legislation or food hygiene standards. You will be selling through a third party, so please acquaint yourselves with legal requirements.

Labelling of honey is a contentious issue, but the law is the law. A file containing a label which gives guidance on conforming will be sent with this newsletter, as a separate item, so that it can be seen clearly.

There is misunderstanding regarding labels printed by the largest bee equipment supplier in the UK. They do as much as they can to ensure that the labels they produce on behalf of beekeepers, comply with the law, but there are areas where they cannot control how the labels are used. If they print a lot number or best before date on a label, there is nothing to stop the beekeeper using those labels on subsequent lots and beyond the best before date. Newly jarred honey has been sold by one local beekeeper with December of the previous year as the 'best before date'. Different types of honey from a single producer with the same lot no have also been seen. Simply because the labels had been printed with that information on, and they didn't want to waste them.

Why people avoid putting a best before date or lot no. on their honey, is a complete mystery. Have your labels printed with **Best before end** and a simple bold **L**, then buy a cheap date stamp and a cheap numbers stamp. You won't waste any out of date labels and you can change the lot no. whenever you want. The argument about not doing it is as erroneous as not using your headlamps when driving in fog, except that the method laid out above could easily save you money on labels, and possibly a fine too.

Contrary to popular belief, the label supplier in question does not guarantee compliance. They try their best, but can't be held ultimately responsible. They give guidance in their catalogue, then direct customers to the Food Standards Agency website for further information. **The only thing they absolutely guarantee is that the letters giving the weight will be the right size. There is no other promise.**

It was also decided at our meeting that other food will only be sold at events connected with Somerton BKA, if correctly labelled, and ingredients are included on the label (also a legal requirement with food products). At such events, Somerton BKA could have some liability for products on sale, and the committee have a duty of care to the members. We could all be jointly and severally liable for such infringements.

Still! None of us have made the glaring mistake that was seen slightly outside of our region recently. Honey was on sale with no labels at all. Just a sign at the front of the table saying 'Local Honey'.

**Annual General Meeting, Thursday, 16th November
at the Parish Rooms, Somerton, TA11 7NB - 7.00pm.**

The Minutes of the Annual General meeting, 2016 accompany this newsletter as a separate file.

Each Committee post is eligible for re-election at the AGM. Nominations are invited for all posts, but please gain agreement from the member you wish to nominate.

If you have any items pertaining to the business of the Annual General Meeting only, or including nominations for committee posts, please advise the Secretary, **Jackie Mosedale, no later than Thursday, 2nd November.** (Jackiemosedale@gmail.com)

Mince pies will be served at the end of the meeting.

Just a gentle reminder that your committee members are all 'over 21' and though they are happy to continue, we need 'new blood' to come forward to take the apiary and the association into the future. A comprehensive knowledge of beekeeping is not the prime quality needed and details of beekeeping itself are rarely discussed. It's about managing an association on behalf of its members. If you would like to know more on how the committee meets and operates, please contact any one of us. Details for all present post holders can be found on the final page of this newsletter.

Fred Clarke - Chairman

Somerton BKA October Committee Meeting

Other than matters highlighted elsewhere in this issue, the committee discussed the following.

- The kind offer to sell us the marquee, previously loaned to the Honey Show, will be declined, as it was thought that a large amount of remedial work was required.
- Only Association bee suits to be worn while visiting the Divisional Apiary. This policy will be continued.
- Another decision on the apiary is dealt with immediately after this article.
- For some time The County newsletter has not been received by either the Divisional Secretary or our Newsletter editor for passing on to members. It is however, available on the county website. On investigation it transpired that it had been sent to one email address that became defunct 3 years ago and another which ceased functioning 6 months ago.
- Somerton BKA is required to field a delegate at county meetings. If no single delegate can be found, it may be possible to appoint several deputies. One committee member volunteered to be a deputy and another promised to investigate the involvement required.
- David Rose enquired as to whether the Farmers' Market is still required and the committee agreed unanimously that it is.
- David Rose also proposed that all stall holders at the Honey Show should supply their own gazebos, and the committee endorsed this.
- The 2018 Beginners' Course will be held at Tor Rugby Club again, and the fee will be £35.00 which will include Associate Membership and a copy of Haynes' Bee Manual.

Name for Apiary Building

We asked for suggestions for a name for the apiary building and received the following ideas. At the Honey Show, Joe King took control of the public ballot boxes and the results are in.

Honeycombe - 22 votes

B & Bee - 18 votes

The Brood Box - 5 votes

The Skep - 15 votes

The Bee Space - 23 votes

The Hive - 9 votes

The name of the Building is therefore - **The Bee Space**

Soft Set or Granulated

At our recent successful Honey Show our judges commented on entrants' misunderstanding of the difference between soft set and granulated honey. So if you are unsure of the difference you may be interested in an idea suggested by Roy White.

Roy, who is a very knowledgeable and experienced beekeeper, and a holder of the Advanced Husbandry certificate, has proposed the following:

He is going to prepare his own soft set honey but he is going to photograph each step in the process. Roy will then share these photographs so that they may be used by any member wishing to improve his knowledge of soft set honey production. He will give brief text explanation about what is going on, and the participants will have the opportunity to query, and share relevant experiences. Somerton eLearning! So, if you wish to participate in this idea please contact Roy for more details. Roy's phone number is 01935 823898.

Fred Clarke - chairman



Winter oxalic acid treatment

The association will be making our annual bulk order of Api-bioxal, the approved oxalic acid treatment for varroa, in about 4 weeks time. No need to panic just yet, and we will be asking for orders from members - probably in the next newsletter. In the meantime, it would be very useful if you could save some 568ml (one pint) plastic milk bottles, or similar, so that we can dispense small amounts to beekeeper's exact requirements. If you want to deposit them somewhere, rather than hanging on to them, they can be taken to the apiary when there is somebody there, or contact a committee member.

Depressing News all round

Eddie Howe got in touch to report on an article in the Magazine **Science**, It was reported that 75% of all honey produced worldwide contains insect harming pesticides. *The frequency of contamination was highest in the North American samples (86 percent), followed by Asia (80 percent) and Europe (79 percent). The lowest concentrations were seen in South American samples (57 percent).*

Following on from that researchers in Germany have documented a steep decline in flying insects at dozens of nature reserves in the past three decades, and agricultural pesticides may be to blame. While it is well documented that butterflies and bees have been disappearing in Europe and North America, the study in PLOS ONE is the first to document that flying insects in general have decreased by **more than three-quarters** across Germany since 1989.

Over the past 27 years, they found **an average decline of 76 percent**, with the effects appearing worst in summer (82 percent). "All these areas are protected and most of them are managed nature reserves. Yet, this dramatic decline has occurred," said co-author Caspar Hallmann from Radboud University.

While the study did not pinpoint a reason for the drop, researchers said many nature reserves are encircled by farm fields, and that pesticides could be to blame.

Bee of the month

As last month we brought you the small scissor, or harebell bee - Britain's smallest bee, it's only fair that the largest should get a look in. *Xylocopa violacea* - the violet carpenter bee at 20 – 22mm long is six times the length of the small scissor bee. It is not officially native to Britain yet, but has bred and over-wintered. It keeps turning up in the south east and has been seen in the midlands and as far north as Yorkshire.



Compared here with a European honeybee, it can be seen just how large they are. It is a bee of the Spring time and in Europe is seen on the wing from late January until June.

It burrows into plant stems and even sound wood to lay its eggs, and its predisposition for wooden pallets might be a reason that it finds its way to this country on such a regular basis.

Somerset BKA newsletter

The county newsletter is normally distributed on a quarterly basis, and one was due not long ago, but due to a misunderstanding, or two, didn't reach Somerton division to be passed on. Hopefully the situation has been rectified and a copy of the latest offering at county level is attached to this newsletter: for full members that is.

If you are an associate member, perhaps because you are a new beekeeper this year, then you won't receive the county newsletter or the British Beekeepers Association News. If you now have bees, joining as a full member is really worth considering. You get the advantage of those publications, which contain news not aired here - duplication is not very interesting. You also get comprehensive public liability, product liability and bee disease insurance.

There isn't much mileage in taking out full membership in November, as subscriptions run from January to December, but we will be publishing the membership renewal forms in the next issue.

Mike's Bee Supplies

visit by appointment
T: 01278 445158
E: mikes-bees@windytor.myzen.co.uk
www.mikes-beesupplies.co.uk

Fondant
£12 for 12.5kg

1lb Honey Jars £0.38 each
12oz Jars £.37each

We take
Cash or card
(no cheques)

PayPoint
VISA

Suits
Hive
And more!

Find us at
72 Wembdon Hill
Wembdon
Bridgwater
Somerset.
TA6 7PZ

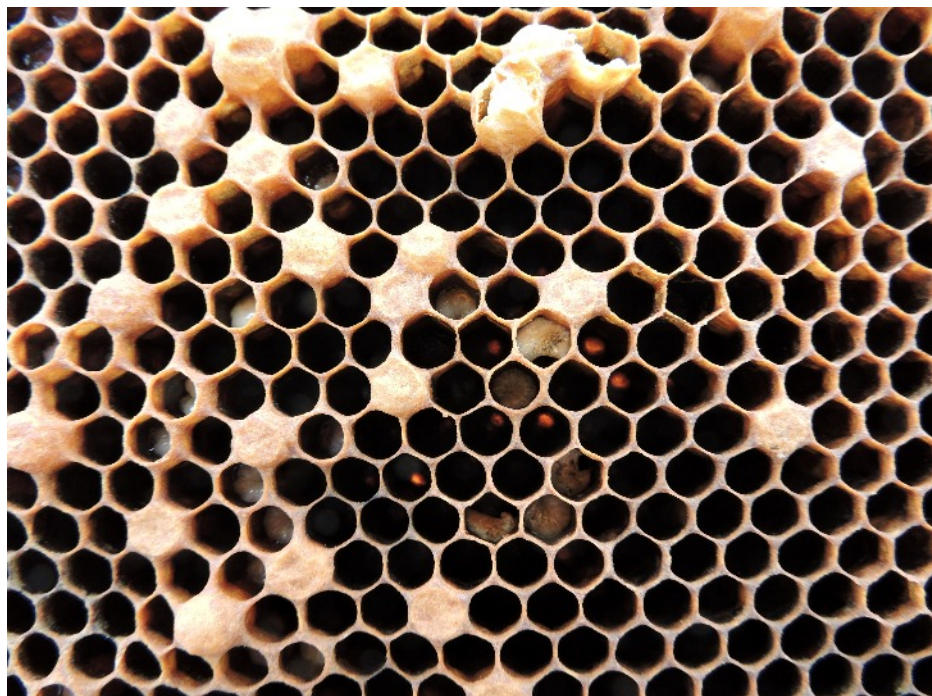
Pam Hunter's talk on 'the queen'

Encouragingly, there was a much better turn out to listen to Pam Hunter than there had been at the previous evening meeting. Pam gave us some excellent insight into what makes a queen and what makes her different - from creation to physical make up, and it was intriguing. Pam is an excellent speaker but really comes alive during the question session at the end of her talks. I think it is more than fair to say that she speaks her mind, and she certainly pulls no punches in certain areas of opinion.

Work Party - Saturday 21st October

Storm Brian was on its way, and I wondered who, if anybody, would brave the weather, but there was an excellent turn out, and the jobs we wanted done, all got completed (except the painting). We concentrated on the outside and did even more than anticipated. The pond was sculpted and the liner is in, bulbs were planted, hardwood cuttings were taken and planted . Gutters were re-aligned and there is now a paved path between the buildings. The meadow even got a last haircut before the winter. Thanks very much to all those who turned up.





Reporting of diseases

When we had a suspected outbreak of EFB at our apiary back in the summer, we took photographs and emailed them to our Seasonal Bee Inspector. He was able to reassure us almost immediately that the problems, shown in the photograph above, were not EFB, but a failing queen. The Inspectorate, which is a part of the National Bee Unit, like all Government departments, is a bit strapped for cash. As a result, getting a Bee Inspector to visit your bees is going to become increasingly difficult. It has been suggested that if you are concerned, you could take a photo of the problem area in your hive and email it to your Bee Inspector. A phone image is OK, as long as it is clear.

The Bee Inspectors can look at the image and with their expert eyes can determine what, if anything, is wrong, suggest a course of action and save everybody a lot of time, money and potential worry.

Dates for your diary

**Somerton Beekeepers' Association
AGM**

The Parish Rooms, Somerton
TA11 7NB

Thursday 16th November - 7.00 pm

Module 2 Study Group

Second meeting

Wednesday 1st November - 7.30 pm

Contact Joe King for details

01749 890357

**Beginners' Beekeeping Course
Tor Rugby Club, Lowerside Lane
Glastonbury TA6 9GY
First session**

Wednesday January 17th - 7.30 pm

Somerset BKA Lecture Day 2018

Saturday 17th Feb.

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

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