



Somerset Beekeepers' Association



NEWSLETTER

April 2017 no.129



Editorial: As you will no doubt know I have taken over from Stewart Gould as the Newsletter editor. Many thanks to him for his sterling work. Please send any copy for the next edition to me by 15th June. Email: friend.elizabeth@gmail.com This is **your** newsletter so feel free to send me any comments you have about it and any ideas you have to improve it. And **please** send in articles!

Letter from the Chairman, duly elected at the AGM 2017



Firstly, thank you for electing me to the role as SBKA's Chairman! I hope that what I lack in beekeeping expertise is made up for by my passion and willingness to work to advance the craft of apiculture and to promote general public awareness and understanding of the benefits of apiculture.

I attended Taunton's beginners' course a few years ago after my youngest child advised me to get something to do when she and her siblings had all left home...fortunately I've yet to find myself twiddling my thumbs!

That course did far more than fill the odd hour or two – it has opened out a wonderful world in which the power of the small has totally entranced me. From animal husbandry to carpentry, planting for forage and candle making, to honey

bottling and retail sales, there is certainly a lot involved in beekeeping.

Currently I am a member of Taunton committee and, before becoming Vice Chairman last year, was Taunton's Council delegate; I know the step up is a big one and I am hugely thankful that there is such a wealth of talent and expertise within the officers and delegates.

I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor Jonathan Friend for being Chairman over the past three years; under his leadership SBKA is a thriving charity delivering education and information to nearly 850 members and has a healthy bank balance.

SBKA has been in existence since 1906 and in the last 111 years it has faced many challenges and opportunities and I'm sure they will keep on coming as we deal with the impending arrival of the Asian hornet, along with a myriad of environmental and disease problems.

As this newsletter goes to press, the Executive – that's our President Ken Tredgett, Secretary Dr Richard Bache, Treasurer Chrisi Kennedy, Master Beekeeper Gail Johnson, newsletter editor Liz Friend and me - is meeting for the first time this year.

Together we will review what we do and explore how we can make SBKA as relevant and useful to our members, and the public, as it can be. The Executive will make recommendations to Council where the Division's delegates will decide how they wish SBKA to act.

But, to quote Donald Rumsfeld, we don't know what we don't know – if you have ideas about what you would like SBKA to do, please contact your Division's delegate or email me.

Anne Pike: chairman@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS



7 – 9 April

Harper Adams University College Campus, Newport, Shropshire TF10 8NB
Information about the event including the lecture programme and details of the various workshops are on the [BBKA website](#)



SPECIAL LECTURE

26 April at 7.00pm for 7.30pm

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

The speaker this year is **Dr Giles Budge** who will be speaking about
“The foulbrood gang: Tracking and tracing honey bee killers.”

Giles, who is an applied scientist with expertise in pathology, apiculture, diagnostics and crop protection, will run through the history of American and European foulbrood disease, and describe the most recent research findings that enable outbreaks to be linked thereby helping with disease control.

Refreshments will be served and there will be a raffle.

THE ROYAL BATH AND WEST SHOW

31st May – 3rd June 2017



It time is right to start planning for the 2017 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.

Setting up will take place on Sunday 28th May (starting 9.00am) to Tuesday 30th May and stewards are required in the marquee on the following four days, Wednesday 31st May to Saturday 3rd June. The rota for stewards is either all day, 9.00am - 6.00pm, or a half-day, 9.00am-1.30pm or 1.00pm - 6.00pm.

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. The rotas are due for submission to the Show Committee in April, so an early reply will be very much appreciated.

Ken Tredgett

Entries now open for the Royal Bath & West Show 2017

The **Bees and Honey Marquee** is always one of the most popular sections at The Royal Bath and West Show. The show regularly attracts in excess of 150,000 visitors many of whom visit us in Bees and Honey, returning year after year, both children and adults.

Schedules, entry forms and the online entry system can be found by clicking the 'RBW17 Competitions' link below:

<http://www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show/competitions/schedules-to-download>

If you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact the Entries Team on 01749 822 209 or email **Sarah Chick** sarah.chick@bathandwest.co.uk

Wanted!! Your exhibits for the Honey show at the Bath & West Show; classes for all aspects of beekeeping for everyone include Mead, Photography, Candles, Beeswax, Honey, Cookery, Arts & Crafts, Cosmetics and more!!

Rewards!! Subject to judging of course includes – Prize money, prize certificates and trophies. **Also your entry ticket to the show (if you entry fees amount to more than £10)**

The Royal Bath and West County Shield

The County Shield is awarded to the county whose beekeepers win the most points overall in the competitive classes. Last year this was won by Wiltshire. With your support we want to win it back for Somerset again this year.

No honey? Don't worry, there are plenty of opportunities to enter that don't involve honey from baking a cake to taking a photograph. Last year we introduced a new class (Class BH5) a decorated beehive. This is something you could do as an individual, or if you find it too daunting perhaps as a Division.

Opportunities: To sell your honey and other hive products at premium prices if you enter the show. The show includes not only the competitive show classes but also honey sales, candle rolling bee related sales counters selling a range of goods from honey cosmetics, bee friendly plants, novelty bee pottery, high-tech microscopes and related products and the ever popular beekeeping equipment sales selling everything for the beekeeper from beginner to advanced, and all served up with friendly advice from one of our longest serving supporter of Bees and Honey, David Pearce and, if you ask David nicely, he might even buy you an ice cream!!! (Terms and Conditions may apply!)

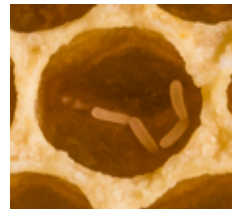
Another very popular section within the marquee is the children's section where children can draw a honey bee and take away a small pot of honey. Some of our visitors to this section have been coming back to for many years, first as children and latterly as parents with their own children. We also have educational and interactive displays from county beekeeping associations from across the South West of England.

This as you can imagine is a mammoth task, only achievable with the support of many volunteer stewards. As a volunteer steward you will get a free admission ticket to the show. All we ask in return is that you spend half a day stewarding in The Bees & Honey Marquee. You are then free to spend the rest of your day looking around and enjoying what the show has to offer.

Interested in stewarding? Contact **Ken Tredgett**. Tel: 01373 464736
or email tredg@talktalk.net

Honey Show entries or stewarding:
Contact **Bernie Perkins, Chief Honey Show Steward**. Tel: 01458 250095
or email bernieperkins.tengor@tiscali.co.uk

Note: Closing date for Entries: Paper – 3rd April or on line 10th April



© Jonathan Friend

SOMERSET BEE HEALTH DAY

Saturday 17th June, 2017 - 9.00am to 4.30pm

West Buckland Village Hall, Silver Street, West Buckland, TA21 9NA (adjacent to the playing field)
Apiary inspection will be at Heatherton Park, TA4 1EU

Taunton Division is hosting this event with support from Simon Jones (Regional Bee Inspector on behalf of APHA) and his Team of Seasonal Bee Inspectors.

Cost £5.00 per person

Refreshments: Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available throughout the day. Please bring a packed lunch. Parking: Free

The day will cover presentations and workshops delivered by Simon and his Team and will include:- Talk on general diseases

Comb Workshop (inspection of diseased combs)

Two further workshops to be confirmed

The total number will be restricted to 60 members to maximise the benefits of the day and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Unfortunately, we will not be able to admit any members just turning up on the day, so to avoid disappointment, reserve your place now!

Contact Mike Dillon. E: mikedillonbees@gmail.com or T: 01823 669619, M: 07585 537030

Cheques payable to "Taunton Beekeepers" to Mike Dillon, 1, Walkers Gate, Wellington, TA21 8DJ

THE COUNTY HONEY SHOW and the TAUNTON HONEY SHOW

Friday & Saturday 4th & 5th August 2017

Will be held at

Taunton Flower Show, Vivary Park, Taunton.

Schedules and entry forms will be available from:-

Entries Secretary - Mrs Jenny Gammon, 500 Cheddon Road, Taunton, TA2 7QX

Tel No: 01823 270465 and will be published on the SBKA website.

Entries close 26th July 2017



The County Honey Show takes entries from all over Somerset.

There are classes for everyone from novices to more experienced beekeepers.

The staging of entries takes place before the show, either on the Thursday evening 6-8 pm or before 7:30 am on the Friday. There is no need to pay to enter the show ground to bring in your exhibits. Entry into the Flower Show is much reduced after 4pm on Saturday so have a

look around before picking up your exhibits after 6pm.



THE NATIONAL HONEY SHOW

Thursday 16th October – Saturday 28th October

At Sandown Racecourse KT10 9AS

The schedule will be publicised in August and full details will be in the July edition

The main lecture programme for this year includes lectures by Tom Seeley, Heather Mattila, Kim Flottum, Will Steynor and Peter Tomkins. There will be the usual series of Bee Craft Lectures on the Friday.

On Saturday there will be a special focus on the early years of beekeeping to help those starting out think about what to do next. The topics have been carefully chosen as being relevant to those new to the craft, with many of the things covered that beginners are often confronted with in their early years and will be delivered by experienced beekeepers. It is strongly recommended that beginners attend all presentations.

Somerset Beekeepers Annual Lunch 2017



I have booked Long Sutton Golf Club for our SBKA Annual lunch again this year after receiving such positive feedback from those who attended again last year. The range of members attending from

across the county was very diverse last year from new beekeepers in their first year to those that had been beekeeping for sixty years, teenagers to octogenarians.

It will be held on **Sunday 15th October**, arrival from 12-30 to sit down and eat at 1pm. The address is **Long Sutton Golf Club**, Long Sutton, TA10 9JU

The lunch will be two courses with a Carvery of up to 4 meats and a choice of deserts. There is a vegetarian option available on the day. The total cost will be £13.50. Tea or coffee can be purchased individually after the meal if you wish.

I do hope you can join us this year. They have said they can only cater for fifty and we nearly met that number last year, so too avoid disappointment please book early.

Please send me your bookings (and the numbers who would like the vegetarian option) along with cheque made payable to Somerset Beekeepers by Monday 2nd October at the very latest.

Suzy Perkins

Tengore House, Tengore Lane, Langport, Somerset, TA10 9JL

Tel: 01458 250 095 Email: apicrepe.tengore@talktalk.net

PAST EVENTS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM, held at Cameley Lodge was well attended.

The new people in post are the Chair, Anne Pike; Treasurer, Christina Kennedy; Ken Tredgett as events officer; Elizabeth Friend as newsletter editor and Bridget Knutson as year book editor. All other posts are as printed in the year book.

Thanks to Mendip for arranging this years AGM.

Next year it will be hosted by Wedmore and Cheddar Division and will be held at Wedmore Golf Club on 10th March 2018.

Report from Richard Bache on the talk by James Cresswell:

After an excellent carvery lunch, attendees were captivated by our guest speaker, Dr James Cresswell of the University of Exeter who discussed his research into how crop plants interact with the surrounding environment through pollination. He discussed how far pollen and therefore genes may flow and how the effect of this will depend on the size of the crop and pollination behaviour of bees. He also introduced a fascinating account of the pollination of oil seed rape and demonstrated that insect pollination is infrequent, wind pollination is probably ineffective and therefore in the highly bred rape flowers in a field it is 'crash pollination' with direct contact between flowers moving in the breeze that enables fertilization.

LECTURE DAY



Report from Anne Pike: A record number of beekeepers packed into Edgar Hall for our annual Lecture Day in February.

Speakers included one of the key figures behind the UK's defence of honeybees from Asian hornets. Nigel Semmence, from the Animal and Plant Health Agency, (pictured left) brought a giant model of an Asian Hornet as well as a groaning table of traps and other paraphernalia used in the fight against the alien invader. His message was pretty stark – it is highly likely that we will have to learn to live with Asian hornets possibly as early as this season but certainly in the next few years.

In the Spring *Vespa velutina nigrothorax* queens make a small primary nest, often in a sheltered position like in a shed. Once the first workers emerge the colony often moves to a new site, where there is plenty of space to build a secondary nest and

expand. These secondary nests can be huge, as seen near Tetbury in Gloucestershire at the end of last year. Experience from observing this nest showed that worker hornets foraged nearby within a radius of approximately 500m. In the autumn the colony dies with on average of 11 'foundress queens' surviving the winter and ready to start all over again next spring.

The hornets hawk honey bees – they face into the flight path of bees (with their rear ends facing the hive entrance) to pick them off. They are not aggressive unless their nest is disturbed when they can sting and squirt venom.

A key mechanism to managing the menace is the use of monitoring traps to identify when the hornets are in the vicinity: any possible sightings should be reported immediately to the Non Native Species Secretariat alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk

Traps are available from Thornes, the BBKA and Vita and instructions for a DIY trap are available online <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167>

In the spring they should be baited with a sweet solution such as dark beer with sugar; in the autumn a 25 per cent solution of shrimp or fish in water.

Apparently the best bait is a wriggling Asian hornet – but he doesn't advise bringing one back from France! Register with BeeBase to keep informed! www.nationalbeeunit.com

Fortunately Michael Maunsell didn't drone on (!) but he did talk about the male honeybee. He is a charismatic and engaging speaker, which made what, could have been a rather academic talk into an entertaining exploration of the importance of drones to honeybee colonies. Later he focused on workers.

Margaret Murdin, Chair of BBKA Trustees, took The Queen and Proficient Beekeepers as her subjects. She also took the opportunity to talk about the BBKA and mentioned that while membership numbers are holding steady, about 5,000 people leave and 5,000 join each year; apparently between 40 and 75 per cent of beekeepers have joined their local Associations within the last four years and only 10 per cent of beekeepers have been keeping bees for more than 10 years.

Simon Jones and his team of Seasonal Bee Inspectors were on hand to answer queries about bee problems and trade stands were run by David Pearce and Northern Bee Books.



Jacqueline Mosedale received the West Country Honey Award from Gail Johnson and President Ken Tredgett

West Country Honey Farms Award, 2017

Members who attended Lecture day were delighted that Jackie Mosedale was awarded the rose bowl this year. This is the citation in support of her:

“West Country Honey Farms Award, 2017

I wish to nominate Jackie Mosedale of Somerton division for the West Country Honey Farms award. Since she joined Somerton division, Jackie has been keenly engaged with the running of the association. A natural organiser, she has been the divisional secretary for several years now and is currently the divisional president. Her activities have not been restricted to divisional level though and she served as SBKA chairman, where her ability to manage tasks was exceptional. Indeed, when the role of education officer was vacated, she took a large part in filling the role and has a central role in organising the lecture day. She has also applied herself to making special lectures and development days work smoothly and is a familiar face at the Bath and West Show, where she helps to represent the Association. However, her influence has been wider than simply administrative. For many years she ran the beekeeping supplies service as a Thorne supplier since she bought the stock previously held by Gerald Fisher.

Her garage has been an important source for beekeeping equipment in central Somerset. Furthermore her home has always been a very welcome venue for apiary meetings and her experience in the catering sector has shown through! Perhaps most importantly, she is always friendly. Therefore, for services to beekeeping and Somerset BKA, I nominate Jackie Mosedale.”



NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

Ed: I thought it might be a good idea to ask each division to tell us what they've been doing and tell us about any forthcoming events they have arranged which might be of general interest. All secretaries were asked to contribute!!

South East Division: "We shall be running our usual summer programme and also focusing on trying to attract new members. We shall be doing more promotional work and moving our honey show to Castle Cary so that we can attract passersby and show off what we do to the general public.

We ran a successful beginners' course this winter and will be trying to ensure that all the new beginners have practical experience and mentors so that they can get their own bees this summer. We are particularly keen to attract younger beekeepers and to broaden our committee membership".

The Honey Show will be at Castle Cary Market Hall on Saturday 14th October.

Central Division

Central Division will be hosting the bees and honey tent at the annual Mid Somerset show in Shepton Mallet on Sunday 20 August in Cannards Grave Road. As this is our annual show, entries are encouraged from all divisions and the schedule and entry forms will be available soon. The bees and honey tent is popular with the public who ask a lot of questions and show a great deal of interest in our information displays, observation hive, candle making etc. Sales of honey and honey products are always brisk.

The Mid Somerset show is the only award-winning free entry one-day agricultural show in the South West. Even if you don't enter, it's a great family day out with numerous craft stalls, livestock and equestrian classes, South West cheese awards and Somerset cider championships. Come along to the busy honey tent and say hello – it's always packed!

Wedmore and Cheddar:

We had a very good winter meeting when Bridget Knutson showed us how to clean wax suitable for showing at the Bath and West. Hopefully people will now be inspired to enter their wax into a honey show. We also met to discuss preparations for the season and have been busy making hornet traps. Jonathan Friend, Bridget and Steve Newman have run a very successful beginners' course. One of the attendees has actually been keeping bees for years but thought he ought to come along to see how it should be done!

We have arranged some follow-up practical sessions for the beginners and a full programme of apiary meetings and, following the advice of the Bee Inspector in his NBU report (see page 14), we are hoping to arrange a bee safari.

NEWS OF PEOPLE

Sent in from Taunton by Anne Pike



Given the challenges that beekeeping brings, readers will be impressed that **David Morris** from the Taunton division has now been keeping bees for 60 years.

In recognition of his achievement he received a certificate from the Chair of the BBKA's trustees, Margaret Murdin, at the lecture day. David has kept bees continuously during this period and has been a member of Somerton Division, an active member of Taunton division where he served as President for three years, as well as the county association.

He said he finds the craft as compelling today as he did when he first started helping his father as a boy. "What I find fascinating is our ability to work with an insect that, for all intents and purposes, remains a wild creature. Whilst we try and exploit some of their natural instincts hopefully, at the same time, we make their lives easier with some of our interventions."

Over the years the challenges facing honeybees and other pollinators have increased as environmental pressures reduce forage and invasive species such as the Varroa mite have made bees more susceptible to disease. But he still anticipates the start of the season with optimism: "We must always hope that the new season is better than the last. It may be a forlorn hope, but it would be great if the thousands of dollars, pounds and euros being spent world-wide on bee research finally came up with a simple and cheap solution to the Varroa mite and foul brood problems."

Gerald Fisher (photo courtesy of Somerton newsletter)



It was with great regret that we heard that Gerald has finally hung up his veil and retired from beekeeping. In his infinite wisdom he might be sensible getting out before the hornets arrive!!

As most of you will know he has been a stalwart of the SBKA as well as the Somerton division. He has taught a lot of people about beekeeping and has always been happy to pass on his knowledge. On a personal level he was a great help when we started beekeeping, always willing to offer help and advice and reassurance that we weren't being complete muppets – even though we probably were!

He has also, over several years, given our new beekeepers some great bees. We wish him well in his retirement.

Liz and Jonathan Friend



HONEY SHOWS: I am reminded that I first learned about what's involved with showing honey from Gerald. Suzy Perkins, a Honey Show judge, assures me it's not the winning or losing that's important, it's the taking part! There are several Honey shows taking place this year around the county so why not give it a go!! They need your support and there are some good tips on how to prepare your honey later in the newsletter.

Liz Friend

EXAM UPDATE



EXAMS – don't be put off – it's really interesting and you can get badges!!

A little bit about some of the exams you could take, for fun, or just follow the schedule for interest, without taking the exam.

There are study groups taking place across the county, so if you want to study, and want a group to work with, ask me, and I can put you in touch with a group.

You don't have to take the exam at the end of the course.

The Basic Beekeeping exam is for anyone who has kept bees for at least one year. I think this is an excellent way of making sure you understand diseases, and what you are looking for, and making sure you understand the principles of swarming, and swarm control. You also get a nice bronze coloured embroidered badge to cover up any holes in your beesuit.

The modules cover a variety of subjects, you can take them in any order, except the Exam Board prefer you to take module 8 last. These are good if you like studying, and writing, or just to learn more about a particular subject, without taking the actual exam. Although when you get 4 modules, you do get a certificate having reached the Intermediate Level.

If you are a more practical person, how about taking the Husbandry Exams? These test your knowledge of queen rearing, swarming, honey preparation and regulations, microscopy, giving a talk, and everything in between. These are hard work, but they do test your knowledge, and you do get a silver badge after taking the General Husbandry and the modules.

If you want something in between the Basic and the General Husbandry, how about looking at the new exams coming out next year.

The Bee Health Certificate: designed to improve your knowledge of diseases and their treatment. It is practical, and carried out at a local apiary by one assessor, and takes about 1.5 hours. You will need to have taken the Basic to take this. This is levelled between the Basic and General Husbandry.

Or what about the Bee Breeding Certificate? If you are interested in raising your own queens, then this is for you. A higher level than the Health certificate, and aimed at encouraging improving your bee stock, and bee breeding methodology. The assessment takes place at your own apiary in two sessions. It will cover practical skills, record keeping and knowledge of bee breeding techniques. Again, you will need to have the Basic Certificate to do this.

For more information contact me, or look on the BBKA website. Applications for both these two new exams will be taken for 2018, not this year.

Bridget Knutson: Exam Secretary.

Contact her on examinations@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

PREPARING HONEY FOR SHOW



Beekeeping is a craft in itself, showing is an extension of the craft requiring specialised techniques.

Bearing in mind the old adage if you find a dozen beekeepers discussing a problem you will get a dozen solutions, the following tips are based on my own experience and are no way meant as a definitive technique but merely a guide for beginners to showing. I hope you will find them useful!

Why show

Beekeeping is a fascinating hobby resulting in an end product that can be both enjoyable and rewarding should you choose to sell any surplus end product. As with any hobby that produces an end product, part of the pleasure comes from showing it off to other people with the same interest as you and also to members of the public, who increasingly derive pleasure from attending craft shows during their leisure time. Showing is also a good discipline as it gives you the opportunity to have your produce judged for quality and presentation against others thus raising the standards to the level required should you choose to sell any surplus. And finally, we all enjoy the satisfaction of having a prize card or maybe even some prize money or perhaps if you do really well winning a cup!

Run honey - There are three classes of run honey, light, medium and dark. Light honey in this area tends to be the most common followed by medium. Dark honey tends to be quite rare and it may therefore be necessary to examine individual combs held up to a strong light source to ascertain its likely colour. As honey can vary in colour from extremely pale to almost black I would advise you to try and sort your combs into different colours so that you can extract them separately.

Points to follow:-

1. If possible extract from new comb that is fully sealed
2. Filter thoroughly through a fine filter cloth into your settling tank.
3. Tilt settling tank forwards slightly, this will reduce the collection of air bubbles in the tap.
4. Leave the settling tank to stand for at least 24 hours this will allow bubbles and impurities to float to the top forming a slight scum on the surface of the honey.
5. Wash and dry your honey jars, then warm the jars prior to filling as this will reduce the formation of unwanted bubbles
6. When filling your jars tilt them slightly to allow the honey to run down the side of the jar, again this will help reduce air bubbles that can be fiddly to remove later.
7. Always over fill jars, this will give you slight excess that can be skimmed off if required to remove any final imperfections and still maintain the required weights.
8. Allow honey to settle in the jars before removing any further bubbles that may appear.
9. Bubbles may be removed by use of a spoon or even a warm knitting needle.
10. Once you have completed step 9 replace your lids ensuring they are spotlessly clean and leave sealed. Don't be tempted to open again until judging takes place as the first thing the judge will do on removal of the lid is to smell the aroma of the honey that has built up in the jar since sealing it. Also you risk allowing dust particles onto the surface of the honey.

Finally a day or so before the show if you find your honey has lost some of its sparkle; you can put the jars into a warming cabinet to clear it. (We use an old fridge with a light bulb in the bottom) or you can stand the jars of honey in hot water.

Granulated/Set honey - On initial bottling following the steps for run honey, ensuring removal of all air bubbles as these cannot be removed once the honey is set. Obviously honey will not granulate overnight to the extent required for showing so you will need to establish which of your honey is suitable well in advance of the show and jar it in plenty of time to allow it to fully set. The time that honey takes to granulate can vary dramatically from a few days to several weeks or months, so you should allow yourself plenty of time. It is also advisable to prepare more jars of granulated honey than you require so that you have a selection to choose from as the end result can vary from a completely even colour to slight or even completely frosted appearance. (Slight frosting is acceptable for showing purposes)

Creamed honey - Creamed honey is achieved by mashing and blending until you are left with a completely smooth and creamy consistency, the honey should not have coarse granulations remaining once fully creamed. Allow creamed honey to stand for at least 24 hours before putting into jars this will allow air bubbles to rise to the surface.

COMB HONEY

Frames - New frames that are freshly drawn this year are best for this class as the wax and cappings will be a nice pale white to lemony colour. Older frames are darker in colour and less attractive. The normal requirement for this class is one shallow frame suitable for extraction. The comb should be fully drawn out edge to edge and every cell filled with extractable run honey that is fully capped. You should check the frame by holding it in front of a bright light. This will enable you to check that there is no pollen or other contamination such as wax moth larva as you will lose points for these. Frames should be as clean as possible, remove any wax or propolis from the top and side bars by using a scraper or Stanley knife blade being careful not to damage the comb or yourself. Once complete display in a frame display case.



Cut comb – Once again cut comb should be freshly drawn, containing run honey and be fully capped. Unlike frames for extraction the foundation should be unwired. If you use wide spacing you will achieve a thicker comb that will as far as possible fill a cut comb container. You will need to make yourself a template to enable you to cut the comb out in the shape of your container. Alternatively you can purchase a cutter specifically for the job. However if you choose to use a knife you will get a cleaner cut if you heat it first.



Chunk honey - As with the cut comb you will need to make yourself a template. The chunk of honey should ideally be large enough to fit tightly from the bottom of your honey jar to the neck, the comb cells should be pointing up as found in the hive. Once you have positioned the comb in the jar, slowly fill with run honey allowing for air to escape. Whilst chunk honey can be fiddly the results can be extremely attractive combining the advantages of runny honey and honey comb all in a jar. It is also very popular with customers.

WAX



Wax is a subject dear to my heart and I could fill many pages with tips and techniques. The key tips I would give you on wax are as follows:-

1. Colour is one of the most important attributes for good show winning wax, it can vary in colour from almost white to black depending on your source. Generally speaking, judges prefer a pale primrose/lemon colour (muddy beige or coloured wax rarely wins prizes) the best coloured wax will normally come from wax cappings. When you are extracting the honey look at the colour of the cappings, try to separate off the different colours and save them.
2. Wash the cappings to remove any residual honey using cold or warm water, not too hot as you don't want at this stage the wax to melt.
3. If you have one, I find the best method for melting wax is a double saucepan. Pour boiling water into the bottom pan and place your top pan containing the wax on top. Place pan on a low heat allowing the water to simmer gently and wax to melt in the top pan.
4. Straining. Once the wax is fully melted pour it through a very fine piece of straining cloth (I use an old pair of my wife's tights as these can be thrown away once used) into a jug that has been warmed in the oven. Return the jug to the oven until you are ready to pour. Note: The oven should be on the lowest heat setting possible to maintain the wax's molten state.

You should now have perfectly clean wax of the correct colour this can be used for making candles wax blocks or larger wax cakes. One final note, all equipment used for wax should be kept solely for this purpose as it is extremely difficult to remove traces of wax from jugs and pans once they have been used for this purpose, rendering them useless for any other use. **Good Luck!**

Bernie Perkins - Honey Show Section Steward – Bath & West Show - Bees & Honey Marque



Ed: You have all the information you need above, so enter some classes NOW and worry about how to do it later!

And don't forget that schedules, entry forms and the online entry system can be found by clicking the 'RBW17 Competitions' link below:

<http://www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show/competitions/schedules-to-download>

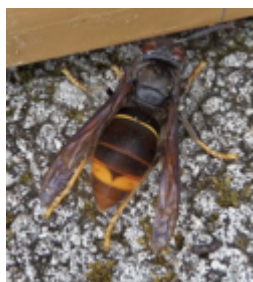
If you require any further information, please don't hesitate to contact the Entries Team on 01749 822 209 or email **Sarah Chick** sarah.chick@bathandwest.co.uk

Note: Closing date for Entries: Paper – 3rd April or on line 10th April

PS. If you miss the online deadline don't panic, give Bernie a call, He & your County need your entries.

NATIONAL BEE UNIT – SOUTH WEST REGION

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



This Spring no newsletter would be complete without mentioning the Asian Hornets. What follows is an edited version of the Bee Inspector's Report for 2016 sent in by Simon Jones.

“The 2016 season has not been the best for honey production, with many beekeepers reporting a mediocre honey crop. The exception to this was those beekeepers who took their hives to the heather in August; some of them have reported exceptional crops.

The Bee Inspectors have had another busy year.

We have continued with our **inspection program for European (EFB) and American (AFB) Foulbrood**; although the incidence of disease has on the whole been lower than 2015 there has been a slight increase in the number of (AFB) cases in Cornwall (see the graphs below). To help beekeepers improve their knowledge of disease, the Inspectors have given demonstrations at club teaching apiaries and are getting increasingly involved with ‘**Beekeeping Safaris**’ organised by local groups. If you are interested in running one in 2017, please contact your local Bee Inspector; there is a ‘Fact Sheet’ on BeeBase describing Bee Safaris.

We have again been carrying out **Exotic Pest 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 this there are 18 Sentinel Apiaries around the region. This is where beekeepers that have an apiary near a risk point, assist the NBU by regularly monitoring their colonies for Exotic Pests and twice a year send in floor debris samples to be tested. They are an important part of the surveillance program and I would like to thank them for their continued support.

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).

Imports into England, Scotland and Wales for 2016

The 2015 figures are in brackets for comparison:

- 13,921 Queens imported from the EU (10,434)
- 1,924 Packages of Bees imported from the EU of which 1,354 were from Italy (2,393 of which 1,862 were from Italy)
- 23 Nucs imported from the EU (225)
- 0 Full colonies imported from the EU (16)
- 335 Queens from Third Countries –Argentina (520)

Every year the National Bee Unit (NBU) carries out **Contingency Exercises for Exotic Pests**, this is used to practice the Contingency Plan that we have in place. Last season (August 2015) the SW team ran an exercise around Exeter airport.

This year it was the turn of the Southern Region and it was sprung on them without notice to simulate an actual event. To make the exercise even more true to real life, one of three samples

prepared by NBU office was secretly spiked with some pieces of Small Hive Beetle before it was submitted to the laboratories for testing. The laboratory test procedures worked and when the pieces were found the field exercise was initiated. Due to the high number of beekeepers in that area all of the available Bee Inspectors from the South West team were drafted in to help.

In mid-September as we were preparing for the end of the season, which is usually the end of September, Asian Hornet was found in Gloucestershire. All of the available Inspectors from the SW were deployed to Tetbury to assist with this incursion (there is more information about this further down the report). Then in early October another find in North Somerset meant that we had to set up an additional Local Disease Command Centre (LDCC) to carry out further monitoring in that area. It is important to carry out exercises for this type of event, and we were pleased to have been so well prepared when it happened; however there is no substitute for the 'real thing' and this winter we will be looking at the lessons identified from these two incursions.

Update on Asian hornet and Small Hive Beetle in Europe

A natural or assisted spread of the Asian hornet, *Vespa velutina*, from mainland Europe into the UK had been anticipated and a Contingency Plan put in place to deal with any confirmed incursion.



hornet nest found 55 feet above ground

The recent Defra press [release](#) confirms the destruction of the nest found at Tetbury, Gloucestershire and no subsequent Asian hornet activity in this area or that of the two individual sightings in North Somerset (both dead specimens). Further details and pictures of the nest at Tetbury can be found on BeeBase '[recent news](#)'.

With the amount of traffic, both commercial and private, entering the UK from Europe, further incursions are highly likely and as experience has shown, could occur anywhere in the UK, not just in the higher risk areas along the South and South East coasts.

The NBU will be assisting beekeepers in placing hornet traps in the affected areas early next year but all beekeepers are advised to put out monitoring traps with a sweet bait in apiaries in late winter. Experience in France has shown that these are highly attractive to queen hornets coming out of hibernation. These should be checked regularly, preferably daily so that non-target species can be released, and any suspect sightings reported to the Non-Native Species Secretariat at alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk and the NBU office or your Regional Bee Inspector.

A fact sheet detailing a suitable home-made monitoring trap can be found [here](#) on BeeBase

An updated identification sheet for the Asian hornet and further information on the Asian hornet can also be found on the dedicated pages on BeeBase [here](#)

There are also some Asian Hornet videos available for viewing on the APHA YouTube channel which may be found [here](#)

Small Hive Beetle

In July this year we had the unwelcome news of a further outbreak of Small Hive Beetle about 100km north of the original finding near Gioia Tauro in Calabria, South West Italy. It is understood that this outbreak was found after the Italian authorities became aware of and traced an illegal movement of a significant number of colonies from the restricted area to several apiaries in the province of Cosenza, Calabria.

All the colonies were destroyed and inspections of surrounding apiaries commenced. A small number of adult beetles have since been found in one other apiary close by. Only time will tell whether the prompt action has eradicated SHB from this area as (so far) appears to be the case for Sicily where colonies were moved just before the first out-break was discovered.

The NBU continues to step up monitoring for SHB under the exotic pest surveillance programme at apiaries within England and Wales near to identified risk points for incursion. I am thankful to those beekeepers who add to the surveillance effort by being part of the Sentinel Apiary programme but I would encourage all beekeepers to make themselves aware of the signs of SHB and monitoring techniques as described in the NBU leaflet, 'The Small Hive Beetle – a serious threat to European apiculture', available as a download from BeeBase at www.nationalbeeunit.com or as a hard copy.

I make no apology for mentioning once again how essential it is that all apiaries are registered on BeeBase (as well as beekeeper contact details) so that we can identify apiaries at risk in the event of an incursion of SHB into the UK and target control measures effectively. Self-registration is free via the link at www.nationalbeeunit.com, or you can register by contacting the NBU office or your Regional Bee Inspector. It is also essential that all beekeepers abide by UK regulations for the import of bees from Europe and elsewhere, including submitting an Importer Notification Form, either on-line or to the NBU office so that we are able to follow up on imports. It is of course illegal to import bees, queens or any bee-related products from within the 100km zone around the affected areas. Further details can be found on the [Imports/Exports pages](#) of BeeBase.

Foulbrood Disease for 2016 in the SW Region

Further details and mapping can be found on the disease incidence pages of BeeBase at www.nationalbeeunit.com. It is recommended that these are checked regularly to see if there is any foulbrood disease close by.

All beekeepers registered on BeeBase with an email address will receive an automatic email alert if disease is found within 3km of the registered apiary. If you are self-registered, please ensure that you keep your apiary records up to date or contact me if you are unsure. Self-registration is recommended as it also gives beekeepers secure password protected access to personal details and inspection records.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Seasonal Bee Inspectors who make up the SW team for all their hard work during the past year.

The new season will start on 1st April 2017 and from that date their contact details will be as follows:

Eleanor Burgess- **Somerset**- 07775119465- Eleanor.burgess@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Megan Seymour-**Somerset and Avon**- 07775119475- megan.seymour@apha.gsi.gov.uk

If you have any concerns prior to the 1st of April then please contact me:

Simon Jones

Regional Bee Inspector, South West England

(Avon, Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Scilly Isles)

Telephone: 01823 442228 | Mobile: 07775 119459 | Email: simon.jones@apha.gsi.gov.uk

National Bee Unit-Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA)

Website: www.gov.uk/apha | Twitter: [@APHAgovuk](https://twitter.com/APHAgovuk) | Facebook: [aphagov](https://www.facebook.com/aphagov)

National Bee Unit Website (BeeBase): www.nationalbeeunit.com

Address: National Bee Unit, Sand Hutton, York, YO41 1LZ - Tel: 0300 303 009