



Somerset Beekeepers' Association



NEWSLETTER

April 2019 no.136



Please send any copy for the September 2019 edition to me by 15th August
Email: friend.elizabeth@gmail.com.

Letter from the Chairman.



Chairman's letter

We are on the cusp of the next beekeeping season and, perhaps, this more than many could be a game-changer.

Jersey Asian hornet hunter Bob Hogge told me this week that "You can't avoid them coming to Somerset/UK". While his is a sobering assessment of the enemy at the gate, Somerset Beekeepers are stepping up 'Operation Vigilance'.

SBKA is providing a Vita Pharma monitoring trap for all full members. If you haven't picked up your trap yet, get in touch with your Division's Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT) coordinator. Of course, it is essential that these traps are used to monitor and not kill otherwise we will find ourselves contributing to the terrifying decline in insect life. Somerset AHAT coordinator Lynne Ingram has run training sessions with the county-wide team and they are on standby to support members and the public as well as the National Bee Unit and the Non Native Species Secretariat. We are hugely fortunate that some of these coordinators have gained first-hand experience tracking Asian hornets in Jersey and are bringing their skills and experience to bear here. Recognition is an essential skill for all of us now: SBKA has produced a range of ID cards and leaflets so we can familiarise ourselves with the Asian hornet. The printed ID information can be picked up from your AHAT coordinator and at SBKA events; pdfs are available to download from the website, there are photos in our online image gallery and Asian hornets in resin are being distributed to all Divisions.

A honeybee enemy which is already active in the county is European Foulbrood (EFB); recent research suggests that Somerset has a particularly persistent strain that is more difficult to eradicate than others. To raise awareness and help members to recognise EFB, education officer Richard Bache has written an EFB booklet which is available at SBKA events and to download from the website. In the coming weeks we will be filming the first brood inspection of the season with Richard who will explain how to examine a colony for disease. The film will be uploaded to the website and our social media channels.

Also, South East Division is hosting a Read the Comb Day on June 15 at Castle Cary run by our bee inspectors. This essential training event is an opportunity to safely handle diseased combs so that we see for ourselves what to look out for. Places are limited so do book early!

For the first time this year we are running a £2,000 pilot compensation scheme to support members affected by EFB; we will supply a nuc. to any member who loses all their bees in all their apiaries to EFB to help them get re-started. For T's & C's, please see the website.

And, after all these words about threats to our honeybees, I would like to wish you a rewarding, and uneventful, season!

Anne Pike, Chairman



From the treasurer

The New Membership system is now operational and its important for members to understand that we use the system to send to information that we are legally required to send for your membership, such as your BDI receipt/Insurance certificate and Notice of the AGM. We will also send information directly connected with your beekeeping in the County, for example we have just emailed information from the County bee inspector. We would also contact you if there were sightings of Asian Hornets.

We do not pass your emails to third parties other than those agreed to on the membership form and in our [SBKA Data Privacy Policy](#).

It is important therefore that you DO NOT unsubscribe from the mailings you receive. If you do, we are required under the Data Protection Regulations to get your permission again to reinstate you and we may not be able to maintain your membership correctly.

Christina Kennedy



EXAMS

Information about dates and fees are now on the BBKA website, under [exams and assessments](#).

I do have back copies of exam papers if anyone is interested.

Bridget Knutson
Examinations Secretary.

Written exams

Module 1 – Honey bee Management

Module 2 – Honey bee Products and Forage

Module 3 – Honey bee Pests, Diseases and Poisoning

Module 5 – Honey bee Biology

Module 6 – Honey bee Behaviour

Module 7 – Selection & Breeding of Honey bees

Module 8 – Honey bee Management, Health and History

(There is no Module 4)

Practical exams:

Basic

General Husbandry

Advanced Husbandry

Bee Health Certificate

Bee Breeding Certificate

Show Judge

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

BBKA Spring Convention 2019

Will take place on
Friday 12th April to Sunday 14th April 2019
at Harper Adams University , Newport, TF10 8NB



20+ Lectures; 60+ Workshops & Seminars for all levels of beekeeping experience
Research Session Saturday 13th for BBKA sponsored studies
Hear from scientist Samuel Ramsey who discovered that varroa mites feed on bee organs and not on their blood **
Large Tradeshow Saturday 13th
Excellent facilities and great value catering

See BBKA website for more details here: [here](#)

** Samuel Ramsey has done some excellent research. There is a description of the research project [on the University of Maryland website](#). The research paper itself can be read [here](#) and his splendid UMD Three Minute Thesis presentation in 2017 can be viewed on YouTube [here](#)



SBKA Special Lecture

24 April 2019

at Edgar Hall, 8 Cary Court,
Somerton Business Park, TA11 6SB
7pm for 7.30pm start

Graham Royle will be speaking on the subject of
Disease Recognition and his experience of dealing with EFB

There is no charge for this lecture which should be of considerable interest to all beekeepers so do please come along.

Graham Royle is a celebrated national speaker from Cheshire and is very involved with the education of beekeepers at all levels. He has been keeping bees for over 25 years and holds both the BBKA Master Beekeeper qualification and the National Diploma in Beekeeping. Graham was awarded the Wax Chandlers prize by the Worshipful Company of Wax Chandlers for achieving outstanding results in the BBKA examinations.

He is also a Seasonal Bee Inspector for Cheshire and Chairman of Cheshire Beekeepers and is the author of *Apis Through the Looking Glass*

Royal Bath and West Show

29 May – 1 June



The time has come round again already to begin preparing for next Year's Show. The display in the Marquee will need to be assembled and Stewards will be required to man the stands during the Show.

If you are interested in helping in either setting up or stewarding please contact Ken Tredgett as early as possible on 01373 228226 or e-mail tredg@talktalk.net. The rota for Stewards is either a half day from 9.00am to 1.30pm or a whole day from 9.00am to 6.00pm.

Why not come and enjoy a good day out with half a day in the Bee and Honey Marquee and the rest of the day spent exploring the Show with its many and various things to see and do.

Tickets are available online at www.bathandwest.com/royal-bath-and-west-show

Or why not offer to help with stewarding and get a free one!

"Read The Comb" Day

15 June 2019.

South East Division is hosting the event
at Ansford Academy, Maggs Lane, Castle Cary. BA77JJ

9am for 9.30am start – finish at 4pm

Richard Ball (former National Bee Inspector) and Richard Bache will be joining Simon Jones and his team for the day.

The cost will be £5 with tea and coffee provided, but bring your own lunch.

Details of how to book a place are below.



Picture of Healthy comb taken from BeeBase

Somerset has the highest numbers of EFB affected hives in the country and a particular strain of EFB, which is difficult to eradicate. The SBKA is committed to helping its members to identify the disease and to support them in eliminating the incidents of EFB in Somerset.

As part of this commitment we have arranged a practical day course, which will look at EFB as well as other bee diseases.

All members are encouraged to attend.

The Programme will cover the following topics in an informative way with opportunities to handle diseased combs so beekeepers can see for themselves what to expect.

- BeeBase.
- Notifiable pests and diseases-recognition.
- Control and management of minor pests and diseases.
- Asian Hornet (Policy require us to deliver a workshop on this subject at every Bee Health Day this season)
- Varroa- lifecycle, IPM and approved treatments.
- Apiary hygiene and barrier management.

Members are encouraged to book online. Tickets are available online for £5 at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/read-the-comb-disease-recognition-day-tickets-54800973186>

If you don't want to book online then please send a cheque for £5 with SAE to County Treasurer, Christina Kennedy, Allways, West Shepton, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5UH Treasurer@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

Somerset Beekeepers Annual Lunch 2019



The County Lunch 2019 will be held on the **17th November** (slightly later than last year) at **Long Sutton golf club**.

The cost is £14 for the main carvery lunch with a choice of puddings. Please advise when booking if you would like the Vegetarian or Gluten free options.

Please send cheques made payable to Somerset Beekeepers Association for the full amount to Suzy Perkins, Tengore House, Tengore Lane, Langport, Somerset, TA10 9JL.

Past events

AGM 16th March

After an excellent lunch at Enmoor golf club, 22 members gathered in the village hall for the talk and AGM. There were, it has to be said, a few problems initially - no water and no electricity! Eventually everything was sorted out and we sat down to hear Chris Park

talking about skep beekeeping. Chris had brought along several of his skeps to show us and gave a brief account of the historical background to how skeps were traditionally made and used.



It was a fascinating talk. Chris is lucky enough to live on a large farm and can, therefore, afford to let his bees swarm from the skeps, something

he feels helps reduce disease and allows the bees to re-queen naturally. He's a keen advocate of keeping bees in skeps for all sorts of reasons, not least that it takes up a lot less time if you don't have to do regular inspections every week and his opinion is that his bees are much healthier and better tempered than bees kept in conventional frame hives. What was clear from his talk was his professional approach to beekeeping. Everything he does has been very well researched and thought out and the bee inspectors seem quite happy with his apiary. Interestingly, as



well as using skeps he also keeps bees in some conventional hives which can act as a control.



The talk ended with Chris encouraging everyone to drink his special mead from his carved horn while he answered questions. Asked about how bees in skeps build their comb – the answer was the cold way.

The AGM proceeded smoothly and all nominated officers were elected or re-elected. Jackie

Mosedale took over as President from Ken Tredgett who was thanked for all the work that he has done as President.

Joe King from Somerton was awarded the West Country Honey Award. Unfortunately he wasn't present but Fred Clarke took the award for him and reiterated all that Joe has done for Somerton over many years.



And finally, let us not forget the hornets.

From Lynne Ingram

Asian Hornets

By the time you read this, I hope that we will be experiencing warmer spring temperatures and longer days. As this happens, any hibernating *Vespa velutina* queens will emerge from their winter hiding places, and start rebuilding their strength by feeding on nectar and tree sap. In Jersey and France queens have been spotted feeding on tree sap from oak trees as well as beech, maple and willow, as well as on single open camellias, so keep an eye on those and other flowers open in your garden.



Feeding stimulates the queen's ovaries to mature, and the nesting instinct increases. Before the foundress queen starts her nest however, research suggests that queens will migrate some distance away, as other species of *Vespa* are known to do – sometimes in large numbers. It is assumed therefore, that post hibernation migration may be occurring in Europe, which could explain the rapid spread of *Vespa velutina* across France.

Research suggests that *Vespa velutina*

queens are able to fly about 40 km per day.

Once the foundress queen has migrated, she will start making a small embryo nest from papier mache. These are generally in a sheltered low level site – in a shed, garage, loft or in a bramble patch. The queen is alone and vulnerable at this time and so conserves her resources. Keep an eye out for these nests – they will be much easier to remove than a large nest 50 foot up in a tree! If you see one, take some time to observe such a nest to make sure it contains *Vespa velutina* and not a wasp – take a photo of the queen on her nest as evidence, before reporting on **Asian Hornet Watch**.



At this stage it can take up to 50 days from eggs being laid to worker emergence. Once the workers emerge, they will gradually take over many of the roles of foraging, defence and nest building within the colony, leaving the queen to lay eggs. They will enlarge the nest around the embryo nest, as the numbers increase in the colony. This primary nest will continue to grow in size and numbers until mid July when 70% of these nests will relocate into a high tree. For about a month, however, both nests will remain active, until the brood in the primary nest has all emerged. This is when you may start seeing Asian Hornets preying on your bees, as the adults have many hungry larval mouths to feed.

The adult hornets hunt for protein for the larvae, and in return receive a sweet substance from the mouths of the older larvae. The adults also collect and eat nectar and tree sap.

Remember to keep monitoring your traps daily, releasing any by-catch. At this time of year the queens will not be hawking for bees so traps should be hanging near your kitchen window or somewhere very easy to see.

If you see an Asian hornet, the key is to get evidence so that you can report it. The easiest way is to take a photo or video, then email it with details to: alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk or use the **Asian Hornet Watch** app.

Somerset Asian Hornet Action Team

If you think you may have seen an Asian Hornet and are struggling to get evidence, or need some advice then contact the Somerset Action team on: asianhornet@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk, and someone will come and help with identification and getting evidence. Further contact details for the Somerset AHAT teams are in the **Somerset Beekeepers Association Year Book**, and on the **SBKA** website.