



# Somerset Beekeepers' Association



## NEWSLETTER

January 2019 no.135



Happy New Year everyone – let's hope it's a good one for beekeeping and the hornets stay well away. Please make sure you read Lynne's excellent article on Asian hornets. Please send any copy for the April 2019 edition to me by 15th March.  
Email: friend.elizabeth@gmail.com.

### Letter from the Chairman.



At the start of a New Year I draw up a *better beekeeping* wish list which, for 2019, includes requeening a couple of super-defensive colonies, encouraging a swarm to give my Flow Hive a go and learning to cream honey. Although Somerset Beekeepers don't go in for NY's resolutions, we do have a clear focus for our activities in the coming 12 months to support our practice, honeybees and pollinators more widely.

Asian hornets, those voracious predators from just over the Channel, pose a huge threat to our craft. In France and other parts of Europe they have stripped the environment bare of honeybees and insects. If they get a hold

here, they could be as devastating to pollinators as foot & mouth was to livestock.

Vigilance is a cornerstone of our defence strategy and we want to mobilise the county to be on guard. All members will receive information about how to identify the large black wasp-like predator with the Year Book and Asian Hornet Action Team co-ordinator Lynne Ingram MB provides the contacts for each Division..

Organic national dairy Yeo Valley has taken up our call to spread the message far and wide. This came about after the company gave us more than £3,500 following a promotion in their Blagdon gardens which we are directing to our Asian hornet campaign.

If you have connections with local gardening groups, garden centres, wildlife groups and trusts etc, please spread the word. [You can request laminated Asian hornet posters from the Non Native Species Secretariat to give to these groups].

Our second major focus of the year is European Foul Brood (EFB) – a devastating and highly contagious disease which is widespread in some parts of the county and occurs occasionally in others. We are committed to eliminating the incidence of EFB and want everyone to be able to recognise the disease at the earliest possible stage.

Our Education Officer Richard Bache MB has written an EFB leaflet to put the disease in its Somerset context and explains through clear text and excellent photos how to prevent, spot and manage it. South East Division is hosting a Read the Comb Day on June 15 at Castle Cary to help us know what to look for when we inspect our colonies. It will be run by our Regional Bee Inspector Simon Jones and his team of Seasonal Bee Inspectors, joined by former National Bee Inspector Richard Ball.

We have great sympathy for members affected by EFB and this year we are setting up a pilot scheme to supply a nucleus to any member who loses all their bees to EFB. See the website shortly for the Ts & Cs. Here's hoping that in 2019 our colonies thrive and, if not, we have the knowledge to deal with what comes our way.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS



### SBKA Lecture Day

Saturday 16 February 2019

9.00am -5.00pm

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

**Tickets** cost £5 and include light refreshments but not lunch.

They are now available by cheque from SBKA Treasurer Mrs C. Kennedy, Allways, West Shepton, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5UH or online (plus 83p booking fee) through Eventbrite

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/annual-lecture-tickets-50528676632>

or via the website [www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk)

#### Programme for the day:

9.00am Coffee

9.30am Opening by Ken Tredgett, SBKA President

9.35am Paulo Mielgo Vita (Europe) Ltd; *Varroa*

10.40am Prof. Stephen Martin; *Deformed wing virus update*

11.40am Coffee

12.10pm Derek Mitchell; *Old saws – myths and physics of hives*

1.10pm Lunch

Simon Jones RBI and his team will be available to help with your queries about bee diseases

2.20pm Thanks and presentations

2.30pm Clare Densley; *Romancing the Honey Bee*

3.30pm Raffle and tea

4.00pm Prof. Stephen Martin; *Asian Hornets*

5.00pm CLOSE

Speakers: Full profiles of the speakers were in the October newsletter and are on the website



#### **Prof. Stephen Martin**

Stephen is known for his work on the Varroa mite and its association with viruses, especially the Deformed Wing Virus..

#### **Derek Mitchell**

Derek is a researcher into the differences in heat transfer between man made and natural honey bee nests at Leeds University School of Mechanical Engineering.



#### **Clare Densley**

“Romancing the Honey bee” is a talk which examines the role of Brother Adam as a celebrity beekeeper and compares his work and philosophy with the current beekeeping practices at the Abbey.



**Paulo Mielgo**, is Vita Bee Health’s technical manager



## SBKA Annual General Meeting



The **AGM** is on  
**16<sup>th</sup> March 2019**  
hosted by Quantock Division.  
Lunch will be served at 12.30pm at  
the Enmore Park Golf Club  
Enmore Road, Enmore, Bridgwater, TA5 2AN

followed by the AGM and talk at 2pm at the nearby village hall.

The speaker will be **Chris Park**, the Skep Beekeeper

Information about Chris was in last month's newsletter and is on the SBKA website

Bookings for lunch enclosing your menu choices and a cheque for £15 made out to Somerset Beekeepers Association should be sent to Ken Edwards at Bush Cottage, Bush Road, SPAXTON. TA5 1BX. Tel 01278 671544 email: thebeesfly@outlook.com

**By the beginning of March please**

Menu choices for SBKA lunch 16 March 2019  
Cost £15

Main course served with seasonal vegetables

Poached Chicken Breast with a Chive Cream Sauce and Parsley New Potatoes  
Slow Roasted Beef with a Peppercorn Sauce and Rosemary Roasted New Potatoes  
Baked Cod with a Herb Crust, Tomato and Basil Sauce and Sauté New Potatoes  
Quorn and Roasted Butternut Korma, Fragrant Rice, Naan Bread and Pappadum

Dessert followed by Tea or Coffee and Mints

*Apple Tart Tatin with a Caramel Sauce*  
*Crème Brûlée with Raspberry Shortbread Swirl*  
*Lemon and Ginger Cheesecake*

## BBKA Spring Convention 2019

Will take place on

**Friday 12th April to Sunday 14th April 2019**

**at Harper Adams University , Newport, TF10 8NB**

According to the BBKA website, tickets will be available in January 2019



## **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](mailto: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](http://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.

Tickets are available on line (+ 83p booking fee) at

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/read-the-comb-disease-recognition-day-tickets-54800973186>

or send a cheque with SAE or contact for online payment details to

County Treasurer, Christina Kennedy, Allways, West Shepton, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5UH

[Treasurer@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:Treasurer@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk)

**PLEASE  
NOTE:**

### **SBKA Year Book 2019**

Information has now gone into the Year Book for this coming year. If you had not renewed your membership by 12<sup>th</sup> January, your details will not be in the Year Book and you will not receive a postal copy. However, a copy will be available to you from your divisional secretary when you re-join.

### **Somerset Beekeepers Annual Lunch 2019**

Advanced notice: Following the success of last year, Suzy Perkins is hoping to organize another County Luncheon which will probably take place a bit later than usual – probably in November.

So watch this space!

## ASIAN HORNETS

As most of you know Lynne Ingram is the AHAT co-ordinator for Somerset and has already done a lot of work preparing the ground for what I fear will be the inevitable appearance of more Asian Hornets. At the last Council meeting Lynne outlined the work done so far and her report was sent out to divisional secretaries with the minutes. In many ways the most important thing that came out of that report was the urgent need for everyone to spread the word. Hornets will come and everyone needs to be able to recognize what the hornets look like. We're not just talking beekeepers but everyone. If the inevitable happens beekeepers on their own will not be able to cope. If you are involved with any groups please tell them. There are plenty of leaflets available for you to put on display so please get out there!

Some useful information from Lynne:

### Asian Hornets Through The Year

As 2019 begins, our minds turn to the forthcoming beekeeping season. At the moment we may be giving fondant to our bees, doing mid winter varroa treatments or perhaps planning our beekeeping goals for the year ahead. But, whatever else you are doing, you do need to be thinking about Asian Hornets.

Last year there were 4 nests found and destroyed in the UK, and 9 confirmed sightings. As the numbers build up in Europe, and Northern France, the threat of Asian Hornets invading the UK increases, and we all need to be very vigilant in order to prevent/ or slow a major invasion. Asian hornets (*Vespa velutina nigrithroax*) are voracious predators of pollinators, and in particular honeybees, whose colonies contain a vast number of insects in one place – a veritable insect supermarket for the Asian Hornet!

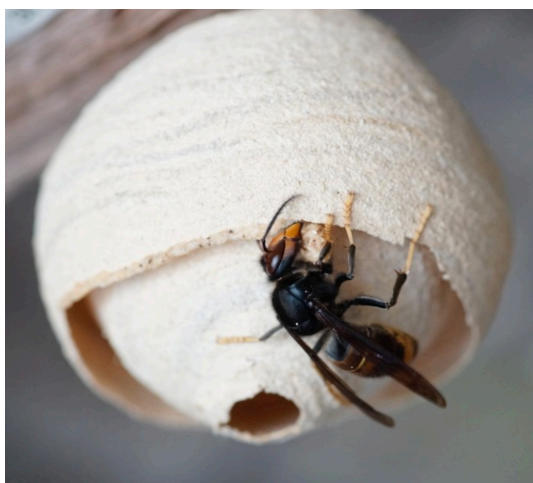


John de Carteret

*So what are Asian Hornets doing this time of year?*

Mated queens are now overwintering in cracks, crevices and sometimes underground. They can hibernate singly or in small groups. We don't know as yet, if there are any hibernating in the UK. Like bees they feed well in the Autumn, in order to build up their fat bodies to sustain them during the long winter. Like other members of the wasp family, they overwinter with their wings, legs and antennae protectively tucked in underneath them. The rest of the colony would have died out in December.

As the days lengthen in March or April (depending on the weather), the queens start to come out of hibernation, and firstly search for nectar rich flowers, in order to build up their energy. In France and Jersey they are often seen on early Camellia flowers, so if you have any, it may be worth keeping an eye out for Asian Hornet queens. Queens search for a nest site, then start creating golf ball sized embryo nests, which are generally in sheltered spots such as sheds or garages. To start with the queen will be laying the eggs, foraging for food and feeding the larvae. She may curl herself around the pedicel of the nest to keep the larvae warm. Once the first workers emerge, they will take over many of these tasks, leaving the queen to lay eggs. If you see a nest, check for Asian hornet activity, then photograph it before reporting it.



John de Carteret

This is the time of year when a monitoring trap can be invaluable, attracting the queens to a sugar rich bait. It is important though that beneficial insects, such as European hornet and wasp queens, can be released from these traps in order to protect our native pollinators. You can make a trap from a water bottle as illustrated below (instructions on Beebase)

[www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=1056](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=1056)



or buy a commercially available trap, and instead of filling the bottom with liquid bait in which insects would drown, scrunch up some kitchen towel so that insects can suck the bait from the paper without drowning. Or place a yogurt pot full of bait inside the trap, with a mesh or net covering to prevent drowning. Don't forget to inspect your traps regularly, and release anything else that has been captured.

#### *If you find an Asian Hornet*

If you do find an Asian hornet in your trap, the key is to get evidence so that you can report it. You could take a photo through the trap wall, or put the trap in a bag in the freezer, and then photograph the hornet once it is dead. Email your photo with details to: [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto: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](mailto:asianhornet@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk), and someone will come and help with identification and getting evidence. Further contact details for the Somerset AHAT will be in the Somerset Beekeepers Association Year Book.