



Somerset Beekeepers' Association



NEWSLETTER

July 2018 no.133



Editorial: Many thanks to all those who sent in contributions.
Please send any copy for the next edition to me by 15th October
Email: secretary@somersetbeekeepers.org
This is **your** newsletter so do **please** send in articles!



Letter from the Chairman

At the time of writing, I'm on my way back from the House of Commons where I have represented SBKA in campaigning charity Sense about Science's Evidence Week which highlights the need for evidence-based policy making in government. SBKA is one of two dozen or so national and community organisations from all over the country invited to talk to the Houses of Commons Science & Technology Committee.

I had just 60 seconds to explain why science matters to us as beekeepers but that was plenty long enough to raise concerns about the invasive and predatory Asian hornet. I talked about our links with Dr Pete Kennedy and his team at Exeter University who are conducting research in Europe where Asian hornets have become widespread.

It was encouraging that Mary Creagh, Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee, was in attendance and wanted to reply to our message. In short, she gave a personal assurance that her committee would keep across the Asian Hornet issue.

At a time when government services are under pressure, and with the impact of Brexit, there is some reassurance to be taken from the interest shown by the likes of Mary; Norman Lamb, Chair of the Science and Technology Committee; Chi Onwurah, Shadow Minister for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and many others who attended the event.

Meanwhile, I urge everyone to take a look at our Asian hornet policy adopted at the May Council meeting which was drawn up by education officer Richard Bache; it sets out clear and concise guidelines about how we should approach the current situation - recognition and reporting is key.

The policy is on the website and has been sent to all Divisions. Easy identification cards – to pin inside hive roofs - and leaflets are being printed and will be made available to all members shortly. One of our members and seasonal bee inspector Eleanor Burgess is organising an Asian hornet week in September – more information to follow.

And, finally, I hope your colonies have thrived in the current spell of very hot weather and that you, yourself, haven't overheated when inspecting your bees!

Anne Pike chairman@somersetbeekeepers.org

Note from the Treasurer about the website “members only” section”

As we develop the website we are looking at ways of improving members availability to access documents on line, e.g. minutes, accounts etc. We will continue to circulate documents in the usual way at present but will consider further options for communicating in the future in conjunction with branch and members requirements.

To enable us to move forward we have set up a members area and members with voting rights will shortly be receiving an email inviting them to join the area by setting up an access and their own password. We will add to the availability of documents in time.

If you don't have an email address we cannot invite you to join but any documents on the pages will still be available as hard copies from your branch secretary or the County Secretary.

Article from the Education Officer

Remember to wash your hands!

Apiary hygiene has become increasingly recognised for its importance in the past few decades. Old notions of keeping back ancient comb in the hope of saving a few pennies are now regarded as false economy.



old comb often becomes less well utilised as well as being a focus for disease

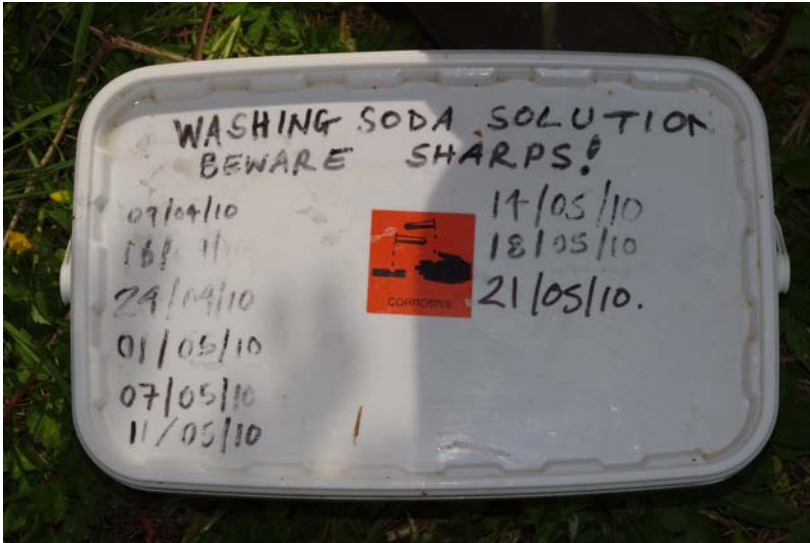
There is little doubt that there is a need to focus on apiary hygiene in Somerset. Many diseases can spread by beekeepers' actions, but perhaps the most important are those that are not readily visible. EFB often exists in a sub-clinical state and Somerset has a persistent problem with EFB. Despite long-term national reduction in EFB prevalence, Somerset had 52 cases recorded last year. Nosema is another endemic problem linked to colony losses with the prevalence of *Nosema apis* and *N. ceranae* both around 40% of apiaries in the South

West. Without an approved treatment, the only management option for Nosema is good hygiene practices.



New comb and healthy bees are a joy to behold

The beekeeper can spread disease both within and between apiaries. Gloves are likely to be the most important item of clothing to spread disease. Washable gloves are preferred and Marigold-type household gloves serve the purpose well and allow scrubbing in a washing soda solution after hive inspections. For visiting the apiaries of others or when disease is suspected, disposable gloves such as 'nitrile' inspection gloves are preferred. A separate bee suit for visiting the apiaries of others is also good practice and this should be washed between apiary visits.



A washing soda bucket; the washing soda solution is frequently replaced

The bucket of washing soda solution can be a good way of storing hive tools and a scouring pad can be used to keep it clean. Other tools, such as drone uncapping forks, should also be cleaned this way, although the sharp prongs are best stored where they are not likely to cause injury! Cover cloths are now seldom seen in practice and are probably best avoided unless they can be thoroughly cleaned between hive inspections. Smokers are difficult to keep clean, particularly the bellows, but

they can easily acquire propolis from the handling of frames, and this can be scrubbed off with washing soda solution.

Bees themselves can carry disease and beekeepers should be mindful of this when performing beekeeping operations. For instance, when amalgamating two colonies, the beekeeper should be confident that they are not weak due to disease. The same thought process needs to be engaged when balancing colonies and even if some inter-colony transfer of bees within an apiary will be required from time to time, transferring bees, brood or comb between apiaries should be minimised.

Drifting can also spread disease and well-spaced hives, with differing orientation or colours and shelter from winds can reduce this. Robbing can also spread disease and this can be a particular problem as any diseased colonies are likely to be the victims of robbing, whereas healthy colonies are more likely to be strong and in a position to rob. Keeping bee-tight colonies, minimising inspection times, minimising entrance spaces, feeding only in the evening, avoiding dropping comb or syrup in the apiary and reducing entrances towards the end of a nectar flow will reduce robbing. Sugar syrup is the healthiest feed, but if honey must be fed, it should be fed back to the hive from which it was taken. There is importance in early and adequate autumn feeding to reduce water content, fermentation of stores and dysentery, which in turn may promote spread of Nosema.

The bees are important as well with strong and genetically diverse colonies better able to repel disease. There has been much interest in hygienic traits, and while there is some uncertainty about their precise nature, it obvious that some strains harbour more disease than others and this is observed in quantities of chalkbrood and wax moth in the hive, but also the amount of debris on

the flood when using solid-floor hives. It is also worth mentioning that improving the genetics of bees by buying in new queens or colonies carries a risk of spreading disease and so there are inherent benefits to locally sourcing breeding material where appropriate.

Swarms can also be a source of disease, especially where their origin is not known. The gold standard is to have a second 'bolt hole' or quarantine apiary. Ideally new swarms should be hived onto foundation and not fed for two days to maximise their metabolism of nectar that they carry in their honey crops, thereby reducing any disease that they carry with them.

A thorough disease inspection around a month later when brood is present is also a good idea.

Equipment and combs can also be important sources of disease and should be sterilised if possible before introduction to the apiary. Plastic hive components may be thoroughly scrubbed with bleach and washing soda solution whereas wooden parts may be scorched with a blow-torch. Drawn comb remains a valuable resource if it remains in good condition but it can be difficult to sterilise. Irradiation remains out of the reach of most beekeepers and acetic acid fumigation requires some care. Regular comb replacement is most practical for most beekeepers with both the Shook Swarm and Bailey comb changes being effective methods to transfer the combs in one go and minimise disease being spread to the new comb.

With a persistent problem with EFB and Nosema in Somerset, hygiene in the apiary is likely to become increasingly important. We are likely to need to consider this more with the hives, combs, bees and tools that we use and the clothes that we wear. We also need to be mindful of this when we are working in the apiary.

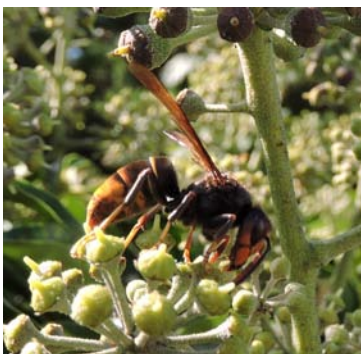
Further Reading

Replacing Old Brood Comb, National Bee Unit 2014.

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=170>

Hive Cleaning and Sterilization, National Bee Unit, 2018

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/downloadDocument.cfm?id=423>



Asian hornet on ivy in Brittany
c Stewart Gould

HORNETS: Do keep a look out for hornets!

Don't forget that Richard has had some flyers printed to raise awareness of the Asian Hornet among the general public. Do let him know if your division has any input at events open to the public in late Summer and what the usual attendance might be so that he can plan how these leaflets should be distributed.

Also remember that all the materials used at the Bath and West Honey Show are also available to borrow – please contact the Somerton division if you would like to use them.

Forthcoming Events

Advance Notice:

**The Lecture Day next year will be on 16 February 2019
at Edgar Hall in Somerton.**

Further details will be given at a later date



Exeter branch

Bee Health Day - Saturday 28th July 2018

The Kenn Centre, Exeter Road, Kennford, Devon EX6 7UE

Organised by Devon Beekeepers' Association, Exeter Branch; Sponsored by Bee Diseases Insurance Limited

Programme

0900-0930: Registration (complimentary tea and coffee available on arrival)

0930-1030: Talk on apiary hygiene and disease control

1030-1600: Workshop groups; break into small groups covering:

- Varroa biology, integrated pest management and approved new veterinary medicines.
- Small hive beetle and Asian hornet.
- Diseased comb recognition - a range of diseased comb available to examine in detail selected by Bee Inspectors; test your knowledge; use of lateral flow devices.
- Practical apiary disease inspection including checks for foul brood and exotic pests.

1600-1630: Question and answer session.

Presentations and workshops will be delivered by Bee Inspectors while practical sessions will take place at the centre or nearby.

Cost

The cost of attending this event is £10 per person payable by BACs

(account number 03919326: sort code: 30-93-14; reference "Bee Health Day").

Alternatively, please send a cheque to Branch Treasurer, Southbrook Cottage, Southbrook Lane, Whimble, Exeter EX5 2PG payable to DBKA (Exeter Branch) marked "Bee Health Day".

Lunch from Local Cafe will be £3.25 for burgers or jacket potato, £3.85 for a range of Subs, Baps and Wraps etc. (add amount to your payment and email choice to secretaryebka@gmail.com.)

The menu is on the website – address below

To book

Total number of places is restricted to 60 members in order to maximise the benefits of the day allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. To reserve a place, please register online at www.exeterbeekeepers.org.uk/bee-health-day-2018 or alternatively, reserve your place by sending an email to secretaryebka@gmail.com.

- Notes:
1. We will provide refreshments during day.
 2. **Please bring your (clean) bee suits and wellies/boots** to be worn for the practical apiary disease inspection session.
 3. Please be prepared to car share to the beehives if needed.

THE COUNTY HONEY SHOW and the TAUNTON HONEY SHOW

Friday & Saturday 3rd & 4th August 2018

at Vivary Park



The County Honey Show takes entries from all over Somerset and there are classes for everyone from novices to more experienced beekeepers.

All members are eligible to enter classes in the county competitions which include the products from the hive as well as craft, cookery and floral art.

Entrants spending £10 or more on entries will be given a free one-day ticket and you can combine honey show entries with other classes.

Staging of the entries takes place either on the Thursday evening 6-8 pm or before 7.30 am on the Friday; there is no charge to enter the showground to bring in your exhibits. Entry to the flower show is much reduced after 4pm on Saturday; pick up your exhibits after 6pm when entry is free. Total prize money exceeds £100.

The schedule and entry forms are available on the website: www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk or from the Entries Secretary - Mrs Jenny Gammon, 500 Cheddon Road, Taunton, TA2 7QX
Tel No: 01823 270465 Email: sidnjen@vodafoneemail.co.uk

Entries close on Wednesday July 25

SOMERTON HONEY SHOW

Saturday September 22nd

Long Sutton Village Hall, Martock Road, Long Sutton TA10 9NT

There are open classes, children's classes, classes for new beekeepers, cooking, wax classes and a Farmers Market outside on the adjoining grass.

It's a wonderful afternoon out for all and admission and entries are free.
It's the largest honey show in the south-west and many say it is the best.

Stewart Gould



Wiltshire BKA

Invitation to SBKA members:

Wiltshire BKA are holding its

Annual Wiltshire Bee and Honey Day

on 6 October

in the Corn Exchange, The Market Place, Devizes SN10 1HS

The day is free to attend although if people want lunch and coffee/tea in the breaks they will need to book these in advance as we are obliged to use the Corn Exchange caterers (early bird booking £10, normally £12)

Email sophie@activeinfo.co.uk for further information. The booking forms are on the WBKA website <http://www.wiltshirebeekeepers.org.uk> together with information about the day and the speakers who include **Bob Smith "Wot a Whoppa" - experiences of a double brood system on 14x12**
Prof Phil Stevenson: "Sex, drugs and ecosystem services: how flowers attract bees"

Bob Smith, "Really Getting to Grips with Swarming"

Somerset Beekeepers Annual Lunch 2018

Please join us again this year for our annual county lunch. The date is **Sunday 14th October** arrival from 12-30 to sit down and eat at 1pm at Long Sutton Golf club, Long Sutton, TA10 9JU



The lunch is two courses, a Carvery with up to 4 meats and a choice of deserts. There is a vegetarian option available on the day, but if you could indicate when booking if you require the vegetarian option that would be appreciated. The total cost will be £14.00.

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 exceeded 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** as soon as possible **made payable to Somerset Beekeepers**.

The latest date for receipt of booking is Monday 8th October subject to space availability.

Suzy Perkins, Tengore House, Tengore Lane, Langport, Somerset, TA10 9JL
Tel: 01458 250 095 Email: apicrepe.tengore@talktalk.net



THE 87th NATIONAL HONEY SHOW

Thursday 25th October – Saturday 27th October

At Sandown Park Racecourse KT10 9RT

The schedule will be publicised in August

Details are on their website <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk>

The main lecture programme this year features Michael Smith and Clarence Collison
The Beginners Programme includes Lynfa Davies, Anne Rowberry, Bob Smith and Roger Patterson

There will also be the usual Friday “Bee Craft” lectures.

For those who can't get to the show, previous lectures can be viewed on the National Honey Show site via YouTube. <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lecture-videos.php>

PAST EVENTS

Bath and West Honey Show 2018



From Ken Tredgett: I should like to thank all those members who so generously gave up their time to help in putting together this year's display and returning in the evening at the end of the Show to dismantle the stalls. Their assistance and hard work are invaluable and very much appreciated.

I must also thank the many stewards who manned the stalls throughout the Show, giving up their valuable time to interact with the visitors, especially the stirring work done by the "newbie" beekeepers. Hopefully they thoroughly enjoyed the experience and will look forward to coming back next year.



Congratulations to David Pearce who, this year, won the Somerset Cup, having the most points amongst the Somerset members.

Once again my thanks to all those members who took part in any way in making this year's Show the success it was.

The County Shield was again won by Wiltshire – but it will be back!

Bath & West Honey Show 2018

From Bernie Perkins

Vice Chairman Bath & West Bees & Honey Committee

Bernieperkins.tengor@tiscali.co.uk

Just a small piece to say thank you very much for all the help and support we received at this years' Bath & West Honey Show. It was great to see many of the old Faithfull's as well as several new people coming forward. Without your help we really could not run such a big honey show and marquee over four days.

In my position as Vice Chairman of the Bees and Honey committee my primary role is that of the Honey show and I was very pleased this year to see an increase in exhibitors and even more pleased to see that almost everything that was entered on paper turned up at the show. The number of entries this year (2018) was 354 (2017) 307 an increase of 47.

The Bees and Honey marquee is one of the most popular on the show ground each year with children coming back year after year to draw a bee. As one of the most prestigious shows in the Country our judges, judge the exhibits accordingly. We were indeed fortunate this year in having two of the most senior judges and in fact the Judges referees for the National Honey Show Enid Brown and Hazel Blackburn. The standards were as always very high and it was great to see a high level of competition between individuals and also Counties. The judges particularly commented on how much they liked the decorated hive class, and we were very pleased with the high number of entries drawing attention to the Bees & Honey marquee.

As you know there is a great deal of rivalry between Somerset and Wiltshire for the County Shield, but this year we were pleased to welcome two extremely experienced exhibitors from Devon who between them won three trophies and amassed 111 points in the coveted county shield challenge and they have both said they will be back next year as they enjoyed themselves so much at the show. Wiltshire Beekeepers won the County shield this year after Somerset having held it for the previous two years – but now Devon has their eye on it.

Once again thank you for all of your help and support this year and if any of you would like to come and help us next year by stewarding for half a day and have half a day to look around the show it is never too early to let me know.



From Chris Rawlings

Royal Bath and West Show, Bees and Honey Section.

The 2018 Bees and Honey Section put on a fantastic attraction for Beekeepers and the public alike, once again coming together from counties of Avon, Devon, Somerset and Wiltshire.

Most of us only meet on this one occasion in the year and is a great testament to the happy atmosphere in the marquee, whatever the weather.

Setting up starts on the Sunday before and I must thank all those that get stuck into the siting and dressing of tables from 8.30 a.m. Right up to the start of show there are volunteers coming and going, setting up the County stands and demonstrations. It takes 3 days to set up and 3-4 hours to breakdown, but the volunteers stay until it has been cleared. Thank you all.

The Bee Garden has now become an attraction on its own, but still a vital part of the Section. A long way from the old days where 2 old boys would sit on chairs and allow the public to take a leaflet or two. It was vibrant, always had a crowd asking questions and viewing the Observation hive, with enthralling demonstrations by Dennis Pictor and Diane Sleigh, with the live bees provided by Dennis. This year staff from Longleat House zoo also helped in the Bee Garden. It is impossible to name all helpers individually so I can only thank everyone who helped in any way.

The Honey Show was affected this year by the addition of Devon entrants who scooped 111 points mostly in the honey sections, Avon scored 27, Somerset scored 282 and Wiltshire got the Shield with 440. Well Done all who entered.

The Blue ribbon was won by Geraldine Lenert for her Wax Flowers, but the person scoring the most points and winning many of the cups was Angus Boyd.

My personal congratulations goes to Bridget Knutson who produced an excellent Observation Hive which beat Ann Rowberry and myself, well done Bridget.

Thank you all who entered and well done if you won a card. Remember we are one level below the National so any card won had to be at a high standard.

Fund raising in the marquee produced a surplus or just over £1000 which will go back to the Bath and West to help reduce the running costs of our Section which is regarded as the best in the Country by some of the charities that attend the largest Agricultural Shows.

Thank you all

Chris Rawlings
Chief Steward and Committee Chairman
Bees and Honey

ED: Many thanks to Bernie and Suzy Perkins for the photos.



On the subject of Honey Shows don't forget that several divisions are holding Honey Shows. Do give them your support

Yeovil: July 14-15 at the Yeovil Show

Central: August 19th at the Mid-Somerset Show

Exmoor: October 7th at Dunster Tithe Barn

Burnham: November 15th as part of their AGM

Details are on the SBKA website

Readers are reminded that Bernie Perkins wrote an excellent article about preparing honey for the show, which was in last year's newsletter (April 2017) and is now available on the SBKA website.