



# Somerset Beekeepers' Association



## NEWSLETTER

October 2018 no.134



Please send any copy for the January 2019 edition to me by 15th December.  
Email: [friend.elizabeth@gmail.com](mailto:friend.elizabeth@gmail.com).

### Letter from the Chairman.



Looking back on this season two themes have dominated beekeeping talk – the weather and Asian hornets.

The coldest winter for years followed by the hottest summer since records began has certainly given us plenty to contend with; I hope your colonies survived the freezing conditions and capitalised on spring, summer and even September nectar flows. To help us get a better picture of what's been going on, which will guide us in how we can support you more, we invite you to

take part in an informal honey and colony survey (see page x).

At the time of writing there have been a number of unconfirmed reports of Asian hornets in the county while three nests have been discovered and destroyed in England. In Jersey beekeepers must feel they are fighting a losing battle as more and more Asian hornet nests are discovered, while in France and elsewhere in Europe this non-native and highly invasive species has claimed not just the lives of insects but is responsible for a growing number of human deaths, too. SBKA has been helping everyone to confidently identify Asian hornets as well as monitor activity in apiaries and near autumn insect-attracting flowering plants like ivy. Through our website, Facebook group, printed ID cards and leaflets distributed through Divisions, and the media, there is a lot of reference material which we hope is helpful.

Also, we have set up an Asian Hornet Action Team to assist with identification and support the bee inspectors when they are deployed. Lynne Ingram is the co-ordinator of the county-wide team made up of a member from each of the Divisions; later Divisions may wish to develop their own action teams. Lynne visited Jersey at the end of August to help beekeepers track Asian hornets back to their nests and is passionate about the need for us to be prepared. (Check our website for Lynne's accounts of tracking Asian hornets).

As your chairman I have written to our five MPs to draw their attention to the UK's first Asian hornet week and seek their support. If Asian hornets become established here I fear the government will withdraw funding to track and destroy nests and the responsibility (and cost) will be passed to the home/landowner leading to a rapid proliferation of numbers. We must keep our MPs, local councils and the community on board if we are to succeed in repelling/managing this massive threat to our honeybees and wildlife.

Anne Pike [chairman@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk](mailto:chairman@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk)

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Exmoor Beekeepers** host their **7th Annual Honey Show** of the modern era at the Tithe Barn in Dunster, TA 24 6RY, on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2017**.



You are most welcome to enter lots of classes and come along and enjoy a day out in the beautiful historic village of Dunster in West Somerset. Entry is free.

We have 29 classes made up of novice, open and all-comers. Please look on the SBKA and/or Exmoor BKA websites for details.

In the morning, Mike Badger MBE, bee expert and author, is coming to talk about mead making to beekeepers whilst Suzy Perkins undertakes the task of judging.

Throughout the day, tea, coffee and cakes, will of course be available.

From 12.30 until 4.00 pm the general public, particularly families and children, are invited to join the beekeepers to admire all the entries; to browse our education corner where experienced beekeepers will be on hand to answer questions; to enjoy various bee-related activities for the children, particularly face painting; and to wander around several stalls with an eye to Christmas presents.

It is a fun day out and intended primarily to encourage beekeepers to partake and the public to become more aware of the importance of bees to our human world.



## THE 87<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL HONEY SHOW

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> October – Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October**

At Sandown Park Racecourse KT10 9RT

Details are on the honey show website: [www.honeyshow.co.uk](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk)

The main lecture programme this year will feature Michael Smith, winner of the Ig Nobel Prize for his ability to make people laugh; and Clarence Collison, author of the book, "What Do You Know" and current author of the Bee Culture magazine column "A Closer Look".

The Beginners Programme last year was a tremendous success and we're hoping to build on that this year with an inspiring programme delivered by Lynfa Davies (Welsh Beekeepers), Anne Rowberry (Avon Beekeepers), Bob Smith (Kent Beekeepers) and Roger Patterson (Sussex Beekeepers)

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 website via YouTube.

## Somerset Beekeepers Annual Lunch 2018

Please join us again this year for our annual county lunch. The date is **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> 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 8<sup>th</sup> October subject to space availability.**

Suzy Perkins

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

Tel: 01458 250 095 Email: [apicrepe.tengore@talktalk.net](mailto:apicrepe.tengore@talktalk.net)



## SBKA Lecture Day

Saturday 16 February 2019

9.00am -5.00pm

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

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

They are available from Divisional Secretaries or by cheque from SBKA Treasurer Mrs C. Kennedy, Allways, West Shepton, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5UH

And 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:

#### Prof. Stephen Martin



Stephen has studied social insects (bees, wasps, termites and ants) for most of his career. His two areas of specialisation are the 'pest and diseases of honeybees' and 'chemical ecology of ants'. He holds a Chair in Social Entomology in the School of Environmental and Life Sciences at Salford University, Manchester. Prior to that he spent 12 years working at Sheffield University, 7 years with the National Bee Unit and 7 years in Japan conducting research into hornets.

Stephen is best known for his work on the Varroa mite and its association with viruses, especially the Deformed Wing Virus. His team of researchers at Salford, funded in part by beekeepers, are using the very latest molecular methods to read the genetic code of the DWV virus. The aim is to understand why some honey bee colonies have become naturally tolerant to Varroa and see if this information can provide beekeepers with a long-term solution to the problem.





### **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.

Derek's fascination with honey bees over the last 7 years, is that the deeper you delve into how they exploit the physics of heat, the more impressive the feats of honey bees becomes.

### **Clare Densley**

I have kept bees since 1992. When in 2008 I got the chance to become an assistant bee keeper at Buckfast Abbey I thought that I had died and gone to heaven. I also worked as a seasonal bee inspector for 2 years alongside looking after the Abbey bees.

In 2010 we cut down the number of hives from 400 to around 30 or so. The honey they produce goes to the monks. We run courses, host visits, run a community apiary, and engage in some modest research. Our philosophy is that of gentle and intelligent bee keeping; understanding the colony as a superorganism and working with them as much as possible.

We don't breed the "Buckfast bee" here anymore. I am happy working with mongrels although we do rear our own queens and run queen rearing courses annually. My ideal bee is more modest than Br Adam's archetypal model. I

prefer a more self-sufficient colony which is easy enough to handle but less refined than many of the commercially bred sub species.

"Romancing the Honey bee" is a talk which examines the role of Br Adam as a celebrity beekeeper and compares his work and philosophy with the current beekeeping practices at the Abbey. It rambles on to look at why honey bees have become celebrities of the insect world and how this is reflected in mythology, art and religion. Then we look at science and how research has informed us about how honey bees really function and keep strong. I am interested in our emotional and commercial relationship with bees. The final section throws open to discussion how we might work with the bees to resolve some of the problems we have presented them with over the last century.



**Paulo Mielgo**, Vita Bee Health's technical manager, has beekeeping in his blood! His surname is similar to the Spanish word for honey (miel) and his father has managed 700 hives in Argentina.

After gaining a degree from a veterinary college in Argentina, Paulo worked in many countries including Italy and South America and previously worked for Vita's South American partner, Apilab. His current role involves working with researchers and universities to help develop new honey bee health and nutrition products. Vita

researches, develops, manufactures and markets a range of honeybee health treatments.

## SBKA Annual General Meeting



The **AGM** is on  
**16<sup>th</sup> March 2019**  
hosted by Quantock Division.

It will be held at  
the Enmore Park Golf Club,  
Enmore Road, Enmore, Bridgwater, TA5 2AN

Further details will be circulated nearer the time.  
The speaker will be **Chris Park**, the Skep Beekeeper.



In an article published on Dave Cushman's site <http://www.dave-cushman.net>, he says "Natural beekeeping groups, trusts and societies are proliferating as one of the many responses to recent and current problems with beekeeping practices, pests and diseases. Hence, keeping honey bees in skeps is recently receiving interest from those seeking new solutions, old ways or natural inspirations. It has always been of interest to those with an interest in the history and the heritage of honey, and now it is fascinating folk with an interest in the resilience of ancient

technologies, the simplicity of natural and locally sourced materials and from those looking for a more bee centered approach

## 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

Speaker to be decided – further details will be sent out when available.

## PAST EVENTS

**THE SPECIAL LECTURE** held on 25<sup>th</sup> April was well attended. The speaker, Margaret Thomas, offered plenty of timely and practical advice. Our thanks to her for an excellent talk.

## THE COUNTY HONEY SHOW and Taunton Honey Show



Christine and Mark Gullick, who belong to Burnham division, won the blue ribbon for the best exhibit at the Taunton and Somerset honey show held this year. Christine said: "Winning this trophy is wonderful - especially as it was awarded on my birthday! It's great to get recognition from the judges and makes me feel better about all the work that goes into looking after the bees and preparing the entries for the Show."

Taunton beekeepers Jenny and Sid Gammon were presented with three trophies including the Taunton Perpetual Challenge Trophy awarded to the local member to gain the most points. Show success was particularly poignant for the couple who have decided to give up beekeeping after 33 years. Jenny said: "We're giving up the bees but I have plenty of honey and wax ready to enter the show again next year."

Peter Maben, Chairman of Taunton Beekeepers, said the two-day show had attracted many thousands of visitors and 15 per cent more exhibits than usual from all over the county. "It seems that everyone is talking about bees!" he said. "There's so much interest in the health and welfare of bees and pollinators generally that our marquee was literally buzzing with people talking to us about honey bees."

### 2018 Somerset Honey Show results:

**The Blue Ribbon for the best exhibit in Show** – Christine & Mark Guillick

Taunton – trophies, cups & awards:

The Taunton Perpetual Challenge Trophy - Sid & Jenny Gammon

The Priscott Perpetual Skep Plate - David Pearce

The Stoker Perpetual Trophy - Sid & Jenny Gammon

The Pat Barter Trophy - Sid & Jenny Gammon

The Andy Coles Memorial Trophy for Mead – jointly to Mary Adams and Graham Welfare

The Tom Tucker Trophy for Cookery – Mary Adams

The Downes Perpetual Cup – jointly to Lyndsay Stone and Graham Welfare

The Gammon Perpetual Trophy – Mike Shaw

The Taunton Honey Show Plate – Maggie North

The Taunton Honey Show Perpetual Trophy - David Pearce

The John Spiller Mascot – Anne Pike

### Somerset County Cups:

Jubilee Cup – David Pearce

Miss M.D Bindley Cup – David Pearce

Terry Arnold Perpetual Challenge Trophy – Mary Adams

The Duffin Challenge Trophy – Christine & Mark Guillick

The Clifford Langford Award for Mead – jointly to Mary Adams and Graham Welfare.



### HONEY FARMS AWARD

Nominations for the Honey Farms Award should be sent to Ken Tredgett by the end of January 2019. Nominations submitted after that date will not be considered.

Contact Ken on [tredg@talktalk.net](mailto:tredg@talktalk.net) or 01373 4647

### HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Please send nominations in to the SBKA secretary if you have any members who have been beekeeping for over 30 years and wish to become honorary members of the SBKA.

### SBKA YEARBOOK - a reminder from Bridget Knutson, Year Book editor

"I need the information from Divisions by the 30th November, in either Word or Excel format. If it comes as anything else, and needs altering, it will be sent back. You have been warned!"

### ROYAL BATH AND WEST SHOW

Help is required on Sunday, May 27 to set up our popular bees and honey displays. If you can lend a hand, please contact Ken Tredgett on [tredg@talktalk.net](mailto:tredg@talktalk.net) or 01373 464736

### Exam Secretary's Report 2018

15 people apply to take the Basic exam this year, an improvement on previous years. I am pleased to say that all 15 have passed it. Congratulations to Bryan Goodman (SW), Jasmine Lucas(T), Alan Miles (T), and Sally Lye(S). Further Congratulations go to the following, who passed the Basic with Credit. Janice Bramston (F), Michael Gee (F), Alison Howell (F), Richard Lyons (F), Tabitha Sudworth (F), Rodney White, (S), Nick Clarke (S), Gavin Stiggear (Q), Charles Sundquist (S), Tom Stanley (Q), and Sharon Humby (S). Well done to all of you. Taking an exam is a daunting prospect, particularly if you left school a few years ago, and haven't done one since.

I'd also like to thank the assessors for giving up their time, without them, it would be very difficult to do the assessments, and the Executive Committee who pass the payments. Don't forget, when you pass an assessment in Somerset, you get the successful attempt refunded. Certificates will follow to be presented at the appropriate events within your divisions.

We also had some successes in the module exams, congratulations to Diane Sleight (F) Credit in Module 6, Fred Clarke (S) and Stewart Gould (S) Credit in Module 2. Simon Mills (F) who got a Distinction in Module 3, and a Credit in Module 6.

Maggie North took and passed her General Husbandry and Bridget Knutson also took and passed her Advanced Husbandry.



The date for the November Module exam is 10<sup>th</sup> November. Applications to me by 30<sup>th</sup> September please, and payment of £30, preferably to BBKA direct. The March exams will be held on 23rd March 2019.

Past papers are available from me, email me telling me what exam you want to sit, and I will send you a link to access them.

Bridget Knutson  
Examinations Secretary



## **SBKA Benefits for members: a note from the Treasurer**

I am pleased to advise you that Council agreed to leave the SBKA subscription at the current rate of £5.50 per annum - so what do you get for your money?

You get all this for roughly the price of a Costa coffee!!!



### **Education/ Development:**

Annual Lecture Day with topical speakers (nominal fee of £5 to cover refreshments)

Special Lecture Evening - free

Development Day at cost to cover speakers- usually low cost as local bee inspectors/speakers used.

Disease recognition Day at cost to cover speakers- usually low cost as local bee inspectors used

Support with Beekeeping examinations and refund of costs if you pass

### **Members Services including opportunities to exhibit honey and bee products**

Annual General meeting with a relevant speaker (free to members)

County Honey Show and County trophies awarded

National Honey Show

Bath & West Show

Rose Bowl award

Year book and newsletters

Website and social media communications

County Admin and other support for members/divisions

Research into specific topics currently focused on Asian Hornets and EFB

Chrisi Kennedy, Treasurer

September 2018

## **SOMERSET HONEY SURVEY**

SBKA has conducted an informal annual honey survey over the last few years and we would be very grateful if you could answer the following questions and email your answers, and anything else which you consider noteworthy, to Anne Pike by mid- October

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

- How many lbs of honey did you harvest from how many hives; average harvest per colony?
- Is this better/worse/ the same as last year?(!)
- Noteworthy? eg honey/colonies lost to wasps; excessive swarming etc.
- Do you have more or less colonies than at the end of the season?

An accurate picture of the harvest gives us an opportunity to localise the BBKA honey survey work so we can talk to the press and our MPs about the state of our apiaries and if, say, a husbandry factory is identified, take steps to support improvement.

## Items from the Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2018

### European Foul Brood.

Figure 32: EFB – severe infection and patchy brood pattern (example circled)



Taken from NBU leaflet on EFB

At the last Council meeting concern was expressed about the fact that Somerset has the highest incidence of EFB in the country. It was agreed that we would have an EFB awareness week next Spring (2019) to try and encourage beekeepers recognise the signs and to know what to do. Further details will be sent out nearer the time but members will be encouraged to attend disease recognition days and to then inspect their bees for signs of disease when they should, hopefully, know what to look for.

Foulbrood (both European and American) is a statutory notifiable disease, and so beekeepers are legally obliged to report any suspected diseased colonies under the Bee Diseases and Pests Control Order 2006 (as amended).

This is done by contacting either the NBU or a local bee inspector.

### RECOGNISING FOULBROOD

The National Bee Unit produces an excellent brochure on EFB and AFB, including how to recognise it. See [www.nationalbeeunit.com](http://www.nationalbeeunit.com)

### Bee Safaris

Bee safaris when members of a division visit several apiaries in the company of a bee inspector are an excellent idea, not just to check for disease but also to get advice for the inspectors about best practice. It's surprising how many beekeepers forget they should always have a bucket of washing soda solution handy or are happy to move supers around different hives – both things which increase the risk of spreading disease.

### Registration of Beekeepers

A proposal was also put forward at the Council meeting to call for the registration of beekeepers. Quantock division is revising that proposal for presentation at the next Council meeting and all divisions have been asked to discuss this and send their views to the secretary.

### Asian Hornet Action Teams

The Chairman has already mentioned the AHATs. Please do continue to keep an eye out for hornets and keep up the good work done during Asian Hornet week to educate the public about them. We will need more than just beekeepers to take action when they arrive in the UK.

To get free supplies of laminated Asian hornet posters for use in local garden centres, shops, notice boards, sports grounds, district councils etc. contact: [nnss@apha.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nnss@apha.gsi.gov.uk)

### Safeguarding Officer

The safe-guarding policy was accepted at the last Council meeting and Elaine Culley was appointed the Safe-guarding officer for the County.

## And finally .....

### Some good news to end with

Ken Edwards kindly sent me a link to an article which will appear in Asda's newsletter. It says:

"Our Bridgwater store's community champion Jo Thexton enjoyed helping a group of local beekeepers so much that she's now the proud owner of her own beehive.

Jo, who's been community champion at the store for three years, said: "Last year a swarm of bees landed on the side of our store, so someone from Quantock Beekeepers Association came along and removed them.

"It got me interested in bees, so I contacted this association to find out more. Ken and I got chatting, and he invited me along to see how I could help them and how they could help me.

"I started volunteering there, thoroughly enjoyed it, and then went to training sessions on how to keep bees. This led to me getting a honey beehive at home – so I can now call myself a beekeeper!

"This the first year I've had them, and next year I plan on getting my own honey from them.

"We've also started collecting waste sugar from the store and donating it to them. Sometimes the packets are spilt when they arrive in store, and sometimes there are spillages on the shop floor.

"In the cold weather their priority is to look after the queen. But they can't go out and forage, so you have to leave them plenty of syrup to feed themselves and their queen. They then emerge in the spring."



The group were recently runners up in the store's Green Token Giving vote, and Jo presented the group's chair Barry Hewlett with a cheque for £200 which will go towards equipment.

Ken said: "We're very grateful for the sugar and for all of Jo's support. It's been great to have her on board and she's really embraced everything about beekeeping.

"She started coming along to our evening classes then our teaching centre learning the skills needed. We let her have a small beehive, and she took it from there.

"The sugar the store donated is mixed with water so it's like a thick syrup. We feed it to the bees so it's like a low-grade honey which sustains them through the winter." END