



Somerset Beekeepers' Association



NEWSLETTER

October 2019 no.138



Please send any copy for the January 2020 edition to me by 15th December
Email: friend.elizabeth@gmail.com.

Letter from the Chairman.



This season a beekeepers' lot is not one of the bucolic tranquillity so beloved of some honey jar labels. More accurate, but perhaps less appealing, would be images of beekeepers almost passing out in the heat, dashing from apiary to apiary, collecting swarms, dealing with wasps, puzzling over absconding queens and harvesting super upon super of sticky honey.

It's certainly been quite a year! And to get a picture of what's really been going on, and to see if we can help support you more in future, we will be emailing you a short survey shortly.

Meanwhile, our hardworking and supportive bee inspectors have been dealing with EFB: to date no member has made a claim to our EFB pilot compensation scheme which will supply a nuc to any member who loses all their bees. Council has decided to keep the scheme running for 2020 and will review it again next autumn. Also, Council has agreed to commit £2,000 for three years to a PhD research project which should help us to understand EFB better and give us some insight into the Somerset strain. Our contribution will be matched by BDI and FERA will fund the remainder.

We're now well into the final period of the year when we have a chance to spot Asian hornets before they go into hibernation; one missed nest means lots more next year making it essential to keep an eye on monitoring traps and flowering plants like ivy. Education is at the core of SBKA and we are looking at events to tackle varroa and queen rearing; more information in due course. Also, we're using the website and this newsletter to publish interesting beekeeping articles written by our own Master Beekeepers – Tricia Nelson gets the ball rolling in this issue.

And, finally, we're a friendly bunch of beekeepers and would like new people to join the small team which runs SBKA. We're looking for a new treasurer and vice chairman (from the AGM in March) and an events secretary to handle publicity and tickets. More details are on the website or get in touch.

Wishing you a calm winter with plenty of time to catch up on reading and relax!

Anne Pike, Chairman.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

You are invited to the
Wiltshire Bee & Honey Day on Saturday 5 October
at the Corn Exchange Devizes, SN10 1HS.

Free entry.

Speakers are Lynfa Davies and Norman Carreck

Wadworth has brewed a honey beer *especially* for the show – do go and try a pint. It will be delivered to the event by the Wadworth shire horses at 11am

There are plenty of other exhibitors selling bee-related gifts and products

Lunches are available @£6.50

To find out more go to www.wiltshirebeekeepers.co.uk

THE 88th NATIONAL HONEY SHOW

Thursday 24th October – Saturday 26th October

At Sandown Park Racecourse KT10 9RT

Schedules and entry forms are now available but act quickly as the closing date is 7 October for most classes. Suzy Perkins has some entry forms.

Full details on the [honey show website](#)



EXMOOR HONEY SHOW

SATURDAY, 2nd NOVEMBER 2019

The Methodist Hall,

7 The Avenue, MINEHEAD, TA24 5AY

Programme

7am onwards	Stallholders set up
8 to 9.00am	Entries accepted
9.00 am	Judging starts
9.30 am	Speaker: Clare Densley from Buckfast "Reading the Hive"
11.00 am	General public access
3.30 pm	Prize giving
4.00 pm	Close

Hot & cold drinks and cake available throughout the day
Various stalls/tombola/world of honey bees/children's activities

Ed: I have a copy of the schedule which I will send out to all divisional secretaries



South Devon Beekeepers' Convention

3rd November 2019

The Ariel Centre

Ashburton Road, Totnes TQ9 5JX

Tickets: Adults £16.50

(after 20 October £20.00)

Under-18s and Full-time Students Free

Programme

- 09.00 Registration and trade stands
- 09.45 **Welcome and opening address**
- 10.00 **The Accidental Apitherapist** *Gerry Brierley*
- 11.00 Morning break and trade stands
- 11.45 **Policing and Conflict Resolution in Honey Bee Colonies** *Francis Ratnieks*
- 12.45 Lunch* and trade stands
- 14.00 **Mr Bee** *Celia Davis*
- 15.00 Raffle and break
- 15.30 **Bee Plants and the Environment** *Celia Davis*
- 16.30 Farewells and Depart

* A pasty lunch is available at £3.50 but must be pre-booked

For further information or to book and pay online go to

www.devon.beekeepers.org.uk

Somerset Beekeepers Annual Lunch 2019



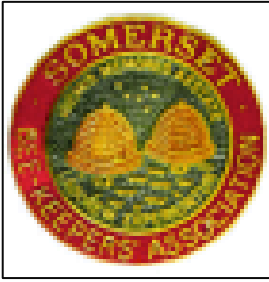
The County Lunch 2019 will be held on the
17th November at Long Sutton golf club.

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

Suzu Perkins, Tengore House, Tengore Lane, Langport, Somerset TA10 9JL.



SBKA Lecture Day

Saturday 15th February 2020

9.00am - 5.00pm

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

Programme

9.00 Coffee

9.30 Opening by *Jackie Mosedale, President of SBKA.*

9.35 Through winter into spring. *Clive de Bruyn*

10.40 Honey Bee mind/navigation. *Prof. Lars Chittka*

11.40 Coffee

12.10 Bee stings. *Dr. Nikos Tsioungkos*

1.10 Lunch.

During this time *Lynne Ingram* and other AHAT members will be available to talk about the Asian Hornet and help with your queries on the current situation.

2.20 Thanks and Presentations

2.30 How to make Mead and Melomels. *Dinah Sweet*

3.30 Raffle and Tea

4.00 What I have learned from Beekeeping in the past fifty years. *Clive de Bruyn*

5.00 Close

Tickets are £5 and include tea and coffee.

To book on line via Eventbrite please [click here](#).

Alternatively, you can send a cheque for £5 per ticket made payable to SBKA together with a S.A.E., to The Treasurer, Allways, West Shepton, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5UH

PLEASE bring your own lunch



You may be interested to know that Prof Chittka has compiled a concept music album in which all song lyrics are inspired by his work on the world of bees and their interactions with flowers with all the proceeds going to Buglife: <https://killerbeequeens.bandcamp.com/releases>.

Clive de Bruyn FIBKA Snr., BBKA Snr., N.D.B.



Clive has been a beekeeper since the 1960's. He is one of the best-known and respected beekeeping authorities in Britain and Ireland. Based in Essex, where he runs over 100 colonies for queen-rearing, honey production and pollination. He is a prominent member of the Bee Farmers' Association, where he has been the Education Officer since 1982. As well as being a bee farmer Clive has studied, worked and presented papers within an international forum for many years and done much work in third world countries. In addition, he has written several books including the indispensable "Practical Beekeeping".



Prof Lars Chittka FLS, FRES, FSB is a German zoologist, ethologist and ecologist distinguished for his work on the evolution of sensory systems and cognition, using insect-flower interactions as a model. He is also the founder of the Research Centre for Psychology at Queen Mary University of London, where he is a Professor of Sensory and Behavioural Ecology.

Chittka has carried out extensive work on the behaviour, cognition and ecology of bumblebees and honeybees, and their interactions with flowers. He developed perceptual models of animal colour vision, allowing the derivation of optimal receiver systems as well as a quantification of the evolutionary pressures shaping flower signals. Chittka also made fundamental contributions to the understanding of animal cognition and its fitness benefits in the economy of nature. He explored phenomena such as numerosity, speed-accuracy trade-offs, false memories and social learning in bees. His discoveries have made a substantial impact on the understanding of animal intelligence and its neural-computational underpinnings. He has published over 250 peer-reviewed articles, many of them highly cited.

Dr Nikos Tsioungkos is an Allergy specialist and has been working in the UK in the last 5 years. He obtained his Specialty (Allergy and Clinical Immunology Degree) degree in Athens/Greece and holds a certificate of excellence in Allergy having sat the European Examination in Allergology and Clinical Immunology (EAACI/UEMS). He has a master's Degree in "Clinical Applications of Molecular Medicine"/ University of Thessaly, Greece. He speaks 4 languages and in his spare time he enjoys travelling and collecting fine art.



Dinah Sweet started her beekeeping with husband John, 40 years ago. Dinah Sweet completed a Diploma dissertation in Apiculture at Cardiff University on melissopalynology (the study of pollen grains in honey) supervised by the legendary Rex Sawyer, author with Robert Pickard of "Pollen Identification for Beekeepers". Since then she has been examining honeys for commercial packers and giving talks on the topic to Beekeeping Associations. She has held positions within BIBBA and the Welsh

Beekeepers Association and often gives talks. She wrote the National Honey Show booklet on Mead for showing and drinking She has been judging mead at the NHS for the last 10 years and also recently finished a number of years, working as a bee inspector.

SBKA Annual General Meeting 2020

Hosted by Yeovil and District Division

28th March 2020

Venue: Frogmary Green Farm, West St, South Petherton TA13 5DJ

Lunch

Lunch will be two courses, costing £14.50. Booking for lunch should be made by sending a cheque payable to 'SBKA Yeovil Division', stating your choice of menu options for both main course and dessert to:

Sharon Blake, Stratton Court, Over Stratton, South Petherton, TA13 5LQ **by 21 March 2020.**

Menu

Beef and Cider Casserole, served with seasonal vegetables and potatoes.

Chicken Parmesan, served with potatoes and mixed salad or seasonal vegetables.

Vegetable Lasagne, served with mixed salad and specialty herb bread.

Followed by a choice of:

Lemon Passion or Blackberry and Apple Crumble with cream or ice cream

And tea or coffee.

Special dietary requirements can be catered for if advised by 21 March 2020.

Timetable

12noon – Frogmary Green Farm will be open for guests to arrive and purchase their own drinks from the bar upstairs.

12.30pm – Lunch

2pm - Welcome by the SBKA President.

2.05pm – Lynfa Davies, Master Beekeeper, NDB.

Nucleus Colonies: Their Many Uses. What are nuclei and how do they contribute to our beekeeping?

3.15pm - Tea or coffee.

3.30pm AGM



We asked Lynfa to introduce herself:

"I live in Mid Wales where Rob and I are part of Aberystwyth and District BKA. I have been keeping bees for 15 years after Rob bought me a week's beekeeping course as a birthday present. I was immediately hooked and over the years worked my way through the BBKA modules to become a Master Beekeeper in 2015. This year I passed the National Diploma in Beekeeping.

I have 20ish hives (if Rob asks it is a dozen!!) that are on Nationals with most of them on double brood. We have had two exceptionally good seasons; we thought last year was amazing but this year has almost equalled it despite the weather being more unstable.

I rear my own queens and sell a few nuclei locally. I really enjoy teaching new beekeepers and sharing what I have learned with others and hopefully help make a difference to their beekeeping. When I am not with my bees I can usually be found on my bike cycling up all the hills near my home or going for a dip in the sea. "

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM is an occasion which all members of SBKA are welcome to attend. It is an occasion that affords members the opportunity to hear an interesting lecture, meet members from other divisions and to have a say in how the association is run. **Please make a note in your diary to attend the AGM and help SBKA to continue to be a successful beekeeping association.**

Directions to Frogmary Farm:

From the M5: Exit at junction 25 and take the A358 towards the A303. At the Southfields roundabout with the A303, take the first exit and travel east on the Ilminster bypass. At the east end of Ilminster by pass take the fourth exit from the roundabout, passing the Esso garage on your left. On for 1.1 miles to the first mini roundabout where you turn right. Frogmary Green Farm is on the left after .6 mile.

From the A303: At the east end of Ilminster bypass take the fourth exit from the roundabout, passing the Esso garage on your left. On for 1.1 miles to the first mini roundabout where you turn right. Frogmary Green Farm is on the left after .6 mile.

Do not use your SATNAV for the last part; please follow the directions above. If you have any problems finding the venue, please phone Frogmary Green Farm on 01460 249758. There is plenty of parking at Frogmary Green Farm.

Draft AGM Agenda

- 1 Apologies
- 2 To Approve the Minutes of the 2019 SBKA AGM
- 3 Matters Arising from the Minutes
- 4 Treasurer's report and adoption of charity accounts for year end 30 September 2019
- 5 Election of Officers
- 6 Election of Executive Divisional Representatives
- 7 Appointment of independent reviewer: Bruton Sweet
- 8 West Country Honey Farms Award
- 9 Honorary Membership

Honorary Membership

Do check whether any of your members are eligible for honorary membership which is awarded for anyone who has had continuous membership of SBKA for 30 years.

West Country Honey Farms Award: We all know members who have given a huge commitment to beekeeping in Somerset. Each year, the West Country Honey Farms award recognises the contribution of a member. Last year, there were several nominations but some had such little detail that the committee really was unable to consider them.

It is time to call for nominations again, so please give your nominee support by detailing their contribution, for instance, what they have done within the Division, have they helped with mentoring, training, encouraging new beekeepers. Have they helped introduce young beekeepers to the craft? What has their contribution been beyond the division, county delegate, participation in organising and assisting at county events, shows such as the Bath & West Show.

Give the committee as much detail as you can but in as succinct form as possible.

Please send nominations to Jackie Mosedale no later than 31st January. This will enable the committee to meet together, assess each nomination and agree on who merits the award. If you require any further information, please contact Jackie Mosedale on Jackiemosedale@gmail.com



Special Lecture will be on 22nd April 2020 at Edgar Hall, Somerton

Past events

Royal Bath and West Show

Prizewinners at the Show: apologies to Alan Nelson for omitting in the last newsletter that he had won the McNab perpetual silver rose bowl for the most points in classes 6 to 11.

And many Congratulations to Christine and Mark Gullick
Bristol Bees and Pollination Festival Aug 31 – Sept 1 2019



They won the bronze bee award this year with the most points in show with seven firsts, five seconds, seven thirds and one highly commended awards. They were also runners-up in the silver bee award.

Asian Hornets – reports from AHAT coordinator Lynne Ingram

The Somerset AHATs continue to be on alert for sightings of Asian Hornets, particularly in the light of confirmed sightings this year in Tamworth, New Milton and Ashford.

In Somerset the teams have responded to enquiries, and suspected sightings of hornets by setting up bait stations and surveillance. There have been several alerts in the Exmoor and Minehead areas, and the Exmoor team were able to work in partnership with Exmoor National Park, and one of the Devon AHATs to survey the area in question, which was on the Somerset/Devon border. Alerts were also responded to in Street and Westonzoyland. Lynne has also received many email enquiries to asianhornet@somersetbeekeepers.org from as far away as London. Luckily each was accompanied by a photo and proved to be either Hornet mimic hoverflies or Giant Wood Wasps. These enquiries show how far the Somerset information on Asian Hornets has reached.

Education: Lynne continues to give presentations on Asian Hornets. Recent ones include the Bristol Bees and Pollination Festival, Soroptomists, Tiverton Beekeepers.

Various other AHAT team members have been giving talks, distributing posters and leaflets to the public. and having a presence at various fetes, flower shows and events Somerset AHAT rolled out 'The Asian Hornet Roadshow' (as it is now being called) at the Bath and West Show. It was an extremely busy stall with thousands of visitors viewing samples of Asian and European hornets, wasps and bees, and receiving information and advice from the AHAT Team. Whilst at the Bath & West we made contact with some large organisations, such as Western Power, Network Rail, Avon & Somerset Police, and gave them advice and information which will be distributed to their employees. We also talked to tree surgeons, nurseries, educational establishments, and gave out information. Team members felt 'hornet'd out' at the end of 4 days. The Roadshow was also at the County Honey Show in Taunton, again drawing a lot of attention, and will have a 2 day presence at the County Show at Taunton Racecourse on September 21st and 22nd. We will be setting up the roadshow at The Lecture Day in February 2020.

AHAT team members, and beekeepers are being encouraged to engage with any networks that they are part of and give them information about Asian Hornets Materials from the roadshow are available to borrow and are available from Lynne. We have run out of some materials and are now reprinting some of them.

Asian Hornet Week: A press release was issued for Asian Hornet week, and this was done in partnership with the Exmoor National Park, with whom Exmoor AHAT had been working. We also had the Roadshow at Taunton Farmers market that week.

Further opportunities: South West Beekeepers Forum are very keen to see the South West Counties working together to combat Asian Hornets. To that end they have invited Somerset to host a training/conference day to bring people together. Details of this still have to be planned as Lynne has been in Apimondia, but is likely to be very early in the New year. We will be working in partnership with other County AHAT teams to bring this to fruition. I will be back from Apimondia this weekend so will start work on finding a date.

Monitoring for Asian Hornets is continuing as this time of year is when the Hornets are more numerous and more likely to be active in your apiary. I'd encourage you to spend up to an hour observing your hives, fallen fruit, and ivy, if you can. Please encourage others to do the same.

A new trap has been developed that includes a wick – details of which I have sent to AHAT team leads. I will forward details for further distribution.

Some AHATs have mapped the position of monitoring traps – others will be working on that during the winter season.

Teams continue to be kept up to date with AH news nationally and internationally eg in Jersey 100 + queens and nests have been found already. Teams have been encouraged to practice tracking skills on European hornets (or wasps!)

'The Asian Hornet Handbook' has now been published by Sarah Bunker. She is an entomologist, beekeeper and went hunting hornets in Jersey last year. It is a comprehensive guide to all aspects of the Asian Hornet, including lifecycle, tracking, national picture etc, and well worth purchasing

For further details: <https://www.asianhornethandbook.com/product-page/the-asian-hornet-handbook>

Lynne Ingram asianhornet@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk
01278 786307

Article by Tricia Nelson for SBKA Newsletter:

In this issue we launch the first in a series of educationally-based articles written by Master Beekeeper Tricia Nelson from Quantock Division. Take a look at the SBKA website to see two short videos of David Charles driving bees at Quantock Division.

The end of one beekeeping season and the start of another; time to reflect on what happened this year and what you want to do next. What went well for your bees? What didn't? What might be worth trying next year? So, what sticks out in my recollections of the year which might be of interest to you?

Driving the bees

We have all learned that bees walk uphill into dark spaces. Hence smoking swarms up into skeps, tucking your trousers in your socks and covering your wrists so they don't walk up your trousers and sleeves. Some of us have shaken a swarm out onto a sheet arranged over a sloping board leading up to a new hive and watched them slowly processing into the hive and how they surge up and in once the queen enters. However, seeing exactly the same behaviour in response to a rhythmic and persistent tapping on the sides of the skep with no smoke used at all was extraordinary. It was so quick, almost instantaneous.

This is a demonstration by David Charles.

A skep had been kept inside a National hive in an empty brood box separated from a lower brood box by a crown board



David inverted the skep onto a honey bucket as shown left. (Can you see the comb inside?) and then secured a second empty skep to the inverted one using irons – see right

The empty skep was secured at 45 degrees to the inverted skep with the irons, a cloth secured at the back to ensure a dark and 'solid' path for the bees to walk up



David then rhythmically tapped the sides of the inverted skep (as shown in the video which is on the website) and in a matter of seconds the bees started to run out of the comb up into the empty skep.

No smoke was needed!

In the past there were competitions for who could drive their bees the fastest with extra points for spotting the queen!]



The skep colony in its hive had been placed in the position where the newly hived bees were to live. This meant that all the flying bees returned to that hive during the demonstration. (Another behaviour well worth remembering when you have a tricky colony to examine). The newly driven bees were then shaken out in front of their hive (the hive that their skep had been contained in for the past few weeks).

Mission accomplished except ... the skep was found to be full of sealed stores. The colony had not only thrived inside the National hive but moved down below the crown board drawing comb in the lower box. This comb was full of brood, so this too had to be put into the new hive but this time in frames.

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Saving the brood comb

Equipment needed:

- A flat surface eg a crown board
- Natural gardeners' twine and scissors
- Suitable clean frames
- A sharp knife
- Patience!

David demonstrated how to do this, successfully saving the bulk of the brood, even though the comb was very soft. NB. It is important to get everything ready before starting the process, which is very fiddly and cannot be rushed. He gently cut each vertical comb from the crown board supported it with his hand

David demonstrated how to do this,



David said *"In the past I have used rubber bands for this task, but these can cut into the comb, the bees can't get rid of them easily and they are rarely the right size."*

So, the idea David demonstrated was to make a string support structure on the frame which will keep the comb vertical long

enough for the bees to make the necessary adaptations and secure the brood. So, string the frames first!

Because it is important to keep the comb as flat as possible, David demonstrated how best to do this by placing the strung frame on a flat surface. He swiftly placed the comb in the prepared frame and cut away the excess comb. The strings were then tied at the

top of the frame and one horizontal string tied around the width of the frame. The completed frame was then carefully raised to vertical and placed in the colony.



Stringing the frame requires using enough string to wrap round both sides of the comb and secure at the top; three verticals and one horizontal. (This photo is simply using a wired frame) Each vertical string was secured on the bottom bar with half running up each side with enough length to allow for tying at the top after the comb has been positioned.

I thought this was an extremely useful technique to learn, very difficult in the hot conditions facing David during his demo, but particularly useful if you have to do a cut out when retrieving a swarm, so perhaps it is worth keeping a few strung frames, a flat board and a knife on standby for just such occasions!