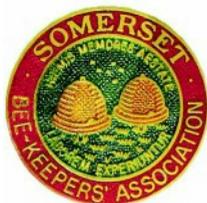


Somerset Bee-keepers' Association NEWSLETTER



Swarms well into August

I have come to the conclusion that every year is a strange year for beekeeping. August 16th seems to have been a popular day for bees, with three swarms collected in eastern Somerset on that day alone. Many others have been reported and collected during the month though. Most of them were of a reasonable size, unlike this extremely small cast that landed on some dead apple branches while Meg Seymour was inspecting bees on August 27th.



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Lecture Day 2017

It may seem like a long way away as yet, but Sharon Blake has already booked the speakers for Saturday 18th February 2017, and the venue has been confirmed as the Edgar Hall in Somerton. This is a departure from recent years when the event has been held in Cheddar. Edgar Hall is a great space with modern facilities, and also has ample parking. Tickets should be available for collection at the September 3rd council meeting of Somerset BKA.

The subjects for the Lecture Day Speakers are Margaret Murdin, Michael Maunsell, and Nigel Semmence, and their subjects will be Drones, Workers - the supreme defenders, Queens, How to become a proficient beekeeper and Exotic pests. It is not entirely clear who will be speaking on which subject, but details will be available closer to the date.

Margaret Murdin

Margaret has been keeping bees for over ten years and now has over twenty colonies across three apiaries. She is a Master Beekeeper and has recently won the prestigious Wax Chandlers' Award. Margaret has also gained the National Diploma in Beekeeping and is an active member of the NDB short course team.



As an active member of Ormskirk and Croston Branch of Cheshire Beekeepers, she teaches beginner beekeepers, study groups for the module exams and General Husbandry.

Margaret is Chair of the Trustees of the BBKA, a member of the Education and Husbandry Committee and sits on the Examination Board. She is a Correspondence Course Tutor and an Assessor for module examinations and husbandry assessments. Previously Margaret was the Principal of a large Further and Higher Education College, a Chief Examiner for Teacher Education and a tutor and examiner for the Open University. She has sat on several Government Committees advising on further, higher and special education.

Michael Maunsell



I began beekeeping in the early 1970s. A local farmer approached me to rescue bees from a dangerous hollow tree that overhung the road between my house and his land. There followed a short intense bout of study of beekeeping matters and carpentry to make a suitable home for my new tenants. In my naivety I assumed that the bees would be delivered to me. I definitely got that one wrong as I had to cut down

the tree and remove the bees from it myself. Some of that original hive is still in use today, the roof was finally destroyed only last year being an A roof was very impractical. With a background in science I set about experimenting with my new charges, and boy did I try things out. Beekeeping was very easy back then and the bees were well capable of recovering from any extra stresses or strains that I placed on them. Varroa changed all of that and now the bees need more care and attention if they are to thrive. My day job was mathematics, applied mathematics and physics teacher. I learned a great deal of beekeeping from my involvement with GBBG, where I was secretary for over ten years. My beekeeping philosophy is simple - Start with your own local bees, a strain: natural selection “survival of the fittest” got them to where they are, artificial selection, based on good record keeping, will take them on. I now operate 25+ colonies spread over six apiaries.

Nigel Semmence

Title: Exotic pest update – Small Hive Beetle and Asian Hornet.

Nigel started beekeeping in his teenage years and learnt from his grandfather, keeping bees both at home and at his school in Norfolk. Many years later after a career in scientific sales and having moved to Hampshire, Nigel worked for the Oxford Bee Company and Almond Pollination Company researching the use of solitary bees for pollinating crops in the UK and California in the USA.



In 2009 Nigel joined the National Bee Unit (NBU) as Regional Bee Inspector (RBI) for Southern region running a small team of Seasonal Bee Inspectors (SBIs) covering the Isle of Wight, Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. In 2015 Nigel was promoted to the role of Contingency Planning and Science Officer with responsibility for planning for the arrival of exotic pests and diseases of honey bees.

Somerset Beekeepers Annual Lunch 2016



I have booked Long Sutton Golf Club for our SBKA Annual lunch again this year after receiving such positive feedback from those who attended last year.

It will be held on Sunday 16th October - arrival from 12-30 to sit down and eat at 1.00 pm. The address is Long Sutton Golf Club, Long Sutton, TA10 9JU

The lunch will be two courses with a Carvery of up to 4 meats and a choice of deserts. There is a vegetarian option available on the day. The total cost will be £13.50. Tea or coffee can be purchased individually after the meal if you wish.

I do hope you can join us this year.

Please send me your bookings (and the numbers who would like the vegetarian option) along with cheque made payable to Somerset Beekeepers by Saturday the 1st October at the very latest.

Suzy Perkins

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

Tel: 01458 250 095

Email: apicrepe.tengore@talktalk.net

Impacts of neonicotinoid use on long-term population changes in wild bees in England

This important paper was published in the August edition of Nature Communications and sent to us by Toby Knowles of Bristol University and Somerton BKA. The full paper is attached to this newsletter as a .pdf file.

Ben A. Woodcock^{1,*}, Nicholas J.B. Isaac^{1,*}, James M. Bullock¹, David B. Roy¹, David G. Garthwaite², Andrew Crowe² & Richard F. Pywell¹

Wild bee declines have been ascribed in part to neonicotinoid insecticides. While short-term laboratory studies on commercially bred species (principally honeybees and bumblebees) have identified sub-lethal effects, there is no strong evidence linking these insecticides to losses of the majority of wild bee species. We relate 18 years of UK national wild bee distribution data for 62 species to amounts of neonicotinoid use in oilseed rape. Using a multi-species dynamic Bayesian occupancy analysis, we find evidence of increased population extinction rates in response to neonicotinoid seed treatment use on oilseed rape. Species foraging on oilseed rape benefit from the cover of this crop, but were on average three times more negatively affected by exposure to neonicotinoids than non-crop foragers. Our results suggest that sub-lethal effects of neonicotinoids could scale up to cause losses of bee biodiversity. Restrictions on neonicotinoid use may reduce population declines.

Results

Multi-species dynamic Bayesian occupancy models. We constructed a multi-species dynamic Bayesian occupancy model^{16–18} to assess change in the occurrence of 62 wild bee species in England over a 18 year period (1994–2011). We use this model to explore the relationship between population persistence and exposure to neonicotinoid-treated oilseed rape over this period. This time period was centered on the first wide-scale commercial use of neonicotinoid seed treatments on oilseed rape in 2002. This model included spatially and temporally explicit information describing the cover of oilseed rape¹⁹, the area of the crop treated with neonicotinoids²⁰ and an index of the combined toxicity of all foliar-applied insecticides (referred to as the foliar insecticide impact (FII) index). Note that although the FII index includes a small number of neonicotinoid based foliar applied insecticides, their non-systemic mechanism of action makes their incorporation into this index appropriate.

The model used in this analysis was hierarchical and incorporates an observation sub-model that accounts for bias associated with volunteer collected data^{21,22}. We restricted our analysis to 1 km² grid cells with surveys in at least two of the 18 years to produce a final data set that contains 31,818 surveys from 4,056 km², which were nested in 1,658 25km² grid cells (Fig. 1). We excluded honeybees, since these are regularly moved across landscapes by beekeepers. Our analysis included wild bee species with records on at least 500 survey visits. Finally, we tested the prediction that bees known to forage on oilseed rape would be more likely to experience population extinctions due to higher neonicotinoid exposure than species not known to forage on this crop.

Beekeeping is all the buzz at county honey show

The Somerset equivalent of the Olympic Games for beekeepers attracted a record number of entries at this year's County and Taunton Division honey shows held at Taunton Flower Show.

Bathealton beekeeper and hive maker David Pearce was the biggest winner taking the blue ribbon for the best exhibit in show – a perfect jar of honey - in addition to three other trophies. Graham

Welfare from Hatch Beauchamp ran him a close second and was awarded four cups.

Taunton Division chair Peter Maben said the two-day show had attracted many thousands of visitors and 20 per cent more exhibits than usual. "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."

Magnificent displays of different honeys, wax and other products from, or inspired by, the hive attracted plenty of attention. An observation hive, where bees are displayed behind glass, and an outdoor netted demonstration area let



visitors see beekeepers working with bees and explaining how the hive works. Ken Tredgett, President of Somerset Beekeepers Association, singled out the junior competitions for particular praise. "It is great to see such colourful artwork and excellent writing produced by youngsters from local primary schools. Their enthusiasm and passion for bees shines through and I hope that in time some of them will take up beekeeping themselves."

The Blue Ribbon for the best exhibit in Show - David Pearce of Bathealton near Wiveliscombe

Taunton – trophies, cups & awards:

The Taunton Perpetual Challenge Trophy - Graham Welfare
 The Priscott Perpetual Skep Plate - Graham Welfare
 The Stoker Perpetual Trophy - Graham Welfare
 The Pat Barter Trophy - Sid & Jenny Gammon
 The W. Elmsall Perpetual Observation Hive Trophy - Taunton Beekeepers
 The Andy Coles Memorial Trophy for Mead - Graham Welfare
 The Tom Tucker Trophy for Cookery - Rosemary & Eleanor Burgess
 The Downes Perpetual Cup - Rosemary & Eleanor Burgess
 The Gammon Perpetual Trophy (novice) - Dave Parry
 The Taunton Honey Show Plate - David Pearce
 The Taunton Honey Show Perpetual Trophy - David Pearce
 The John Spiller Mascot - David Pearce

Somerset County Cups:

Jubilee Cup – shared by David Pearce and Graham Welfare
 Miss M.D Bindley Cup – Bridget Knutson
 Terry Arnold Perpetual Challenge Trophy – Rosemary and Eleanor Burgess
 The Duffin Challenge Trophy - Rosemary and Eleanor Burgess
 The Clifford Langford Award for Mead – Graham Welfare

Class 1 Two lb jars of light honey

1st Mike Dillon
 2nd Graham Welfare
 3rd Alan Nelson

Class 2 Two lb jars of medium honey

1st Bridget Knutson
 2nd David Pearce

Exmoor Division Honey Show 2016

This year's honey show will be held on Saturday October 1st in the Tithe Barn, Dunster, Somerset TA24 6RY

Judging will be carried out by *Mrs Suzette Perkins*

The Guest Speaker is **Graham Royle** who is Vice Chairman of Cheshire BKA, as well as being Disease Liaison Officer, Examination Secretary and Chair of the Education Sub-Committee. Graham is a very popular speaker and supplier of equipment, bees and good advice! Graham is only the third beekeeper in Cheshire, and one of very few in the whole country, to have obtained the NDB—the National Diploma in Beekeeping—the highest beekeeping qualification.

There will be light refreshments throughout the day and various stands

Taunton Division Taster Day

Taunton Division is running a taster day next month for anyone interested in finding out more about keeping bees which includes a talk as well as chance to put on a bee suit and take a look inside a hive.

The taster day costs £35.00 per person and takes place at 2.30pm on Saturday, September 10 at Heatherton Park apiary near Bradford-on-Tone. To book a place, or for more information, contact: Mike Dillon on mikedillonbees@gmail.com or 01823 669619.

2016 Somerset Honey Show results

Equipment for sale

This may be of interest to Exmoor Beekeepers in particular. Wavell Urry of Winsford, Somerset is selling his equipment which includes the following - 2 Commercial hives each with Brood, 2 supers, varroa board entrance, 1 extractor -9 frame manual, 1 settling tank, Set of filters (coarse and fine), hive tools, 1 wooden double hive stand and 1 single stand. He would like about £250 for the lot. Wavell can be contacted at wavellurry@hotmail.com

Farewell to Ray

Ray Reddish, a founder member of Burnham and District Division passed away on 7th July, age 88 he had been unwell for some time. Until recently Ray was an active member of the division and had been a beekeeper for some 50 years.



Ray was born in Bexleyheath Kent and moved to this area during the Second World War, when where he worked as a farm hand at Grange farm in Mark. This is where he met Doreen, his wife of 64 years. Ray leaves his wife, children, Paul, Phillip, Michael and a foster daughter Joanne, 4 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

Ray worked for the Creamery in Highbridge before he started his very long working life with Woodbury's, where he made furniture. He retired from Woodbury's in 1992.

Ray set up home at Yew tree Farm, Highbridge in 1962 where he began to keep chickens, geese, and goats, another passion of his.

Ray kept his bees at 3 out apiary sites, as his wife wasn't keen to have bee hives in the garden. One year his son remembers Ray having a harvest of over 1000lb of honey from his 16 hives. We can only hope!!

Ray was heavily involved in getting Frank Foley remembered in the area. Frank, was the Highbridge born hero who helped Jews escape from Germany before the start of World War Two, by giving them visas to flee the country.

Ray was well known in SBKA circles and was always available to assist and encourage new beekeepers in the craft. He will be sadly missed.

It sounds the most boring of ways to spend a July Saturday, but it was far from being that. In fact it was an extremely informative event altogether.

The day was headed up by Simon Jones, our Regional Bee Inspector, who opened up the day with a workshop on the importance of monitoring for disease, pests and other key problems within the hive. The 50, or so, participants were then split into smaller and more manageable groups for the other workshops.

Eleanor Burgess gave a salutary lesson on the inevitable arrival of the Asian hornet, and the devastating effect that it will have when it gets here. It may seem that the National Bee Unit, and the seasonal bee inspectors have been banging on about it forever, but it really is inevitable that it will get here at some point. It may not be on the south coast either, as the most credible report to date, came from mid Wales and centred on a mysterious creature that had been found inside a caravan. The salient point being that the caravan had just returned from France. Fortunately, the creature in question, was a European hornet. Eleanor also covered the other exotic pests that may just hop over the channel and take us by surprise, and one of the main hazards is the import of bees, which is still going on, despite all the warnings.

A varroa workshop was headed up by Dave Packham, the Seasonal Bee Inspector for Cornwall, whose notes were sent to your divisional secretaries for circulation. Dave emphasised that this was the greatest threat to our colonies of bees, and that it is not only responsible for depleting bee health, in its own right by feasting on the haemolymph (blood), but also gives back an array of viruses and other problems.

Megan Seymour was in control at Richard Bache's apiary where she gave pointers on what to look for and how to handle bees. Leila Goss, a new SBI, helped Megan.

The last session in the day was a brood diseases workshop, and for this we had to don rubber gloves and aprons. All materials used were binned at the end of the session and then incinerated. The workshop was run as a quiz, with frames containing live EFB and AFB, as well as drone laying queens, a starvation frame, bald brood and wax moth attack. Where else could you see all of these problems?

Dates for your Diary



Saturday 17 th Sept. - 1.00 pm	Somerton BKA	Somerton Honey Show & Farmer's Market. Long Sutton Village Hall
Saturday October 1 st -	Exmoor Division	Exmoor Honey Show - The Tithe Barn, Dunster TA24 6RY
Friday October 7 th - 7.30 pm	Frome Division	AGM. Frome Rugby Club
Tuesday October 18 th	Yeovil Division	AGM - Time and venue TBA
Thursday October 20 th	Burnham Division	AGM & Honey Competition
Friday October 21 st - 7.30 pm	Mendip Division	AGM - Chilcompton Church Hall BA3 4HP
Saturday October 22 nd	South East Division	AGM - time and venue TBA
Friday November 18 th	Quantock Division	AGM - no other details available
Saturday 19 th Nov - 2.30 pm	Taunton Division	AGM - The apiary

If you would like to see your division's activities here, just forward details to the editor. There is not room to include everything during the active season, but there seems to be a dearth of social gathering in the winter.

Members are welcome to attend the meetings of any SBKA division, but it is suggested that you check with the host or secretary as the time or venue may have changed. Further details are often available on the website or divisional newsletters. This list is taken from the Yearbook and may have changed or been added to since it was originally published.

Update on Asian hornet

The Asian hornet is getting closer, step by step. One was recently found in Alderney by a States of Alderney employee and has since been positively identified by the UK's National Bee Unit as being a non-native Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina*). The nearby nest and larvae were destroyed as a precaution.

The Asian Hornet is smaller than the more common native European hornet and poses a significant threat to honey bees and other pollinators (please refer to the size guide download available on this page). Beekeepers in Alderney and Guernsey have been notified of the identification of the Asian hornet. The States of Guernsey is working closely with the States of Jersey, Sark Government (including Brecqhou), and Herm Island Ltd to ensure all are aware of this finding.

The Guernsey Beekeeping Association has advised its members on steps to increase vigilance and monitoring of bee hives through the use of hornet traps. It is anticipated that sightings of Asian Hornet are most likely around bee hives as it is an aggressive predator of honey bees, but there is no indication that it is in Guernsey or the other Bailiwick islands. As with wasps and bees, hornets have a painful sting so people should avoid direct contact and never attempt to disturb a hornet's nest.

Alderney is just 55 miles from Portland Bill, which is the nearest point on the UK mainland.

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