



Somerset Beekeepers' Association



NEWSLETTER

July 2021 no.145



Please send any copy for the October 2021 edition to me by 15th September.
Email: friend.elizabeth@gmail.com.



Notes from the Chair

Being chairman isn't just a case of sitting at the front during meetings and asking for the delegates to vote on the proposals. There are many other aspects to the job, and recently the organization was thrown into a state of flux and confusion when the newly appointed county secretary stepped down for family reasons. It had proved difficult enough to find a volunteer for the position the first time around. Now we had to

do it all over again, but I was delighted when no less than seven members stepped forward to fill the void. What was even more encouraging was that most of them were new to beekeeping. Whereas a lack of beekeeping knowledge isn't necessarily a barrier, some experience of the workings of Somerset Beekeepers Association will prove to be a great advantage. Thank you for all those who offered their time and services. We may well be back to you with some new ideas soon.

Maggie Norris of Central Division has now stepped into the void, and was co-opted to the position by an online vote which will have to be ratified at an EGM or the next AGM in March 2022. Maggie brings many years of beekeeping experience and, more importantly, knowledge of the labyrinth that is SBKA. She has, in the past, served as divisional secretary of Central Division and in her working life, was an administrator within the NHS. We welcome Maggie and hope that her tenure is trouble free.

It is mentioned elsewhere but, on a personal level, I want to thank the Education group who ran online study groups for two of the BBKA modular exams. These sessions were of tremendous help to many who could otherwise have struggled to come to grips with the intricacies of BBKA exams. Discussing the topics face to face with people who know the answers, rather than debating with others who have as little knowledge as you, seems to work well. If they can drag an old duffer like me through the minefield of bee anatomy and biology, then they are definitely doing something right. The module exams are a good way of improving your knowledge, and you can do the studying without taking the exams. There is no pressure at all and the tutors do it all for the love and admiration.

Is it just me, or is honey extraction the downside of beekeeping? I thoroughly enjoy every other aspect of our chosen addiction. I don't even mind getting stung occasionally, but the prospect of extraction sends sticky shivers down my spine. I love taking it off the hives. I quite enjoy jarring it up, and definitely enjoy selling it, but the slurping/slapping of shoes on quarry tiles and washing your hands and arms continually, then washing them again so that you can wash out all the sticky buckets, extractor, settling tank, filters and spatulas, then having to shower and change your clothes, leaves me cold - but hey ho! It's over and done with now. Well, at least until the end of July.

Stewart Gould

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SBKA Lockdown Lecture Series Programme.

Thursday July 15th at 7pm

The Somerset Lecture series continues with our next lecture on **'Pollinators and Pollination'** from Professor Jeff Ollerton.



Professor Jeff Ollerton is a renowned consultant ecological scientist and author, and during a career spanning more than 30 years, has established himself as one of the world's leading experts on pollinators and pollination. The author of more than 120 articles and book chapters, his highly-cited, ground-breaking research has been used by national and international agencies to support efforts to conserve pollinators and their pollination services. Jeff is also in demand as an advisor and consultant to governments, local authorities, printed and broadcast media, and funding organisations.

Although he is based in the UK, Jeff's field work in support of his research and advisory activities has been conducted across Europe, Africa, Asia, South America and Australia. He received his PhD in pollination ecology in 1993 from Oxford Brookes University and holds Visiting Professor positions at the University of Northampton in the UK and Kunming Institute of Botany in China. Jeff has previously held visiting researcher positions at the University of Campinas (UNICAMP) in Brazil and the University of New South Wales in Australia.

Future lectures: Having attracted more than 8,000 people to our very successful lecture series, we have decided to take a break in August, and resume activities in September. Here are a couple of titles to whet your appetite - but look out for more exciting lectures in the Autumn

Thursday September 2nd at 7pm



'Honey Adulteration and Fraud' - Etienne Bruneau

Honey adulteration and fraud is a growing problem worldwide and in the UK. Britain imports a huge amount of extremely cheap honey from China, and tests on many 'own brand' honeys in the UK have shown them to be adulterated.

Whilst many countries are working hard to combat this worldwide problem, the UK is lagging behind the rest of the world in dealing with it.

Etienne Bruneau is the President of the Apimondia Scientific Commission for Beekeeping Technology and Quality and is a renowned speaker on the issue of honey adulteration and fraud.

Thursday September 16th at 7pm

The B-GOOD project - Dr Sausan Ahmed

B-GOOD is a European wide project that will pave the way towards healthy and sustainable beekeeping.

This talk is a general introduction about the **B-GOOD project** (Giving Beekeeping Guidance by Computational-assisted Decision making) which includes the development of new monitoring technologies, the design of models for determining changes in bee health, and decision-making support, design and deployment of a management data platform. **B-GOOD** also integrates the biology of the honeybee colony with the ecosystem (incl. agriculture) and the socio-economic aspects of different types of beekeeping methods for optimal connection with the environment and beekeeper. Current results will be presented.

Dr Sausan Ahmad is a senior researcher on the **B-GOOD** project, based at Nottingham Trent University

Important - Divisional Zoom licences

The Zoom licences that have been set up for each division were due to expire on July 31st 2021. However, Zoom have now extended these licences until **December 31st 2021**.

Your current licence allows you to have unlimited meetings, for up to 100 people with unlimited time.

Somerset and Taunton Honey Show

at Taunton Flower Show

Friday 6th August – Saturday 7th August

Vivary Park, Upper High St,

Taunton TA1, UK [map](#)

The Bees and Honey” marquee is one of the most popular at Taunton Flower Show and stages the Somerset Honey Show in addition to Taunton’s own Honey Show.



Sunday 15th August Central division Honey Show at the Mid-Somerset Show, Shepton Mallet

Central Division is privileged to hold its Annual Honey Show at the Mid-Somerset Show in Shepton Mallet, and this year is even more special. The Mid-Somerset Show is a traditional one day agricultural show and after a year off and Government restrictions permitting, the 168th Show will take place on Sunday 15 August 2021.

It will take place on its new site at Cannards Grave after being hosted on its previous one for over 100 years. It's just a few fields away from the original site and will be clearly sign posted. Although car parking is £15, entry to the show is free and provides plenty of interest for all the family.



The Honey Tent is always well attended and after comprehensive risk assessments, Central Division will be making modifications to the layout and the number and type of entries and activities to ensure the health and wellbeing of everyone working in or visiting the tent.

Look out for the Honey Show schedule, which will be published shortly on the SBKA website. We welcome entries from other divisions - if your honey yield is low or not yet harvested there are plenty of other classes to enter.

If you're visiting the Mid-Somerset Show, do come in to say hello - we always love to stop and yarn about bees and beekeeping!

The Royal Bath and West Country Festival

27-29 August 2021



It is hoped that the show will go on as usual albeit with some changes to the normal format. Check the website for details [here](#)

Exmoor Honey Show

Minehead Methodist Church
Saturday 9 October 2021
All entries welcome and free.
Entry form from our website in late July
Contact Lance Moir for details



SESBKA Honey Show

Sat 30th Oct
Market House, Market Pl,
Castle Cary
BA7 7AH



Annual Spring Equipment Auction

Sun 10th Oct

Ruishton Village Hall, Taunton TA3 5JD, UK

Our annual auction is usually held in the spring, but covid-19 restrictions have necessitated holding it in the autumn this year.
Items received from 10.00am
Auction starts at 2.00pm

Refreshments
Raffle
Free Car Parking



Lecture Day 2022

This will take place on
Saturday 12th February 2022

at a new venue,
The Canalside Centre Bridgwater.
Details to follow when available.



BBKA exams

Due to Covid all the BBKA exams were cancelled in 2020. Somerset decided to run a study group via zoom which was enthusiastically received with over 100 people from Somerset and 3 people from Cambridge. The study groups were a huge success, not just for those wanting to take the modules, but for those who wanted to know more about bees and beekeeping. For those who did want to sit the exams, we were aiming for the November exams, but again they were cancelled and everything got put back to April 2021. Due to Covid, BBKA were already looking at offering the modules online and in April that became a reality.

We had 18 people sit 24 exams in April, the first year it has been possible to sit them online. Two people also sat modules outside the study groups.

Congratulations go to

Catherine Fraser Somerton, 1C, 2D
Jason Wallis Taunton, 5P
Jenny Squire Taunton, 5C
Stewart Gould Somerton, 5C
Vanessa Woodford Taunton, 1C 5C
Sally Worby Somerton, 1C 5D
Neil Wellum Exmoor, 1C 5D
Janet Jones Exmoor, 1P
Robin Williams 5C

John MacPherson Taunton, 1C
Ross Willis Central, 1P 5P
Jackie Mosedale Somerton, 5P
John Speirs Somerton, 1C 5C
Tim Sellars Central, 5C
Karen Mahony Exmoor, 1C
Sue Buck Wedmore & Cheddar, 1C
Anne Pike Taunton, 1C
Grahame Gould Quantock, 3D

P = Pass, C = Credit, D = Distinction. 1 = Module 1 General Management, 2 = Module 2 Honey and Forage, Module 3 = Disease, Module 5 = Honeybee Biology.

There are discussions underway to run study groups again, probably from September for the November exams, different modules but the same format.

Practical exams are taking place again this year. If you want to take your Basic please let me know and I will send you a link to the application process and payment. This makes the application process easier for everyone.

If you want to take the Basic I would like your application in by 15th July at the latest please. If you want to take the Microscopy then your application needs to be in by 31st August and the exam will be held on 20/21 November.

Bridget Knutson
Exams Secretary

NDB Examination Success!

The National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB) Examinations Board are delighted to announce that two candidates, Lynne Ingram and Richard Bache have passed the 2021 examination.

The NDB is the highest beekeeping qualification available in the UK, and requires a tremendous commitment in learning across a broad syllabus – with an exam including a theory paper and dissertation, followed by an all-day practical assessment covering colony handling, botany, anatomy & disease, and a *viva voce*.

Set against the backdrop of Covid-19, which has limited many normal training opportunities, the candidates, both members of Somerset Beekeepers Association, have maintained their preparations and passed all sections of the exam to become the 93rd and 94th candidates to achieve the NDB since its formation since its formation in 1954.

The NDB board offers warmest congratulations to both Lynne and Richard on their outstanding achievement.



Chris Harries

It was announced at the AGM in March that Chris Harries had won the West Country Honey Farms Award and the citation was printed in the April newsletter.

Covid restrictions meant that he was unable to receive the Rose Bowl at the AGM but he did eventually get it as you can see from the photo (left).

West Country Honey Farm Awards

It's never too early to think about the beekeepers you know and if they are worthy of a nomination for the Rose Bowl. This was given to Somerset Beekeepers Association by the



West Country Bee Farmers as a thank you for contributions to their heather honey harvest. This is a very prestigious award, nominated by your peers, and chosen by previous winners.

If you think a particular beekeeper goes above and beyond others to help beekeepers out, run events, always in the background helping out, always taking on roles others don't want to do, quietly without fuss, then nominate them for the WCHF award.

Give as many details as possible, and then send your nomination to Joe King jk.pilton@btinternet.com for consideration for 2022.

Those on the awarding committee are the three previous winners.

Bridget Knutson

Education Group

We, Lynne Ingram, Alan Nelson, Tricia Nelson, Richard Bache and I, ran two sessions for people wishing to learn more about bees and beekeeping last year, starting in September via zoom, looking at Modules 1 and 5. It wasn't aimed at taking the exams but those who wanted to could. The aim was for beekeepers to learn more about bees and improve their beekeeping. It was very successful with over 100 people between the two groups.

This year we thought we would do the same thing again, my view is the study groups will probably run for 6/7 fortnightly sessions, but nothing has been decided yet.

What we need to know is - what modules would people like to learn about?

I am hoping to get a questionnaire out later. We don't want to redo modules 1 and 5 but are thinking that there might be 1/3 revision sessions for those who want to take those exams in November.

Bridget Knutson

Honorary Members of SBKA

Please remember that nominations for honorary members need to be with the secretary **before the November Council meeting.**

It was decided by delegates that nominations would be agreed at the November Council meetings and not at the AGM as was the practice previously.

Plants for Pollinators

As summer progresses and the sun shines (sometimes), you will have seen your bees and lots of other pollinators all over the flowers in your garden. But which flowers do pollinators prefer?

One of the best flower families for bees is **Boraginaceae** – the borage or forget-me-not family. The family includes a variety of shrubs, trees and herbs totalling about 2000 species, and are typically quite rough and hairy plants with coiling flower spikes when young. Flower parts, the petals, sepals are usually in fives. In the UK there are a few members of this flower family that are really worth having in your garden.

Vipers Bugloss (*Echium vulgare*)

Vipers Bugloss is said to be one of the best honey bee plants in the world, secreting nectar very freely. It is visited by honey bees, bumblebees, solitary bees, butterflies and other



pollinators. It is a striking biennial plant with vivid blue flowers that grow from pink buds. The flowers are trumpet shaped with four red stamens, which extend from the petals. The pollen loads from Vipers Bugloss are blue.

The nectaries are deep within the corolla, and the petals protect the nectar from being dried by the sun or diluted by rain. The flowers grow in curved groups along the length of the numerous spiky stems. These stems may be up to 80 cm tall, are hairy and blotched with red markings, that gives it its serpentine name. The leaves and stem are

rough and hairy, which can cause skin irritation and a rash, so gloves are a must when handling the plants.

Vipers Bugloss self-seeds readily so give it plenty of room, and you will soon end up with a large patch of blue just covered in pollinators of all sorts.

So apart from looking good, why is Vipers Bugloss so attractive to pollinators?



The secret is in the nectaries that constantly refill, so the flowers produce a steady supply of rich nectar all day long, not just in the morning or evening. Depending on soil and rainfall, the sugar content ranges from 22% to 48%. Vipers Bugloss is grown commercially in some parts of the country, and produces a honey described as light amber with a good flavour and body. Some say it bears a hint of lemon. The honey is high in fructose, is slow to crystallize and can remain liquid for 9 to 15 months. On a commercial scale, Vipers Bugloss can produce between 300 - 1000lbs of honey and 500-2000lbs of pollen per acre, which is pretty impressive.



But there is always a downside, and in this case the honey can contain pyrrolizidine alkaloids, which can cause liver damage in livestock and humans so it is not good for long-term consumption.

Some sources recommend mixing the honey with other honeys to dilute the alkaloids. Other sources simply recommend the honey should not be eaten on a regular basis or for extended periods.

But for us beekeepers wanting to provide a variety of nectar sources for our bees, as well a beautiful garden for us to enjoy, then Vipers Bugloss definitely deserves to have a place.

Borage (*Borago officinalis*)



Borage is an annual herb, generally with blue star shaped flowers and is commonly known as starflower. The flowers have five petals with five narrow triangular pointed petals. The leaves, flowers and stalks are edible and taste like cucumber. Borage is often grown commercially for starflower oil. It is an attractive plant to grow in the garden and is often covered in a variety of pollinators.

Borage plants are great for bees - each flower head will refill with nectar after only two minutes of being emptied by a bee. The drooping nature of the flowers means that the nectar is not washed out by rain. It is visited by honey bees, solitary bees and bumblebees which use 'buzz pollination' to release the pollen. The pollen loads are white.

Grown commercially, one acre of borage can yield about 200lbs of nectar and between 60 – 160 lbs of pollen. Borage honey is very light coloured – whitish with a yellow-grey tint. It is a very sweet honey with a subtle flavour.



In medieval times, Borage was supposedly infused in the drinks of Crusaders to increase their courage, so if you are in need of an extra boost maybe borage honey will do the trick. Like most of the plants in the Boraginaceae family borage honey can contain some pyrrolizidine alkaloids.

Phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*)



Phacelia is one of the top 5 plants for potential honey yield, producing nectar continuously throughout the day. It is a fast-growing hairy annual with large numbers of flowers produced by each plant. The many purply-blue flowers are bell shaped, about 1cm long with 5 petals, and protruding whiskery stamens, and are produced on one side of a curving scorpioid cyme. When

sown in spring or early summer Phacelia flowers within eight weeks and lasts for 4-6 weeks. Sowing at regular intervals will give all bees some forage until late in the year. Phacelia is a good plant for improving soil and is widely grown as a green manure which is dug into the ground before flowering. If you sow this as green manure it is worth letting some of it flower before digging it in.



Commercially phacelia can produce between 180 – 1500 lbs honey per acre. The flowers are popular with honey bees, short tongued bumblebees such as *Bombus terrestris* and *Bombus lucorum* and other pollinators, and provide large amounts of pollen and nectar. The pollen load is dark blue. The nectar is secreted by a disc at the base of the ovaries. The honey is amber or light green with a delicate flavour. It granulates to a pale beige or near-white colour.

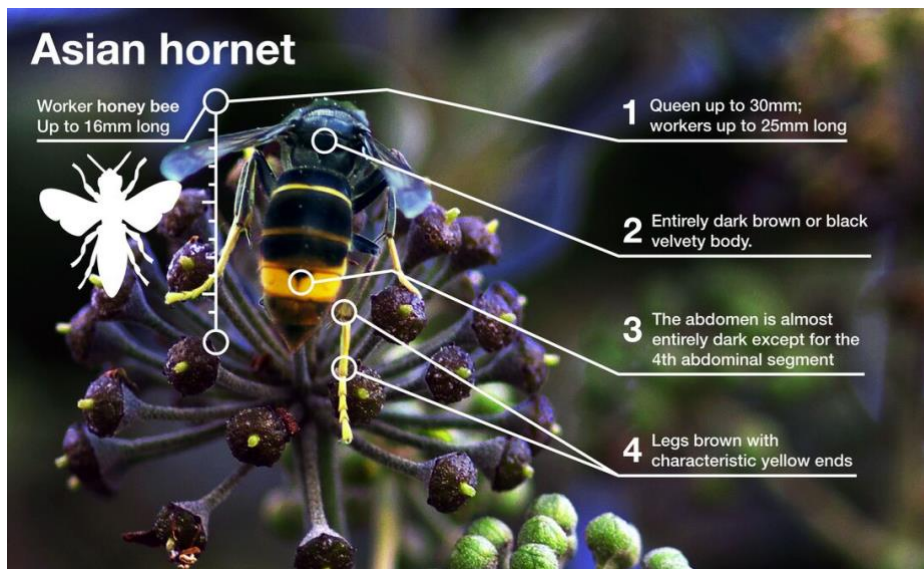
Forget me not (*Myosotis spp*)



Forget-me-not is a biennial plant with clumps of hairy dull-green leaves in the first year and masses of pink buds and small blue flowers in the second year. The flowers are 8 mm across and have flat blue pink, white or yellow petals with yellow centres, growing on scorpioid cymes. They are a magnet for many species of insect, including honeybees, solitary bees and bee flies. The yellow flower centres change to white once pollination has taken place – effectively turning the flower off to pollinators. The pollen load of Forget-me-not is yellow.

Forget-me-not is a good source of early nectar and pollen. The open flowers are easy for bees to access however the nectar tube is very narrow, and as the bees search for the nectar, the minute pollen grains are dislodged and fall onto the bee and into the nectar. The grains appear to be drawn up by the bee with the nectar and is present in honey in much greater quantities than other pollens.

Lynne Ingram



As we move towards mid to end Summer, the number of workers in the nests increase hugely and they will start to become more visible if they are in your area. Keep your eyes peeled for the sight of an Asian hornet in your garden or around your bee hives.

If you think you have seen an Asian Hornet

- Get a photo (or sample)
- If you are not sure or are struggling to get evidence contact your local Asian Hornet Action Team – asianhornet@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk
- If you are sure and you have evidence, then report on the [Asian Hornet Watch App](#) or on alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk and to your local AHAT.

Due to current restrictions please make sure that you keep yourself safe and comply with government guidelines. Check BBKA website for updates on how this relates to beekeepers.

We are recommending the adaptation of Thornes traps to include the wick stations inside. This allows wasps and small flies to escape. (See Instructions below)

Liquid bait – get Sutterra (now sold as Trappit wasp attractant) from your AHAT Team leader or buy online.

If you cannot get it due to current restrictions try one of these French recipes:

- Dark beer mixed with 25ml strawberry dessert sauce and 25ml orange liqueur
- 350ml sweet white wine (or white wine sweetened with sugar) + 20-30ml mint syrup

Please also observe your flowers where Asian Hornet queens may be feeding. Any trees that may be oozing sap are also very attractive to AH queens in Spring.

Summer

(Asian Hornet week September 6th – 10th)

From August onwards, Asian hornet workers may be found preying on your bees, so monitoring stations may also be hung in your apiaries. Again, we need to be monitoring regularly so that we protect our beneficial insects, and so that we have live samples that could be tracked if necessary.

Please register your apiaries and monitoring stations on **BeeBase**.

Monitoring stations:-

This is the new design monitoring stations as used in Jersey. They are designed to allow beneficial insects to escape. The wick pot also prevents all but the smallest flies etc. from getting down the side. They still require **daily monitoring**.

The trap

Drill 3 x 6mm holes in the flutings around the top of the Thornes trap.

The wick station

The wick stations in these pictures are cut down sample pots that when unmodified are 7cm high and just under 5cm diameter. **You can use other similar size small pots.**

The sample pot is cut at half its height i.e 3.5cm and the lower section is fitted through the top section base first. Place a small block of wood or similar over the top of the pot and tap the two parts together. That way you retain the screw top and the modified pot fits snugly into the trap.



A 12mm hole is drilled in the lid to take the wick which is made from paper towelling / Jeye cloths etc. Fill with your liquid bait.

The wick pot prevents all but the smallest flies etc from getting down the side, and the Suterra/Trappit doesn't evaporate so quickly. The holes in the trap allow beneficial insects to escape.

Please monitor regularly.

Somerset Asian Hornet Team contact details

Somerset AHAT Coordinator

Lynne Ingram – 0784 616 5877 - asianhornet@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

Asian Hornet Team Leaders

Burnham on Sea – Tom O'Neill	01278 786036
Central – Paul Harper	01458 210051
Exmoor – Vanessa McDonnell	01278 741225 / 07582813598
Frome – Nicola Peacock	01373830247 / 07492420103
Mendip – Cathy Edge	07986 471627
Quantock – Barry Hulatt	01458 210861 / 07891493709
Somerton – Bernie Perkins	01458 250095 / 07948408770
South East – Lionel Horler	01963 351037 / 07894039933
South West – Bryan Goodman	07816659795 / 07816659795
Taunton – Vanessa Woodford	01460 234426 / 07983118732
Wedmore & Cheddar – Bridget Knutson	01934 742187 / 07952922374
Yeovil – Sharon Blake	01460 242124 / 07907414293



EFB – replacement bees compensation fund

EFB has continued to affect our bees and although claims have been made to the BDI I am not aware that anyone has yet claimed anything from the compensation fund that was set up. Hopefully this means that people have been able to replace their bees from fellow members but just in case anyone has forgotten about the scheme, here is another reminder.

Aware of the possible problem when bees need to be replaced because of an outbreak of EFB, the Council decided in 2019 to set aside a £2,000 fund to support any member who loses all their colonies in all their apiaries to EFB.

Terms and conditions:

1. Must be a fully paid-up and registered member of SBKA, be registered on BeeBase, keep one or more colonies of bees in Somerset and to have lost all their colonies in all their apiaries to EFB in 2019.
 2. EFB must be confirmed by a NBU bee inspector and infected bees and equipment destroyed under his/her instruction.
 3. The NBU-issued Standstill Notice must be lifted by the bee inspector.
 4. Free replacement sources of local bees e.g. from the member's Division, fellow beekeepers etc, must be exhausted before a claim is made.
 5. One nuc/colony per member, irrespective of the number of colonies destroyed.
 6. Applications will be taken on a first come, first served basis and the decision to grant or decline an application will be made by the SBKA Executive, whose decision will be final.
 7. SBKA has set aside a maximum of £2,000 to support members with EFB in 2019; if claims are received after the fund has been exhausted, unfortunately they will be refused.
 8. Replacement bees are subject to availability.
 9. Applications to this fund should be made through the member's Divisional delegate.
- would like them to use their national influence to highlight the problem and work with