



Somerset Beekeepers' Association



NEWSLETTER

October 2021 no.146

Please send any copy to Elizabeth Friend: friend.elizabeth@gmail.com.



Notes from the Chair

9th October 2021

Summer is well and truly behind us now, and although we have had some unseasonal warm days, they tend to start and end a little bit fresher than we might like, with cooler nights. All our bees should be well provisioned for the coming cooler weather and we can think ahead to Beginners courses and further to next season.

The other thing to concentrate on is how everything within Somerset BKA functions, and making it mutually advantageous for all our members. At the last Council meeting, our treasurer Peter Derbyshire expressed concern over the county budget. Almost all of Somerset BKA's income is derived from membership fees, and all full members have been paying £5.50 of their membership to the county association. Some people wonder why. This amount has been static for a good few years, but once Peter gave his view of the existing budget, several divisional delegates made a proposition that the capitation fee, as it is called, should be raised. Expenditure has risen dramatically up to and during the COVID pandemic because we have introduced a comprehensive and impressive programme of online talks, and many other functions have also gone online. Although indirect costs have risen significantly (increased speaker fees, and the comprehensive Zoom licence, the direct costs to members (fuel and travelling time) have gone through the floor. It's a tough balance, but remember that an Exmoor member could have to drive an hour and a half in each direction to attend a two hour meeting in Somerton, for example. That would take up five hours in total, and cost as much as £21.00 in fuel. Using that logic, an increase in the capitation fee seems realistic. Numbers of those taking BBKA modular exams has increased dramatically too, and the success rate has been exceptional, for which those passing exams should be congratulated, but did you know that if you pass, Somerset BKA will refund the exam fee, even though it was originally paid to BBKA.

Your delegates are empowered to make proposals and vote on them – on your behalf. Consequently, the council voted to increase the capitation fee to £10.50 per annum. This wasn't a suggestion from the executive of Somerset BKA but came direct from the delegates. There have been several opinions voiced by members, that this is too high an increase. Could I therefore ask all members to contemplate the intended increase and discuss it with your committee, who in turn can tell your delegate what you want done about the situation. It can, and several members think, should be re-visited at the November Council meeting.

I think it's important to remember two things, firstly, Somerset Beekeepers Association is run by its members for its members, and secondly we can only provide services to our members with funds provided by them. You decide how you would like those funds employed, so we can either increase the membership fee or decrease the activities accordingly. Let your divisional committee know what you think.

Moving on to brighter things, we nearly got away with an entire season without a single Asian hornet being spotted in the UK, but as I write this, one (just one) has been reported in Ascot, Berkshire, but it is still the lowest number since 2016.

There seems to be an increased interest in wanting to become a beekeeper, with Somerton's 2022 course already having attracted 45 people, and there is still plenty of time to go yet. Although the aim isn't to capitalise from new beekeepers, this an income stream for divisions which can help fund other projects, and with the increased interest, it's better that those wanting to take up the craft, learn from experienced beekeepers rather than Professor Google, or random 'experts' (usually in the USA) on Youtube. The internet is a powerful tool, but when you have no knowledge of a subject, judging what is good and what is bad advice, is not simple.

Stewart Gould
chairman

Yearbook

It's getting to that time of year again when if you want a yearbook I need details from divisions. In order for the yearbook to be available at the Lecture Day, I need your membership lists by **30th December** at the latest – **IN EXCEL FORMAT** – if they don't come in excel I will send them back to you to convert. I can't convert them. If you have a programme then I can also put that in. If you can get them to me before December 30th that would be good, I can send it to the printers earlier.

If I don't get details by 30th December I am not chasing – you won't have an entry!

Nominations needed for the AGM 2022

Year Book Editor

I am resigning as editor of the yearbook at the next AGM. I have edited this for the past 7 years, and now is the time to pass it on to someone else.

If you want a yearbook then volunteer to take it on. If no one volunteers, the yearbook will cease to exist.

Bridget Knutson

Newsletter Editor

I will be resigning from the post at the next AGM

Please consider whether you could take on this role. There are only 4 editions per year, in January, April, July and October so it doesn't take up a lot of time.

Liz Friend

Vice Chair

This post is still vacant and nominations for all these 3 posts should be sent to the secretary.



Divisional AGM's

Would secretaries please send names and contact details of their committee members to the SBKA secretary as soon as possible after their AGM. Please remember that the delegates are the trustees of the SBKA and any new delegates will need to fill in a trustee eligibility form.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SESBKA Honey Show

Sat 30th Oct

Market House, Market Pl,
Castle Cary
BA7 7AH



The National Honey Show

21st to 23rd October 2021

Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey, KT10 9AJ.

Main Lecture Programme V = Virtual hybrid presentations (shown live)

Thursday 21 October

9.00. Opening Ceremony

9.30. Torben Schiffer: V "How modern beekeeping enhances nectar competition and contributes to species extinction of wild pollinators"

11.00. Mike Edwards: V "Beyond honey bees - an introduction to the rest of the 600 plus species of aculeates present in the British Isles and Ireland"

12.30. Jo Widdicombe: "The National Bee Improvement Programme"

14.30. Torben Schiffer: V "Man made breeding and selection vs natural reproduction and selection - why modern beekeeping will eventually send the species of honey bees into its demise"

16.00. Vince Gallo: "How to build honey comb - a bricklayer's perspective"

Friday 22 October

9.30. Torben Schiffer: V "Natural conditions of bees living in tree cavities in comparison to modern hives - how the housing affects the biology, development and Varroa infestation rate. (Why modern beekeeping is caught in the circle of constantly fighting the symptoms of the established husbandry system)"

11.00. Kirsten Traynor: V "Pesticides in pollen: what are the bees in America consuming?"

14.00. Norman Carreck: "Global pandemics, bee imports and native bees"

16.00. Kirsten Traynor: V "Media Mayhem: How the news media is pitting honey bees against native bees"

Saturday 23 October

9.30. Kirsten Traynor: V Queen Rearing: A comparison of queen rearing techniques"

11.00. Paul Hurd: "Honey bees are what they eat: how do differing diets result in queens or workers?"

12.15. National Honey Show Awards and Prize Giving

13.30. Kirsten Traynor: V "Reading a Hive"

15.00. Lynfa Davies: "Honeybee behaviour - a look at the mechanisms bees use to manage their lives"

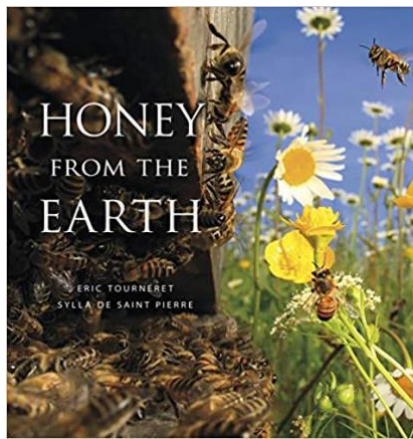
The lecture programmes may change for a variety of reasons. Substitutions may have a different topic from that intended and with a different speaker.

SBKA Lockdown Lecture Series.

Autumn: We are very excited to present our Autumn Lecture programme which has some amazing world-class speakers, many of whom we have been 'wooing' for months!!

DON'T MISS THEM

We are especially proud to be able to present **Sam Ramsey**, the research scientist who overturned 50 years of assumptions about *Varroa* after discovering it feeds primarily on honey bee fat body tissue and not haemolymph. He is an exceptional scientist and brilliant communicator. You will love his presentation!! He will be talking about his current research into *Tropilaelaps* – not in the UK yet – but something we all need to know about.



Meanwhile --if you are already thinking about your Christmas list, then maybe you could ask for '**Honey from the Earth – Beekeeping and Honey Hunting on six continents**' - perhaps the most beautiful book of bee photography ever. To get an insight into how these astonishing photos were taken, don't miss the talk by **Eric Tournet**.

And if you now have some beeswax after uncapping all your honey, then come and listen to **Joyce Nisbet**, who regularly wins prizes at the National Honey show for her wonderful wax creations. You will still have time after the talk to make some waxy Christmas presents.

Finally, we are pleased to present **Nick Balfour**, who will be talking about the relationship between bees and flowers, as well as competition between honeybees and bumblebees.

So please join us as these world class speakers come to your house. Booking is always open to Somerset Beekeepers first.

We are looking for people who would be happy to watch lectures and then review them for this newsletter. Please get in touch if you would like to do this. Thanks so much.

Programme.

October 28th

Partnership and Competition - the relationships between honey bees, bumblebees & flowers with Nick Balfour



The importance of pollinating insects in maintaining global biodiversity and agricultural output is well established. But there remain significant concerns about their populations and we have now lost over 40 species of British bees, wasps and butterflies. While many potential causes have been identified, the long-term decline of flowers in our landscapes is considered a key factor. As such, further insight into the temporal relationships of pollinators and their flowering partners is required to inform conservation efforts.

In this talk Nick Balfour will examine the seasonality of British pollinator activity and plant flowering. With a particular focus on the seasonality of endangered pollinator and plant species. He will also discuss his previous and current research on competition between bumble bees and honey bees.

Nick Balfour is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Sussex. He completed an Ecological Science BSc at the University of Edinburgh in 2008, an MSc in Entomology from the Imperial College London in 2011, and a PhD with Prof. Francis Ratnieks from the University of Sussex in 2016. His main areas of interest are animal behaviour, ecology and conservation biology. To date his research has focused on pollinator conservation and ecology, and the relationship between agricultural practice, biodiversity and ecosystem services.

November 4th

Tropilaelaps Mites: A Fate Worse than Varroa with Dr Samuel Ramsey



Dr Samuel Ramsey is one of the most exciting science communicators in honey bee research working today. He overturned 50 years of assumptions about *Varroa* after discovering it feeds primarily on honey bee fat body tissue and not haemolymph.

For our lecture he will talk about his research into *Tropilaelaps*, a notifiable pest in the UK.

Tropilaelaps mites are spreading across the globe at a rate very similar to that of *Varroa* in the 1960s, roughly 20 years before they arrived in the US. If they continue to spread this way, it's possible that they could be here just as quickly. These mites are much more destructive than *Varroa* with faster population growth, greater mobility, and no pesticides

currently approved for their treatment. There's a lot to learn about them. This presentation details what we already know and what we still need to figure out.

Samuel Ramsey is a Research Fellow with the USDA Bee Research Laboratory at the Agricultural Research Service. He is the Project Lead for the Fight the Mite Initiative which seeks to meet the threat of potentially invasive bee mites with well-researched data. So far, this study has been able to provide critical insight about treatment measures that can be used effectively against parasitic mites of honey bees which are currently expanding their geographic range and economic impact. His passion for research and science communication has led to international recognition and no shortage of press engagement. Dr Ramsey works to use that excitement and interest around his research projects to promote greater diversity in STEM and greater engagement of the public with the scientific process.

November 18th

Honey From the Earth with Eric Tournernet



Eric will give us the inside story behind his stunning collection of bee photography from around the world. The internationally acclaimed honey bee photographer Eric Tournernet spent 15 years traveling the world to capture the breathtaking diversity of bees and beekeeping traditions on six continents.

Eric Tournernet presently lives in the Ardèche region of France with 25 hives in his garden. His childhood near Annecy, France, between lakes and mountains, attuned him to the beauty of natural settings. At the age of 17, he discovered Africa, the desert and encounters with various other cultures. He was introduced to photography in studios where he worked with fashion and advertising photographers, with specialists in lighting and visual creation. He then travelled the world during 15 years bringing back ethnic and social feature stories for the press.

When French beekeepers' efforts to have systemic insecticides prohibited alerted him to the disappearance of the bees, Eric began an in-depth work in 2004 on apiculture by immersing himself in the life of the hive. His innovative photographs were put together in a first published work **«Le peuple des abeilles»** (The Bee Nation) and have appeared in many publications in the international press. In 2007, he expanded his investigations on a worldwide scale with a series of features on the relation of humans to bees, from the most archaic harvesting methods to industrial and commercial beekeeping. His work was published in 2009 under the title **«Cueilleurs de miel»** (The Honey Gatherers).

Since then, Eric Tournernet has continued his travels, exploring the great beekeeping traditions in Slovenia, Germany and Turkey. He has encountered the nomads of Ethiopia and the Pygmies of the Republic of the Congo, the giant bees of India and Indonesia, the stingless bees of Brazil, Costa Rica and also the killer bees of Panama.

He has discovered urban apiculture in New York, London, Berlin, Hong Kong... and the dangerous Asian hornet that has arrived in France, the perpetual honey flows in Australia and hand pollination in China. This quest culminated in the publication of **Honey From The Earth.**

Exhibited at photography Festivals, in Natural History Museums, Botanical Gardens, his images testify to a world in transition and reveal the causes of the disappearance of the bees. These 10 years of discovering bees and people have resulted in an exhibition on the Fences of the French Senate, in Paris and at the United Nations in Geneva.

December 2nd

Waxing lyrical with Joyce Nisbet



Joyce will describe some of the techniques used to produce candles and other attractive beeswax items. During her presentation, Joyce will aim to pass on suggestions for cleaning beeswax, plus techniques to produce beeswax candles, flowers and other models, whether for display or as Christmas gifts.

Joyce started beekeeping in 1990 and is now a Master Beekeeper and BBKA Honey Judge. She is also a BBKA Trustee and chairs the BBKA Spring Convention Committee. Joyce's wax preparation skills improved after she saw high-quality wax exhibits in Honey Shows.

December 16th

Nectar & Pollen Chemicals with Dr Phil Stevenson

Further details to follow



Lecture Day 2022

This will take place on
Saturday 12th February 2022
at The Canalside Centre Bridgwater.
Details to follow when available.



BBKA exam results

We had an outstanding number of people taking exams this year, both modules and written papers. Possibly due to lockdown and possibly due to the zoom study sessions which are still ongoing.

Congratulations go to the following for gaining their Basic this year: -

Richard Longworth – Somerton

Ray Pattemore – Somerton

Robin Rees – Taunton

Jenny Squire – Taunton

Anne Blackburn – Taunton

Jonah Jones – Taunton

Steve Pearson – Exmoor

Les Dixon – Exmoor

Neil Wellum – Exmoor

Congratulations to the following who passed their Bee Health – after waiting 12 months to take it.

Janet Norman – Frome

Jim Elliott – Taunton

Anne Pike – Taunton

Congratulations to

Catherine Fraser – Somerton – who passed her General Husbandry

Congratulations to

Simon Mills – Frome, who passed his Advanced Husbandry and also became a **Master Beekeeper**.

Congratulations to the following who all passed Modules in March

A lot of hard work was put in to get the results they achieved, and it shows. Well done, you all deserve the results.

Catherine Fraser – Somerton, 1 – C, 2 – D

Jason Wallis – Taunton, 5 – P

Jenny Squire – Taunton, 5 – C

Stewart Gould – Somerton, 5 – C

Vanessa Woodford – Taunton, 1 – C, 5 – D

Sally Worby – Somerton, 1 – C, 5 – D

Neil Wellum – Exmoor, 1 – C, 5 – D

Janet Jones – Exmoor, 1 – P

Robin Williams – Taunton, 5 – C
John Macpherson – South East, 1 – C
Ross Willis – Central, 1 – P, 5 – P
Jackie Mosedale – Somerton, 5 – P
John Speirs – Somerton, 1 – C, 5 – C
Tim Sellars – Central, 5 – C
Karen Mahoney – Exmoor, 1 – C
Grahame Gould – Quantock, 3 – D
Sue Buck – Wedmore & Cheddar, 1 – C
Anne Pike – Taunton, 1 – C

P=Pass, C=Credit, D=Distinction.

Study Group

Another study group is currently running for anyone who is interested in Module 3 – Diseases. Some of those taking part will take the exam, but the study groups are for people to learn more about bees and beekeeping, and to be able to look after their bees better. We will go through all the modules in time, using the correspondence course questions. These should cover everything necessary for taking the exam, and everything you might want to know about the topic.

Bridget Knutson
Exams Secretary

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

Honorary Members of SBKA

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

Asian Hornets – Remain vigilant



The first sighting of an Asian yellow-legged hornet in the UK this year, was made on October 8th in Ascot Berkshire.

A beekeeper spotted some hornets outside one of his hives and filmed them. He also spotted a dead hornet and photographed it. He then reported his sightings and sent the photos through the Asian Hornet Watch app.

Since then, a team of NBU Bee Inspectors have found and destroyed a nest in the area.

Please keep your eyes peeled for Asian Hornets around your hives, and on the ivy which is currently in flower. Get a cup of tea and spend some time just watching.

If you have any monitoring traps, then check them frequently.

Get the Asian Hornet Watch app on your phone.

If you aren't sure whether what you have seen is an Asian hornet, get a photo anyway, and contact asianhornet@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

