

# HONEYCRAFT

September 2018



***Public Enemy Number One***

**ASIAN HORNET WEEK 10-16 SEPTEMBER**

*Dorset County Beekeepers Association*

# Editor's Note

The capture of an Asian Hornet in Dorset (Poole) and the more recent confirmed sighting in Fowey, in the south of Cornwall ( <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/asian-hornet-identified-in-cornwall> ) shows that this menace is no longer someone else's problem—living close to the south coast we are all vulnerable and we, the beekeepers, are the first line of defence. Kevin Pope describes steps we can each take to combat the danger in his article on page 3; the upcoming Asian Hornet Week will serve as a useful focus for our initial efforts.

It has been a busy but sometimes difficult summer with unusual weather but most seem to have come through it well, although wasps are causing major problems in many apiaries currently. The full story can be found in the branch and show reports which form the skeleton of this issue. Elsewhere, Kevin Pope describes the year from his perspective as our Seasonal Beekeeper; there is full information on the Dorset Convention to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> October and Liz Rescorla tells us what is going on in the wider world of the South West Beekeepers. In the first of a series of articles Terry Payne reviews two books that he believes should be found on every beekeeper's bookshelf (Christmas present hint?), while Lesley Gasson outlines the training that is available on a county-wide basis over the coming winter months. Cuffy Laverton describes how she has tackled varroa in her apiary and Sue Billington tells of a fascinating 'away-day' enjoyed by several members of BSBKA. I hope that everyone finds something of relevance and interest.

The next issue will be published in early January 2019 and so please let me have all contributions before Christmas.

Finally, if anyone is short of ideas for Christmas presents, you need look no further than the catalogues and websites of our advertisers. Please support them.

*Tim Villiers, Editor*

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# The Inspector Reports

The 2018 season started with a bizarre pattern of weather with snow toward the end of March, making the first inspection of my own bees very late and I could not even get a vehicle to some of my apiaries until mid-April. The rape was, in rough terms, a month late to really come into flower and yield any nectar. In some cases it did not yield at all or very poorly. The hot weather then came with a vengeance and the honey just kept coming. The boxes of honey got heavier making inspecting very hot work; 30°C is too hot to be in a full bee suit, lifting everyone else's honey on and off hives! They say you're never too old to learn, and this year I definitely learnt that I use a lot more calories keeping cool than I do keeping warm; I was in the enviable position of eating more and still losing weight. With all that heat, the ground dried up and the flow came to a sudden halt. As beekeepers, every year we say that it has been an unusual year but I think 2018 really was.

On the disease front, Dorset, and the Southern region generally, has bucked the trend and had much less foul brood than normal. Dorset was way down on the usual count. We only had 6 apiaries with EFB and no AFB detected anywhere. In West Dorset specifically, after 4 years of finding EFB in one hive each year, in 2018 I could not find any, try as I might!

Two apiaries between Dorchester and Yeovil, three apiaries on the Purbecks and the Wareham area, and then one apiary on the Dorset/Hampshire border yielded EFB.

It goes without saying that just because I found so little foul brood, does not mean it is not there. We all need to stay vigilant and check the brood of our bees. If you suspect that there is a problem, please ring me.

There are about 1,100 apiaries in my area. I manage to inspect in the region of 200 annually and so I rely on you, the beekeepers of Dorset to spot the diseased hives. We can then deal with it and hopefully continue to bring the number of cases down. I am sure it is festering somewhere that we do not know about.

And so, on to the exotics, the Small Hive Beetle and Asian Hornet. Early in the season we had a report of SHB in France that turned out to be a false alarm. All season there have been AH reports all over the country and Dorset has had its fair share. Thankfully all turned out to be European Hornets or Giant Wood wasps or another similar insect. That was until the confirmed presence of an Asian Hornet on the Poole to Cherbourg ferry! We have absolutely no idea at the moment whether it was on a day trip from France or if it boarded in Poole----- let's hope it was on a day trip!

The biggest problem that we are all having at the moment is wasps and most of us have traps set already, but can you all please check them every 2 or 3 days in case you have an Asian Hornet trapped in there. Also, why not take your tea or coffee down to the apiary, spend some time watching the front of your hives, just 20 to 30 minutes looking for the AH hawking your bees.

Any sighting—please report to the Non-Native people at [alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk](mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk) or through the iphone and Android app 'Asian Hornet Watch'. Or, use the simple method and phone me and I'll report on your behalf.

Another year where most of the time we have no idea why the bees do what they do. As always though an interesting year and hopefully we have learnt a little more, most of which of course will do us no good next year as the bees will have changed the rules yet again!

Have a good off-season and hopefully I will see you all again next year.

*Kevin Pope*

Seasonal Bee Inspector for Dorset

**THE DORSET CONVENTION**  
**SUNDAY 21ST OCTOBER**  
**AT THE BLANDFORD SCHOOL, MILLDOWN**  
**ROAD BLANDFORD FORUM DORSET**

**Programme for the day**

**9.30 Doors Open**

10.00-11.00 Celia Davis to speak on *In Self Defence*

11.00 -11.30 Coffee/ tea

11.30- 12.30 Pam Hunter to speak on *The Evolution Of Plants and Insects*

12.30- 1.30 Lunch

1.30 -2.30 Dan Basterfield to speak on *Reading Bees*

2.30-3.00 Tea and cake

3.00-4.00 Anne Rowberry to speak on *Shopping for the Colony, where, why how and what bees forage for.*

Tickets for the Dorset Convention are now available for purchase online, and the link to the booking site is <http://buytickets.at/dorsetbka/186441>. Details of the event are given on the booking site, and you can buy tickets for either admission only or admission plus lunch. The lunch provided includes cold meats, cheese, different salads and a pudding it costs £12

The tickets will be emailed to you – and please make sure you bring them with you.

You can also pay £10 on the day at the door but you will not be able to buy the lunch as this has to be booked in advance. You can bring a packed lunch or buy a lunch with your ticket when booking.

**Other attractions**

**Lin Coleman from Stockbridge** Thorne's shop will have a stall selling beekeeping equipment. If you order it before hand I am sure she will bring anything you need with her.

**Northern Bee books** will have a stall of books on Beekeeping; if you want a particular book let me or Jerry Burbidge know to include it in the collection of books

**Tea and cake** provided by Blandford and Sturminster BKA in the afternoon. Lunch is available provided by the Willows tea rooms at £12 to include a light lunch with pudding and can be purchased with your ticket or bring your own packed lunch.

# South West Beekeepers' Forum (SWBKF)

The SWBKF met on 21 August 2018 and was attended by Dorset representatives Ben Benjamin, Liz Rescorla and Chris Slade.

Usually the SWBKF meets in February and November; this was an additional meeting convened to consider the draft of a new BBKA constitution, and to discuss any potential nominations and propositions from the region for the 2019 ADM which may then be further considered in county committee meetings prior to the submission deadline of 19 October 2018.

The constitution is being revised in anticipation of the change of status of the BBKA from a charitable unincorporated association to a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). This followed the approval of the BBKA EC proposition at the 2018 ADM to initiate the process to convert the BBKA to a CIO. Articles about this have appeared in recent issues of BBKA News; information and a copy of the draft constitution which includes amendments following consultation to date are available on the BBKA website.

Considerable work on the draft had already been undertaken, in particular by representatives from West Cornwall, Wiltshire and Dorset and by the SWBKF secretary. The meeting considered the draft document in detail and a number of further amendments were proposed. Following the meeting the same representatives and the SWBKF secretary have completed the revision of the draft constitution and the document has been sent to Stephen Barnes, Chair of BBKA Governance sub-committee.

There was limited time remaining during the meeting for consideration of possible propositions. These included:

- ◆ that BBKA Enterprises be wound up within for example twelve months of the date on which the BBKA becomes a CIO (Wiltshire)
- ◆ that the process of elections to the roles of President, Trustee and Exam Board should be revised to avoid multiple rounds of voting as per the current process (Cornwall)
- ◆ that the BBKA should be represented at and have the opportunity to participate in, perhaps by way of talks or lectures, the Bee Trade Exhibition held each year at Stoneleigh Park and known as Beetradox (Dorset; seconded by Bournemouth and Dorset South)

It was agreed that these propositions will be taken to the respective County Committees for further discussion.

The next meeting of the SWBKF will be in November 2018 when the final papers for the ADM are available and all nominations and propositions will be considered.

*Liz Rescorla*

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## Blandford and Sturminster BKA



A bees nest in a high tree — photo by Ian Condon

What an unusual picture taken by Ian Condon in his local churchyard. The nest could only have reached this size if it was not flooded with rain. The size of this nest is one of the effects of hot weather. Will it still be there in spring after wasps and weather have taken their toll?

The long dry spell seems to have had two effects. One was that early in summer the bees had plenty of time to forage and if there were enough workers the colony did very well. Our association apiary produced over 400lbs of honey. The other effect was that if a colony was slow to build up, the hot weather came and there was almost no nectar in the flowers so there was hardly any honey crop to speak of.

The other effect of the extremes of weather was that in March we had snow and many insects struggled to breed and there was little evidence of wasps. With the long, dry, hot spell they had time to recover and the wasps especially have done well. Our bees in the association apiary were under attack and one of our members said it was like a war zone. We lost a couple of hives. Chris Hayes said that he killed 8 wasps nests near his hives. We rely on a cold snap to reduce their numbers particularly when one thinks of the number of queens each wasp's nest will produce.

We carried out our apiary tidy up on Saturday 25th August and now we are ready for our winter programme. The first talk is on **Monday 10th September in the Shillingstone Church Centre at 7.30pm on Apitherapy**, which is the use of bee products in therapy and how they are obtained. Members of other associations are welcome as we are all part of DBKA.

**On 21st October we have the Dorset Convention at Blandford school** to which I hope most of the members of our association and the rest of Dorset BKA will come. Look at the article on page 4 for the programme for the day.

Finally, on **16th November we have our AGM and association supper in the Shillingstone Church Centre at 7.00pm**. This is usually a social event as well as a way of assessing the activities of the branch for the year.

*Lesley Gasson, Secretary*

# THORNE Sale Days

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## Dorchester and Weymouth

[dorchesterandweymouthbka.com](http://dorchesterandweymouthbka.com)

We have some excellent apiary meetings this summer. Unfortunately, despite the wonderful hot weather for most of the time, on the day of one apiary meeting it poured with rain so that one had to be cancelled..



We have been to an apiary at the bottom of the White Horse Hill, a beautiful valley hidden away at the foot of Northdown Farm known locally as 'Paradise Valley'. Pictured left is some of us enjoying a cup of tea after the apiary meeting. Below is the visit to our second apiary meeting in Weymouth at Furzehill Farm. We had a good number of different hives to look at including a Top Bar and a Poly Hive. We have also been practising using a refractometer. After the meeting we had a wonderful tea in the adjoining orchard.

Also pictured below is using a Flow Hive which we were able to look at another apiary meeting on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> August at Stinsford. It was interesting to look at this alternative way of getting your honey out.



The last meeting we had on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> August was an Extraction Afternoon, where we used a 9-frame tangential and a 4-frame radial extractor as well as showing how to get cut-comb honey. After the exertion of doing the extraction we had time for tea and cakes on the patio followed up by a demo on how to get rid of the scum on top of jars. It is a very simple method but we will keep it as an Association secret!

I would like to thank all the members who hosted these apiary meetings. Without their support and willingness to offer up their sites we would not have had this wonderful programme of meetings, all of which were different and all very enjoyable.

*Sally Leslie, Secretary*

# East Dorset BKA

EDBKA was delighted to hear that all seven of its Basic Assessment candidates passed. This is great reflection on the standard of training that now forms a vital part of the association in the winter months.

The first venture into Queen Rearing at our apiary was a great success with members learning the art of 'grafting' and two queen cells introduced into our hives. Our bees have flourished not least in a set of poly nucs introduced this year. Members have reported good honey crops this season and we look forward to seeing a large number of entries to our honey show on 22nd September.



Finally on two sadder notes EDBKA lost one of its finest members this year in Lesley Searle. Lesley served as Chairman for some time and was an excellent beekeeper.

Secondly the association was visited by Kevin Pope to report the sighting (and capture) of an Asian Hornet on the Poole ferry some weeks ago. We posted alerts on our Facebook site which was viewed by over 50,000 people and gave advice to members on traps to set up in their apiaries. To-date we have received no notification of other sightings or nest sites so can only hope the insect was a travelling passenger from France.

*Ivor Kemp*

## Editor's Note.

For those hoping for a report on the BEEVAC, I understand that it has not been called into use in 2018, but EDBKA are looking forward to making good use of it in 2019!



## News from West Dorset

I am sitting in front of my computer writing this article feeling really cold; it is raining and very gloomy. This is the first time I have been able to say this for some time, as we have had months of wonderful weather, for us well as our bees. Nearly everyone I have spoken to has had good crop of honey this year, which gives encouragement to carry on with the worry of the Asian Hornet so close; wasps this year are in abundance decimating a few colonies and varroa mites are still causing problems. While counts have been low this year, do not be fooled. In our case the mites are there; just given the first treatment and we were surprised at how many dropped.

Getting back to activities within our group, we had a super bee safari with Kevin Pope SBI in June, visiting three apiaries around the Maiden Newton and Cerne Abbas area. We all enjoyed the day, having lovely refreshments too, which are always dear to the beekeepers hearts!! I am sure we could not survive without tea and cake.

We attended the Beaminster ECO Day where we had stall with information mainly on the Asian Hornet - showing people the difference between the hornets, wasps and bees.



Our teaching apiary has had its ups and down this year, with drone layers and two swarms collected to boost of stocks, but which did not turn out very well either, both having poor queens. With two nucs from one of members we are now up to four colonies. Surprisingly, we actually we took off more honey than we expected, which was a bonus, so we were able to show a few of our beginners on how to extract it.

### All very welcome to come along to any of our talks and apiary meetings

DATE	TIME	EVENT	WHERE	DETAILS
TUESDAY 16TH OCTOBER	7.30PM	Talk by Clare Densley Bee Unit Manager at Buckfast Abbey on Pheromone Communication	CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP HALL  EAST ST CAR PARK, BRIDPORT  DT6 3 QD	
TUESDAY 13TH NOVEMBER	7.30PM	WDBKA AGM	As above	
TUESDAY 11TH DECEMBER	7.30PM	CHRISTMAS GET TOGETHER	As above	

*Carole Brown*

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01308 456210

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Web [www.westdorsetbees.org](http://www.westdorsetbees.org)

# SHOW REPORTS

## Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show

Unlike the other two Dorset honey shows, the honey part of the G&S show takes place in the Horticultural marquee and is run by the main show committee, rather than being run by beekeepers in a stand-alone tent, as happens at Melplash and Dorchester. The absence of active beekeepers in the show organisation results in little promotion happening within the beekeeping community; this is reflected in a limited number of entries as can be seen from the accompanying photographs. Nevertheless entries were of a good standard, with the winners being:

### Bayliss Challenge Shield—Mr Ken Jeanes

Two jars of light , clear, runny honey: Rt Rev'd Michael Beasley

Two jars of medium, clear runny honey: Mr Ken Jeanes

Two jars of naturally granulated honey: Mr Tim Villiers

Three jars with labels as for sale: Dr Sue Billington

Two cartons of cut comb: Mr Richard Norman

One shallow frame for extraction: Mr Ken Jeanes

One piece of beeswax; Mr Ken Jeanes

Two moulded beeswax candles: Mr Ken Jeanes

Two patterned or decorated beeswax candles: Mrs Lesley Gasson

An item of decorated beeswax: Mr Richard Norman

Five hive products: Mrs Sally Leslie

Twelve pieces of honey fudge: Dr Sue Billington

One honey cake: Miss Zoe Hunt



# Melplash Show

We had the Dorset County Honey Show incorporated with our West Dorset Show on 23<sup>rd</sup> August at the Melplash Show ground in Bridport. It is always a great occasion for us, promoting beekeeping to the public. We had a super time, the weather was very kind to us, the marquee was vibrant all day; it is such an attraction for everyone. This year we had the most entries ever—over 180. Suzette Perkins was our judge this year; she kindly stepped in at the last minute as Hazel Blackburn had undergone a knee operation just before the show - but she is booked for next year! Suzette said that the entries were of very good standard this year and a few exhibits were worthy of a National Honey Show entry - praise indeed. Terry Knight was our Steward this year and he thoroughly enjoyed the experience.



The Blue ribbon was awarded to Carole Astbury WDBKA member with her super wax exhibit. Congratulations are in order as Carole who went onto win several cups and trophies;; she is one of our inspiring beekeepers. I was delighted this year as the Novice classes were well supported, as several of our beginners entered which was fabulous. Their entries were of very good standard too.

The winner of the Novice prize which also has an entry to the National Show went to Stephanie Rowse ( she had to have a lot of arm twisting for her to enter in the first place but it was worth it in the end!!) She had never entered the show before. Well done, expect great things next year!!

## SHOW RESULTS 2018

### COUNTY CUPS AND TROPHIES

**Dorset Challenge Cup** awarded to member gaining most points in classes 470 - 491

**Winner - Carole Astbury**

**FW Carter Challenge Cup** awarded to member gaining most points in classes 472, 477, 478, 478A, 479

**Winner - Carole Brown**



**Betty Courtney Memorial Shield** awarded to member gaining most points in classes 481, 481A, 482, 489, 490

**Winners – Carole Astbury**

**Pearl Wellington Memorial Shield** awarded to member gaining most points in classes 485, 486, 486A, 491

**Winner - Carole Astbury**

**Novice Trophy & National Honey Show Card** awarded to member gaining most points in classes 476A, 476B, 476C

**Winner - Stephanie Rowse**

**Branch Shield and £20** awarded to the Branch with the most points in classes 470 - 491

**Winner - West Dorset BKA**

# Dorset Country Agricultural Show 2018

## Dorchester & Weymouth Beekeepers Honey Show

The first weekend in September is always The County Show in Dorchester and once again Dorchester & Weymouth Beekeepers were given a tent in the Countryside Area. The weather was good all week for the build-up and on both the show days.

Although dwarfed by the much larger Homecraft marquee next door, our tent was always thronged by the public wanting to "see the bees", roll a candle or buy some honey. Skep making outside attracted many questions including, "how do I clean my granny's large laundry basket?". With great sentimental value this needed to be treated carefully!

Congratulations to Michael Hill for winning Best in Show with *Three Jars, as for Sale* along with a barrow load of cups and awards. The Interbranch Composite Challenge had three Associations enter this year, with first new-to-the-Class West Dorset BKA winning first prize. (Note to D & W members – must do better next year).

Show Judge Margaret Davies kindly awarded the prizes. The Massey Trophy, which is for the most points accumulated from the day added to those won at the Melplash Show, was awarded to Carole Astbury from Beaminster. Veteran exhibitor Paul Watkins won the most points in the Open Classes. A full list of awards is shown below.

Once again I would like to thank all who entered their honey in the show and helped over the long weekend. Hopefully, you will all be back next year.

*Richard Norman*

### Prizewinners

#### THOMSON CUP

Most points in the Show

To: **Paul Watkins**

From: **Poole**

#### MILES PERPETUAL CHALLENGE CUP

Member gaining most points from Dorchester & Weymouth BKA Classes

To: **Liz Rescorla**

From: **Martinstown**

#### DORCHESTER & WEYMOUTH BEEKEEPERS CUP

Most points in the Novice Classes

To: **Michael Hill**

From: **Dorchester**

#### JOHN CHAMBERS MEMORIAL TROPHY

Best exhibit by a Dorchester & Weymouth BKA member

To: **Liz Rescorla**

From: **Martinstown**

#### BBKA BLUE RIBBON

Best exhibit in the Show

To: **Michael Hill**

From: **Dorchester**

#### DORCHESTER & WEYMOUTH BKA CHALLENGE

Winner of special Composite Class by a Dorset Association

To: **West Dorset BKA**

#### The MASSEY Trophy:

Member of any Dorset Association getting the most points In the Open Classes in each Dorset Honey Show:

To: **Carole Astbury**

#### OPEN CLASSES

Light Honey : **Carole Astbury**

Medium Honey: **Paul Watkins**

Crystallised Honey: **Paul Watkins**

Soft Set Honey: **Liz Rescorla**

*Continued on p. 14*

*Dorchester prizewinners - continued from p.13*

Chunk Honey: **Carole Astbury**

Three jars of honey labelled as for sale: **Michael Hill**

Frame of comb honey: **Paul Watkins**

Cake of Beeswax: **Paul Watkins**

Five 1oz blocks of beeswax: **Carole Astbury**

Five pieces of decorative beeswax: **Carole Astbury**

Candles made in a mould: **Lesley Gasson**

Candles made by any other means: **Dennis Clemens**

Dry Mead: **Carole Astbury**

Sweet Mead: **Carole Astbury**

Photograph: **Hilary Green**

Shop counter display: **Sally Leslie**

Composite class: **Paul Watkins**

Observation Hive: **Richard Norman**

Beeswax Polish: **Dennis Clemens**

#### **SECTION OPEN ONLY TO MEMBERS OF DORCHESTER & WEYMOUTH BKA**

Medium Honey: **Liz Rescorla**

Crystallised Honey: **Liz Rescorla**

Soft Set Honey: **Liz Rescorla**

Cut Comb: **Lindsay Burstall**

Candles made by any other means: **Peter Vojak**

#### **NOVICE CLASSES**

Clear Honey: **Michael Hill**

#### **SPONSORED PRIZES**

CMS Weymouth MOT test for Class 6 (2 jars of chunk honey) **Carole Astbury**

Thornes £10 voucher for Class 21 (Shop Counter Display) **Sally Leslie**

Thornes £10 voucher for Class 14 (5 pieces of moulded decorative beeswax) **Carole Astbury**

Fargo Trading for an Apidea/ Double Strainer for Class 23 Observation Hive: **Richard Norman**

# A Grand Day Out

or

## How the other half (Twickenham & Thames Valley BKA) lives

We know that every BKA does things slightly differently, has access to different funds, different premises, and perhaps different expectations of both members and neighbours. But it is always worth seeing how others do it and Twickenham & Thames Valley BKA are certainly worth a visit.

One very hot Sunday in July an intrepid party from BSBKA set off for London, thinking we were slightly mad when temperatures of over 30°C had been forecast. How wrong we were! From the time we arrived, to be greeted with freshly-brewed coffee, to the time we left refusing yet more supremely -aged mead, we were treated superbly.

This BKA was founded 100 years ago so they have had time to hone their skills. Sometime in the 50s several foresighted members bought a slice of



land bang slap in the middle of Twickenham – half way between the rugby stadium and the train station. A hall was built and an apiary established. Over the intervening years they have added a classroom, a library, a kitchen, a well equipped laboratory, a shop, a store room and an extracting room which must be the envy of all. Just to elaborate on the extracting room. It is a cross between a wet room, with washable walls and floors, and an operating theatre – with gleaming stainless steels surfaces and equipment. Members can book this asset for £5 a day! It is ideal as a venue for certain examinations too.

Outside in this oasis, we feasted beneath an Indian/Chinese [origin vague] bee tree. It has been there for some 30 years, is about 30 foot tall and covered in nectar rich blossom and trillions of humming bees. They even choreographed the atmosphere!

Next to the 16 or so hives of all shapes and sizes, including top-bar and Dartington, stood the framework of the outside teaching area: during the summer term there is a constant stream of primary school children, sometimes three classes of 30 children, and on three days a week. They split their time between 'inside' instruction in the classroom and outside in a 'fruit cage' made of entomological netting. This means the children have all the atmosphere of standing close to those working with the bees, hearing them humming and smelling the honey, but without anyone being agitated about bees on their veils or climbing up their sleeves.



The association also runs a winter course as a precursor to the practical year 1 and 2 summer courses. All are over-subscribed. They have over two hundred members, but all aspects are run by volunteers.

By the time we left we were all full of ideas and delighted that they have accepted our invitation for a return visit next year. If you have the opportunity to visit I would take it. You can be assured of an afternoon spent with like-minded people discussing topics of mutual interest.

Thank you Twickenham and Thames Valley for hosting us, and thank you, Lesley, for arranging it all.

*Sue Billington*

# Shook Swarm as an antidote to varroa?

Having had various misfortunes, I was presented last June with two hives on Langstroth frames but they failed to convert to my nationals in time for the winter. The late spring and holidays prevented action 'til April when I decided the only way to get a transfer was to shook swarm and replace with my clean national brood box.

Hive 1 was a small group with a yellow queen. I moved the queen into the new box, clean frames, with feed, took the old frames up the garden and shook and left them to it.

Hive 2 was bursting at the seams but few bees seemed to be out flying. It seems I have a bad case of wing paralysis; few wings looked actually deformed. I took the queen and repeated the exercise. The ground and plants were covered with crawling, climbing bees.

A day later, not seeing, but not wanting varroa, I treated the remaining bees with some just-in-date hiveclean, dribbling it along each gap between frames.

Next week Hive 1 was building up and eggs present, and so it continued, expanding so much I split the hive at the end of June.

Hive 2 was down to 3 frames of bees and struggling. After 3 weeks I had no queen, no eggs and still few bees. After 5 weeks I found eggs and a new queen, now generously daubed with red.

Into July and I felt guilty at not checking for varroa. I put in the varroa trays. These are metal onto which I put 1" squares in permanent pen then painted with a thin layer of cooking oil to act as glue. After a week, rather longer than intended, I removed them with baited breath. First glance showed much wax and a number of body parts but no varroa. I finely inspected with a large magnifier. NO VARROA. This same result from the other two hives. Never have I had such absence of varroa!! (but I think the wing paralysis may still be around – and that, they now say, may be a genetic problem from the queen. Time will tell!)

Bothered by varroa: try the drastic method, hold your breath and hope!

*Cuffy Laverton*

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# Winter and Spring Education and Enjoyment

What are you going to do when the days shorten and the nights lengthen? The obvious answer is join one of the modular courses being run this winter/spring. They are interesting and enjoyable even if you do not take the exam; you will also be a more insightful beekeeper. The 6 sessions last about 2 hours with a break in the middle for coffee. They are run on weekday evenings. To make a course worthwhile there needs to be at least 6 people on the course otherwise there is not enough discussion or stimulation.

There are three modules on offer

**Module 1** for those who have taken their basic beekeeping exam and want to take things further or just want to learn more about their bees. Module 1 is called Honeybee management and follows very closely on from the kind of information needed for the basic exam. This will be run in both Stratton and Shillingstone over 6 weeks.

**Module 2** is called Honeybee Products and Forage and is about the way honey and wax are produced and their content as well as about pollination. Our bees are more important in this country for their pollination than their honey production. This will only be run in either Shillingstone or Stratton depending on the number of those interested.

**Module 6** is called Honeybee Behaviour and is about how bees are governed by pheromones and includes the interpretation of the waggle dance and other social signals in the hive. This will be run in both Stratton and Shillingstone.

**If you would like to join any of these courses please let me know by 15th September.**

Besides letting me know which course you are interested in I want to know whether you would prefer to go to Shillingstone or Stratton and whether you would like to join a course in October and November or in February and March. Encourage your beekeeper friends to join you so that we have at least 6 people on the course. The tutors will be Terry Payne, Liz Rescorla and myself, Lesley Gasson and the cost of the will be £60 for the 6 sessions.

[Lesley Gasson 0258 861690 or !\[\]\(2b0f02b4a70afa75816b328a8d32ffe7\_img.jpg\)](mailto:imgasson@btinternet.com)



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# Building a Bee Library

I am often asked by new beekeepers 'what books should I buy?'

This is a loaded question because it must always depend upon the individual and also because personal opinions will vary, so I can only speak about those books which have helped and interested me, first as a beginner myself as well as later on as my understanding increased.

With this in mind the first book on my list has to be :

## **Ted Hooper's "Guide to Bees and Honey"**

First written in 1976, it is very easy to read and will lead the new beekeeper through all the essential stages of the craft with an emphasis on understanding the bee's behaviour and its biology.

Because of that, the book provides valuable advice and support as one's own knowledge develops, including harvesting your honey and wax to a standard suitable for sale or showing.

The book is on the BBKA's own list of recommended reading and it is useful to know that their examination board often make reference to it.

As I said earlier, the book was written more than 40 years ago and, although the principles described are still very sound, there have been legislative changes in the interim which could pull you up short.

Do please make allowance, for example, that Ted could not have known that PDB (parodichloro-benzine) for the control of wax moth would one day be prohibited!

There are very few text books which do not become out of date the moment they are published and any student must be prepared to keep abreast of current regulations.

There is now a fifth edition available through Amazon or E H Thorne (about £13.00) but I haven't read it myself so I don't know if this has been rectified but, nevertheless, I strongly recommend this book to any new beekeeper who I am sure will find it a constantly valuable reference book.

Another book high on my list is:

## **"Practical Beekeeping" by Clive de Bruyn.**

This was first published in 1997 and is available for about £25.00.

Again, it is a comprehensive guide for everything that a new beekeeper might wish to know, well illustrated with diagrams and photographs, some of them in colour.

It also adopts a very practical approach with clear text and an easy manner, making it easy to read.

A practical feature that appealed to me is the use of summaries throughout the book of what had just been described in more detail in the texts.

It means that you don't have to read the whole chapter all over again to pick up on a particular point – Clive has done that for you.

I hope these thoughts will prove useful to anyone just starting out and I will offer advice on other books in later editions of Honeycraft.

Happy reading,

*Terry Payne*



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# Dorset Dates

Members of all Associations are **WELCOME** at all meetings. However, if it is not your parent branch, please contact the organiser beforehand so that they can ensure that enough seats (cake?) for all attendees.

Date	Branch	Event	Contact	Venue
10 September 7.30pm	BSBKA	Talk of Apitherapy	Lesley Gasson	Shillingstone Church Centre
22 September	East Dorset	Honey Show	Jenny Wellman	West Moors
16 October 7.30pm	West Dorset	Talk by Clare Densley of Buckfast Abbey on Phermone Communication	Carole Brown	Christian Fellowship Hall, East St Car Park, Bridport DT6 3QD
<b>21 October</b>	<b>DBKA</b>	<b>DORSET CONVENTION</b>	<b>Lesley Gasson</b>	<b>Blandford Forum</b>
13 November 7.30pm	WDBKA	AGM	Carole Brown	Christian Fellowship Hall, East St Car Park, Bridport DT6 3QD
16 November 7.00pm	BSBKA	AGM and Supper	Lesley Gasson	Shillingstone Church Centre
17 November 2.00pm	Dorchester & Weymouth	Talk by Derek Mitchell on Thermal Insulation	Sally Leslie	See D&W website
November	SWBKF	Meeting	Liz Rescorla	
11 December 7.30pm	WDBKA	Christmas Get Together	Carole Brown	Christian Fellowship Hall, East St Car Park, Bridport DT6 3QD

### WANTED - a proof-reader for HoneyCraft.

Do you have a sharp eye and can you spare 1-2 hours, four times p.a to check HoneyCraft (on your computer, in the comfort of your home or office) before it is distributed to branches?

**If willing and able, or for more information, please contact Tim Villiers**

**tim@familyvilliers.co.uk or 01963 364384**

# Who's Who in the Dorset County Beekeepers Association

President Mr. Richard Norman

Chairman	Mr. Geoff Buckland, The Willows, Icen Lane, Weymouth DT3 5PY 01305 567950 <b>geofbuckland@aol.com</b>
Secretary	VACANT - a volunteer is needed URGENTLY!
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Blandford & Sturminster	Mrs. L. Gasson, The White House, Candys Lane, Shillingstone , DT11 0SF 01258 861690 <b>lmgasson@btinternet.com</b>
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