

HONEYCRAFT

January 2020



A wet winter

photo by Richard Norman

Dorset County Beekeepers Association



Editor's Note

A very Happy New (Blue!) Year to all readers and their bees.

This first issue of the new decade contains ample evidence that beekeeping is more than just a summer activity. The branch reports describe meetings galore, with plenty of informative talks and social events in all parts of the county and surrounding areas. BBKA module courses are in full swing and it won't be long before the branch beginners' courses are under way. A very full schedule of forthcoming events can be found on pp 29-30.

A number of more formal meetings have been held: Lesley Gasson reports on the BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM), Liz Rescorla has been to a meeting of the South West Beekeepers Federation and the Dorset County BKA council has met. Reports on all these are included in this issue of Honeycraft.

Technology is an ever-present part of modern life: Stephen Potts describes some recent changes to the Dorset BKA website and Chris Harwood has been spending his winter evenings trawling through You-tube for useful instructional videos.

To bring us back to reality Kevin Pope, Dorset's Seasonal Bee Inspector, has produced some photos of things he has seen in 2019 and Mark White reports on the Asian hornet threat which has become all too real in Dorset in 2019. It is clear that we all need to be vigilant and to show our non-beekeeping friends and neighbours what to look out for.

There is a fascinating report on removing bees from a tithe barn in Litton Cheney, an interesting table of foulbrood statistics and an article on bees in literature. Overall, I hope that there is something to interest everyone.

Happy reading.

Tim Villiers

Editor

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Chair Chatter



How much do you sell your honey for? If you look at the three pictures above you will see the wide variations I found in a shop near Kew Gardens. The Manuka honey, which is £34.99 for 750g, is the equivalent of £21.21 a pound. The Salisbury honey is the equivalent of £12.69 per pound and the Richmond Park honey as you can see is £13.50 per pound. The Manuka is always the most suspect as more Manuka honey is sold in the UK than is produced in New Zealand! Do people believe that the more expensive a honey is, the more effective it is in curing all ills? I assume the Richmond Park Honey is more expensive than the Salisbury Honey because people in Kew/Richmond think it is local honey and therefore more prized.

I would love to know who buys honey at these prices. I would also like to know what the beekeepers who produced these honeys were paid for each jar. I imagine there is 100% mark up on the beekeeper's price which would mean the beekeeper getting a wholesale price of at least £6.00 to £6.75 a jar.

When you look at these prices, even though you are far away from London, do not undersell your honey!

Lesley Gasson

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From Somerset

Email: michaeljohnduckett@gmail.com

BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM)

The 2020 meeting (held on 11 January) went off more smoothly than usual because there was not much to discuss and also because Margaret Murdin was an excellent president; everyone was only allowed five minutes to speak, so windbags were cut short. The new president is Margaret Wilson who has been the Chair. She will follow in Margaret Murdin's footsteps, I am sure, with no nonsense with windbags.

There is always a clash between large and small associations. If a large association wants its way it calls for a membership vote which means 14 associations can out-vote the rest of the BBKA; this is particularly true of Yorkshire with 1,700 members and Surrey with 1,000 members. As you can imagine this meant small associations stamped their feet and said it was undemocratic. The other internal wrangle was about proxy voting which some remote associations want because it is difficult to get to Warwick in winter and some near ones hate. The morning was taken up with this sort of tiresome nonsense.

The BBKA is building an education centre for teaching the public about bees, which will cost a lot of money. They intend to keep the current apiary at Stoneleigh which is used for practical exams and exam training, so the education centre will have its own apiary and buildings. The BBKA finances are in surplus which means there will be no increase in capitation and they have money to build the education centre.

When it came to the propositions put forward by the associations, four from Yorkshire were withdrawn. Three items that are interest to members are:

- The BBKA is going to insure 15 members of every branch and association who are involved in AHAT teams. These members will have to be registered with the BBKA and undergo some training, so that they know what they are doing. The NBU will still be responsible for catch and release.
- Secondly, the BBKA plans to approach town planning and landscaping trainers to ask for more pollinator trees and pollen producing plants in local authority areas. The BBKA will join in the training to support this.
- The BBKA is going to contact Welsh, Scottish and Irish Beekeepers associations in the Confederation of National Beekeeping Associations (CONBA) to ask that the UK join Apimondia. England cannot join Apimondia alone; it can only do so as part of the UK.

You will get a fuller record of the ADM in BBKA News but this summary will give you my Dorset perspective.

Lesley Gasson

County Chair and ADM delegate

South West Beekeepers' Forum

Meeting held on 26 November 2019 at Taunton Division Apiary, Heatherton Park

The meeting was chaired by Lyndsay Bryning, West Cornwall BKA in the absence of Peter Darley, BADS BKA and current Chairman of the SWBKF

The meeting welcomed Graham Caines, incoming Chairman of West Cornwall BKA

Minutes of the meeting held on 27 August 2019 were approved. Matters arising from the minutes were as follows:

- ◆ Simon Jones, Regional Bee Inspector (RBI), noted that:
 - Peter Davies, Seasonal Bee Inspector will not be running training days in respect of Asian hornets as stated in the minutes but will be running Bee Health Days which will include sessions on Asian hornets.
 - package bees are still inspected at the point of exit from the country of origin.
- ◆ The meeting on 27 August had considered whether Hampshire BKA should continue to be included in SWBKF circulations given non-attendance and lack of communication. Mike Duffin, Bournemouth and Dorset South (BADS) BKA advised that he and Peter Darley had made contact with New Forest BKA and it was agreed to keep Hants BKA on the circulation list for the time being
- ◆ Kathy Lovegrove, Secretary, SWBKF advised the meeting of continuing difficulties in accessing the accounts held for the former South West Counties Joint Consultative Committee (SWCJCC). Problems had arisen following the change of Treasurer/account holder and the change of name from SWCJCC to SWBKF. The roles of Secretary and Treasurer had been combined on a temporary basis; the Secretary felt that this was no longer sustainable. Nominations were invited for the role of Treasurer; the meeting unanimously approved the appointment of Roland (Ben) Benjamin, Dorset BKA with immediate effect. The new Treasurer will open a bank account for the SWBKF and oversee the closure of the existing SWCJCC accounts and the transfer of existing funds

SWBKF Regional Asian Hornet Training Day – Somerset AHAT Convention

This event will take place on 25 January 2020 at Bridgwater. It is open to all AHAT team leaders and first responders from the South West counties. The aims of the event are to provide attendees with the practical skills and knowledge to be able to fulfil the different roles of an AHAT, and to explore ways of working together effectively across the South West region.

Following discussion about the fairest way of charging participating associations for attendance, it was agreed that association contributions would be based on numbers of registered members. The Secretary and Treasurer of SWBKF will produce the figures and advise associations of the contributions required. In view of the current SWBKF bank account issues payments will be received and processed by Somerset BKA.

It was noted that the BBKA has arranged an Asian hornet conference in Warwick on 8 February 2020 for all area association AHAT members; attendance is free. National Bee Unit representatives have been invited.

The meeting agreed that all participating associations should consider setting up Asian hornet contingency/response budgets; some associations have already done so as part of their AH strategy.

BBKA ADM 11 January 2020

The SWBKF has no mandating power in respect of the ADM; representatives discussed the nominations and propositions, which are available to read on the BBKA website, and will report back to their committees. Dorset BKA's delegate to the 2020 ADM is Lesley Gasson, BSN BKA and the Dorset BKA committee meeting will take place on 4 January 2020.

continued on p.6

SWBKF Report (continued)

Applications for membership of the BBKA by associations: generally these are not supported by SWBKF because of the potential negative effects of increased fragmentation, including increased costs and the difficulty of achieving representative voting at ADMs.

OTHER MATTERS

Honey adulteration: the meeting discussed recent reports that Tesco had withdrawn its own-brand honey following concerns that it could have been adulterated with syrup. It was agreed that the BBKA should have a role in raising public awareness about the wider issue of honey adulteration. Simon Jones, RBI advised that Bee Inspectors carry out honey sampling on a regular basis throughout each year for a range of adulterants.

Future SWBKF guests: Somerset BKA made a request on behalf of Sharon Blake, Editor of BBKA News, to attend SWBKF meetings and this was approved. BADS BKA advised that Bob Maurer would like to attend and this was also approved.

The issue of pursuing the question of an independent Standing Orders Committee with the BBKA was deferred to the next meeting, which will be held on 11 February 2020

Liz Rescorla

Dorset BKA Representative to SWBKF [other representatives: Ben Benjamin, Chris Slade]

Notes:

The South West Beekeepers' Forum (SWBKF) comprises 12 Member Associations (Avon, Bournemouth & Dorset South, West Cornwall, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Salisbury, Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon and Jersey).

The aim of the SWBKF is to further the interests of beekeepers by providing a forum for consultation among the participating area association members of the British Beekeepers' Association of the South West and the Channel Islands on matters of concern and interest to beekeepers, including but not limited to the policies and activities of the BBKA. It generally meets twice a year, with additional meetings if this is felt necessary.

The forum has no mandating powers; however it can make representations on behalf of beekeepers and association members, invite speakers or advisers, and make donations and assist with funding in respect of projects approved by the forum.

Each member association can nominate a maximum of three representatives. Guests with a standing invitation to attend and speak, but who have no vote, include former representatives from participating associations who have served as President of the BBKA, current Regional Bee Inspectors for the Western, Southern and South West regions, and Link Trustees assigned to the participating associations.

DORSET BKA Council Meeting 4 January 2020 Summary of Business



[Any queries regarding this summary should be addressed in the first instance to Branch Secretaries or Branch Council Delegates]

The minutes of the Council meeting 18 September 2019 were accepted and signed as a true record.

Reports were received from:

County Treasurer: The bank account at 31 Dec 19 stood at £9,168.76. This is about £2,000 more than at this time last year. 2019 income and expenditure (excluding BBKA capitation) can be summarised as:

Income £		Expenditure £	
General	2,844	General	776
HoneyCraft	137	Donations	214
Education	305	Education	185

General income was high because the County Fee was still being levied at £6.00 for the main capitation in April. This figure will halve in the coming year.

County AHAT Coordinator: contacts with neighbouring associations have been developed and training material has been updated and made available to branch associations. Dorset AHAT representatives will be attending the Somerset BKA Asian Hornet Convention (local training) on 25 January 2020 and the BBKA Asian Hornet Conference (policy development) on 8 February 2020. AHAT coordinators will then meet to prepare a report and county plan for the Dorset BKA AGM on 8 March.

Education Officer: there are 3 BBKA module study groups being run this winter/spring. Liz Rescorla (Module 2), Lesley Gasson (Module 3). Terry Payne (Module 7). Lesley Gasson will run a preparation course in March/April 2020 for anyone interested in taking the BBKA Basic Assessment. Branch associations are running winter/spring courses for new beekeepers. There will be a Dorset BKA Convention on 4 October 2020 at which the theme will be queen bees; details will be notified separately.

Examinations Secretary: five candidates sat Module examinations in November 2019. One candidate sat Module 1, 3 candidates sat Module 6 and 1 candidate sat Module 7.

County Webmaster: full availability has been achieved on the site; work is ongoing on search engine optimisation. Data protection policy and diary date pages have been added; HoneyCraft is available on the site in PDF form and there are links for regional beekeeping associations and useful bee-related sites.

Membership Secretary: there has been little change since the last report in HoneyCraft. Some members have used the online membership renewal system. Figures for the year end 2019 show 514 Full members, 6 Junior, 45 Partner and 6 Country.

continued on p.8

County Matters

Arrangements for the Dorset BKA 2020 AGM to be held at 3.30 pm on Sunday 8 March were discussed; these will be notified separately.

South West Beekeepers' Forum (SWBKF): a report of the meeting on 26 November 2019 will be published in HoneyCraft. Dorset BKA's contribution of £100.40 towards the cost of the Somerset Asian Hornet Convention, designed as a training day for all AHAT members in SWBKF participating associations, was approved for payment.

County Honey Show: at the Council meeting on 18 September 2019 it was unanimously agreed that the County Honey Show should be discontinued, on the grounds that it has ceased to reflect county interest. In 2018 the show was amalgamated with the Melplash Show, and in 2019 with the Dorset County Show. The county had agreed in 2018 to fund prize money for the County Honey Show; this did not appear to have resulted in an increase in the number of entries. In 2019 only one exhibitor entered both Melplash and Dorchester Shows. Proposals were received and approved to distribute the cups and trophies between branch associations, which will continue to hold their own honey shows.

BBKA Matters

The Dorset BKA delegate to the 2020 BBKA ADM is Lesley Gasson. The Council considered the nominations and propositions, available to view on the BBKA website. Dorset BKA is not making or seconding any nominations or propositions at this ADM.

Future Meetings

Dorset BKA AGM 8 March 2020

Council meetings: 13 May 2020, 16 September 2020, 9 January 2021

L Rescorla - County Secretary

DORSET COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

SUNDAY 8TH MARCH 2020

SUNNINGHILL COMMUNITY HALL
CULLIFORD ROAD NORTH, DORCHESTER DT1 1EB

Open meeting and talk followed by
DORSET AGM (Members only)

THE PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

FROM 1.30 PM	MEET & GREET over tea/coffee and biscuits
2.00 PM	TALK – Margaret Ginman, General Secretary, Bee Farmers' Association
3.00 PM	TEA hosted by Dorchester & Weymouth BKA
3.30 PM	DORSET COUNTY BKA AGM – Members only

DORSET BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

NOTIFICATION OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (MEMBERS ONLY)

SUNDAY 8 MARCH 2020 AT 3.30 PM

PRECEDED BY A TALK BY MARGARET GINMAN, GENERAL SECRETARY, BEE FARMERS' ASSOCIATION AT 2.00 PM (ALL WELCOME)

**IN THE SUNNINGHILL COMMUNITY HALL
CULLIFORD ROAD NORTH, DORCHESTER DT1 1EB**

To consider the business on the following agenda:

Apologies for absence

Minutes of the previous AGM 10 March 2019

Matters arising

Council reports: Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Secretary, Education Officer, Examinations Secretary, Honeycraft Editor, Honey Show Secretary

Asian Hornet Action Team – report/plans

County Honey Show

Adoption of Audited Accounts

County Capitation Fee

Election of Officers and Others: President, Vice-presidents, Chairman, Vice-chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Education Officer, Examinations Secretary, Membership Secretary, HoneyCraft Editor, Accounts Examiner, Website Manager, SWCJCC Delegates, Beecraft Trustees, National Honey Show Delegate

Any Other Business

Presentations

At this meeting all members are entitled to speak and vote

Nominations for elected positions should be sent to the County Secretary, Liz Rescorla winkyozz@uwclub.net by Sunday 23 February 2020

(Nominations should include the name of the nominee, the post for which they have been nominated, and the names of the proposer and seconder as well as confirmation that the nominee accepts the nomination)

The Inspector Reports..... or Kevin's Collage

There is not a lot to report at this time of year on the inspecting front so I thought that a few photos of some of the things I came across in 2019 might be of interest. While there was less EFB in historical terms than we have had in the past, there was more than I would like to see! *Kevin Pope*



European Foul Brood



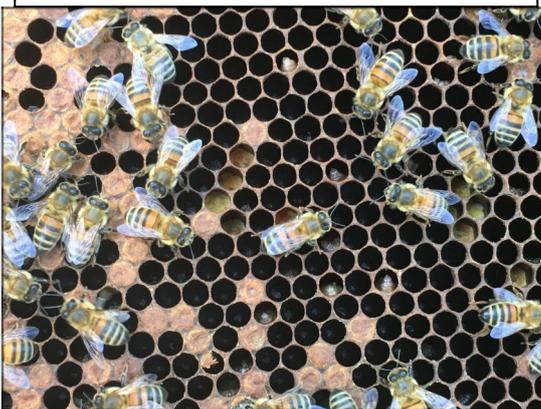
Bald Brood



Laying workers



Drone laying queen



SAC brood



Braula ceca: first I have seen in a hive in the south of England for 25 Years (since Varroa Treatments)



Swarm in oak tree



Wild comb

Continued from p.10

two Asian hornet photographs , taken at Highcliffe in October 2019



hornet



nest



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Asian Hornets

So it's been a busy summer for Dorset AHATs in getting the message out to the public. Little did we know that we would be thrown into the spotlight and the national news in October. Out of the blue we received a call from the National Bee Unit on 1st October informing us that their team had confirmed a sighting of an Asian hornet in the back garden of an address in Highcliffe, near Christchurch. The person reporting the sighting was not a beekeeper, which shows that our publicity is working; they had seen one of our posters in a garden centre near Wool and realised that the wasps in their garden actually looked like the hornets on the poster. In fact, the householder had a small concentration of hornets visiting her ivy bushes and reported this on the non-native line with a photo.

We mobilised our team and I went to the location and saw a few Asian hornets feasting on prawns, which were being used as a bait. This was the first time I had seen hornets on the UK mainland. We were asked to keep the information under wraps until the department confirmed the sighting at 5pm on the 2nd October. Given the location of the sighting on the Dorset border we started to work with the New Forest AHATs and also the Bournemouth and Dorset South AHATs. We were also inundated with media requests and some were farmed out to Hampshire Beekeepers, but we were on the BBC and ITV, while there were reports in The Times, Guardian, the Daily Mail and the Mirror who got the story completely wrong, telling their readers that Giant Asian Hornets the size of cars had arrived to kill us all and enslave the survivors!

On 2nd October the NBU allowed our team to shadow them in the track and trace process to locate the nest. Peter Crabbe, Stephen Potts and Kerry Redman were all able to take an active role in the process, from marking to monitoring flight paths and timing flights to triangulate the nest. Luckily the nest was found a few hours later, a few hundred yards from the sighting in a small park area. The nest was destroyed a few days later at dusk as is standard. The area was put under observation for a two-week period which is standard to establish and mop up any stray hornets. On this occasion another nest was discovered. It seems that the nest was in the transition from a primary and a secondary nest a very short distance apart.

I have to say I am proud of the team and their response to a situation which, if I am honest, caught us by surprise but we made a significant contribution to the response to the sighting and gained very useful experience thereby. We are not out of the woods by a long shot; we need to monitor the area more closely than simply putting out monitoring traps. I have updated the AHATs training for all associations following my time in Jersey and have tried to write up a report of my time on the island but it's taken some time due to the October incident.

Hope everyone has had a good Christmas and New Year.

Mark White

Editor's Note. Mark wrote this report before Christmas. Please see the notes on the DBKA meeting (p. 7) for a summary of future AHAT training and plans.



Dorset County BKA Website

The Dorset Beekeepers website (dorsetbka.com) is undergoing a lot of changes. Below the surface we have added various features that make it easier for Google to index the site and therefore make it easier for you to find it – and others who may be thinking of taking up beekeeping.

What you as a user will see is that we have added some extra pages:

<http://dorsetbka.com/area-links> shows links to other areas. I find that browsing other area websites gives me an insight into how others run their website. In addition there are a lot of beekeepers out there who write blogs and give other ways that they have cured the sort of problems we all face.

<http://dorsetbka.com/national-links> shows a variety of links relevant to beekeepers. The links vary from a list of suppliers through to videos on aspects of bee keeping to academic papers on current beekeeping.

<http://dorsetbka.com/dates-for-your-diary> is a list of events in the area. I have included places as far afield as Frome which is a fair trek for those living in Weymouth or Lyme Regis but for those in the north of the county it is not such a long trek and there are a lot of interesting talks going on in Dorset and further afield.

There will be more changes to the site and it is worth keeping your eyes on the home page on a regular basis to see what has been added since your last visit.

Stephen Potts
Website Manager

When things don't go quite right!

I am grateful to Liz Rescorla for permission to use these two pictures. Ed



Creative Bees !

Cappings were put back on the hive to allow the bees to clean them up—they were there for a little over a week, which gave the bees time to indulge in some sculpting!



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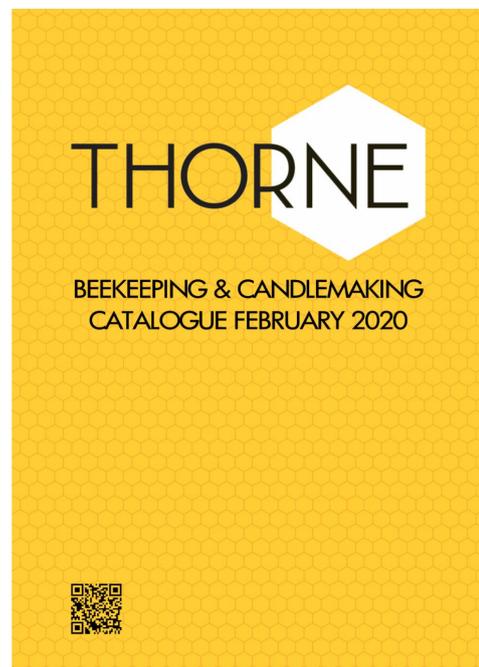
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NEW CATALOGUE



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Blandford and Sturminster BKA



We do not meet in December as an association but bring the calendar year to a close with our AGM in November. One way of ensuring a good attendance at the AGM is to produce food and wine and so the committee produced a delicious hot meal and Tim, our chairman, wine for every table, once the formal business had been completed. The committee has not changed much since last year so there is little to report on that front. Our chairman does a three-year stint which means we have to find a new one every so often, but that will be for 2020. Dorset is fortunate that five of our committee members are also office holders in the DBKA and have been for some time! We hope that this will change as people from other associations come forward at the DBKA AGM to take up some of these positions.

It has been a mild but wet winter so far. Bees don't mind cold so much but they hate damp which makes the combs go mouldy. Mouldy honey kills bees. Good air circulation should keep mould at bay. When you look at your bees in the spring look to see how many leaks you have in your hives and how many mouldy combs you have. What sort of air circulation has each hive got?

We have two indoor meetings in January and February. The first is on **Monday 13th January** in the Shillingstone Church Centre at 7.30pm which is **Beekeeper's Question Time**. All are invited from other associations if you would like to join us. The three master beekeepers will be answering questions. Terry Payne will answer on anything to do with theoretical questions of beekeeping, Geoff Buckland to answer questions on queens, queen raising and bee husbandry and Lesley Gasson on hive products and what you can do with honey, wax and propolis.

In February Susie Perkins, the Honey Judge, is coming to talk to us about showing honey etc. and what judges look for. Susie's talk is on **Monday 24th February at 7.30pm** in the Shillingstone Church Centre.

March is a month of preparation for beekeeping. The Dorset AGM is on 8th March, The Bee Tradex is on Saturday 14th March all day. This is a good opportunity to stock up on a variety of bee supplies at a reasonable price; also there are always interesting speakers to listen to. Finally, we have our apiary tidy and frame-making day on Saturday 28th March, followed by lunch for the kindly souls who help put the apiary into good order.

Lesley Gasson

WANTED

Mobile nuc/observation hive to hold five 14x12 frames

Contact/offers to: Nick Knight

thunderdrones1@outlook.com

Tel: 07427 986224



Our last event of the year was held on Wednesday 11th December.



Instead of our normal skittles we held a 'Bee-Racing' evening complete with course and bees named after some of our members. So we had 'Norman Conquest' and 'Bovington Boy' among others.

Nick Knight had made everything and was the Grandmaster for the evening. You can just see the bees in the attached photo, they were a work of art.

Bets were flying about, money changed hands and we all had a lot of fun. Now we know how it all works its something I am sure we will be doing again

Before that, we held our AGM on 14th November.

Before the AGM started Kevin Pope gave us a very brief update on how the season has gone from his perspective as our SBI and also an update on the situation with the Asian Hornet.

Kevin started by saying that he had found a lot of cases of bald brood and sac brood; this was especially noticeable in the South. Bee Inspectors are not sure why this has been so prevalent this year, particularly in this area. Due to the bad weather in June, a lot of new queens did not get mated which led to quite a few instances of laying workers.

A small amount of European foul brood (EFB) was found in Dorset, around the Blandford to Shaftesbury area and the Dorchester to Wareham area. To his surprise Kevin found a Braula (Bee Louse). The larvae tunnel through the wax honeycomb and the adults are found on the bodies of honey bees. There is some debate as to whether the bee louse causes damage to the honey bee. Kevin had not seen one since varroa arrived, roughly 25 years ago. The varroa treatment has virtually destroyed the population. A word of warning from Kevin: - Do not use Api-Life Var on poly hives as one of the essential oils eats into polystyrene!

Asian Hornet: Kevin advised that the Bee Inspectors have now become much more adept at tracking the hornets and by using triangulation they can narrow the search down to the actual tree. However, the hornets are not just using trees,;one nest was found in an old log on the ground covered in ivy.

Every year feels as if we have been busy and 2019 has been no exception. Looking back... we have had a 'get-together' every month, an apiary safari with Kevin in June and attended three events, one of which was Beefest at The Great Field at Poundbury. There is confirmation that this will be held again this year but bigger and better! Also, of course, the Dorchester Show where we tried some new attractions which seemed to work well. We also ran a six-week beginners course from mid-March to mid-April.

We have quite a few events lined up for 2020, which include a skep-making Day on 1st February and a talk on queen-rearing by Kevin Pope on Thursday 27th February. We would like to invite members from other associations to Kevin's talk which will be at the Colliton Club, Dorchester at 7.30pm.

I have a feeling that 2020 will be just as busy as 2019 as regards events. It seems that another hot year is forecast so we will see how this works out with regard to bees and beekeeping.

Sally Leslie

East Dorset BKA

With the passing of the winter solstice, many members will have completed their winter varroa treatments by now, and checked/topped up their winter feeds, leaving not much more to do, beekeeping wise, until the spring, other than making new frames and supers etc for the coming season.

The EDBKA members winter talks are a great way to while away those winter evenings, and we would love to see as many members as possible at our winter talks. These take place at the usual venue, the Broadstone Community & Arts Centre, Dunyeats Road at 19.30.

The dates and topics are;

31st January Mr Robert Field to talk on '12 Years of Commercial Beekeeping'

28th February talk topic to be decided.

27th March Mr Mark White to talk on the Asian Hornet.

Looking ahead, the EDBKA AGM has been booked for 16th October 2020 for the same venue.

Our training programme is now fully booked, with 30 new and prospective beekeepers signed up for the training course, which is carried out over 12 sessions, six of which are in the classroom, followed by six at the association's training apiary. The course participants should be receiving their programme for the sessions in the next few days.

The association apiary has been very successful this year, with the largest honey crop the association has ever produced, and lovely docile bees thanks to new queens that have mainly been raised on site. This is all down to the hard work, which often goes unseen, by Paul Heawood, our Apiary Manager – well done Paul!

The number of paid-up members stands at 123 members, with 13 pending (unpaid) thanks to the BBKA's new 'ER2' system and the hard work of Rich Greening, our membership secretary, in getting to grips with the system. Well done Rich!

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all EDBKA and Dorset BKA members a happy and prosperous 2020, and hope you all have a great beekeeping year!

Jim Dunne

Emergency feeding

"It's also important to act quickly if you think a hive is really short of stores. Bees share their resources equally and fairly whilst they have them. This means the bees within a hive can all die out within a few hours of each other if they have no more food to share".

Kindly submitted by Richard Norman



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- Books
- Beeswax Foundation
- Glass Jars & Containers
- Marking
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Sherborne Beekeeping Association

The first of our winter talks was given by Brigid Strawbridge Howard on solitary bees. As usual, it was a fascinating talk and her visual aids were truly excellent.

In January we have our annual festive meal on 17th at The Mitre Inn, Sandford Orcas at 7:30pm.

On February 10th John Barber will be talking about anaphalactic shock.

Then on March 2nd, Paula Carnell, who is the Natural Beekeeper at The Newt in Somerset, will be talking about her life 'From Artist to Bees'.

On April 6th John Bebbington will explore the role of bees and show how flowers have developed structures to ensure pollination.

We will be running an 'Introduction to Beekeeping Course' starting on 6th March for six weeks Theory and followed by three weeks of practical at the apiary in Leweston. There are still a few places available, so if you are interested please contact me.

Judy Easdale

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DON'T FORGET !

Dorset Beekeepers Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

at 3.30pm on Sunday 8th March 2020

Sunninghill Community Hall
Culliford Road North, Dorchester DT1 1EB
(N.B. Plenty of parking available)

Guest Speaker at 2.00pm: **Margaret Ginman,**
General Secretary, The Bee Farmers Association

"Margaret is an excellent and informative speaker"



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News from West Dorset BKA—December 2019



All the seven hives at our teaching apiary were fed in September and are thankfully still heavy - but we have fondant at the ready just in case. We will be treating them with Api-Bioxal when the weather turns colder in mid December/ January. They all have padding under the roof to keep the warmth in. We still in the process of revamping our apiary with two new log cabins; one is now finished. A big thank you to everyone who has helped so far. We just need some fine weather for the next cabin when it arrives next year -- as we are all getting fed up with the rain! We are hoping these will be fully in use by March. Lots to sort out between now and then. We are hoping to do some queen-rearing in 2020, if we have a hive or two strong enough, which should be fun and educational.

We had a great talk by Dan Basterfield on "Dissecting bees explained". It was mesmerizing -- he had such a detailed film of bees being taken apart, taken by him with his super-duper camera. It was a fascinating evening enjoyed by everyone. Then came our AGM with Kevin Pope giving us a talk on his eventful year and showing us photos of some of the bee hives he had seen -- quite an eye-opener on how not to keep bees. He also gave us an update on the Asian hornet. Then our AGM took place with 40 members attending, which was the most we have ever had -- may it continue. No changes on the committee this year as everyone was willing to stand again, and there were no other nominees.

As we had such a good year honey-wise at the apiary we decided to have a stall at the Arts Centre for their Bridport Christmas Cheer evening on 4th December. It was all good fun, with not a lot of honey sold but a tremendous amount of interest in tasting the honey and chatting about bees in general. Sorry it seems to me in most of the photos these days!

Our Christmas get-together was very well supported by 32 members on 10th December, considering it was such an awful stormy night. We had short presentation by Sarah and myself on our trip to Apimondia in Montréal, followed by festive eats and mulled wine.



We are looking forward to listening to Wally Shaw, a well-known beekeeper and author of many bee books, coming all the way from Wales on the 14th January. This is our annual joint meeting with East Devon. This year the venue will be in the Christian Fellowship Hall, Bridport and hopefully it will attract more beekeepers from Dorset and Somerset to come along.

This will be followed by our annual lunch at the Bridport & West Dorset Golf club on 19th January, where no doubt there will be lots of speculation on the beekeeping year ahead.

Then our beginners course, which is over subscribed again, will start on 28th January -- so it is all go down in the west on the beekeeping front!!.

Carole Brown
WDBKA Secretary

What's Ahead

All are very welcome to come along to any of our events

Tuesday 14th January	7.30pm	<p>Joint talk with East Devon BKA</p> <p>Wally Shaw, a well known apiarist, who has written several books on beekeeping. His talk will be on:</p> <p><i>'Self-Sufficiency, Locally Adapted Bees and Apicentric Beekeeping'</i></p>	<p>Christian Fellowship Hall, East Street Car Park BRIDPORT DT6 3 QD</p>	All welcome
Sunday 19th January	12.30pm for 1pm	<p>New Year get-together Lunch</p>	<p>Bridport & West Dorset Golf Club DT6 4PS</p>	<p>Smart casual dress please</p>
Tuesday 24th March	7.30pm	<p>Talk by Lynne Ingram</p> <p>Master Beekeeper from Somerset on:</p> <p><i>Dance like no one's watching'</i></p>	<p>Christian Fellowship Hall East street Car Park BRIDPORT DT6 3 QD</p>	All welcome

Early Warning — a date for your diary

Sunday 4th October 2020

DORSET CONVENTION at Blandford School

Theme : "Queen Bees of all species"

Speakers likely to include: Dave Goulson, Clive de Bruyn and Simon Jones

Beekeeping Videos

This is the second article in the beekeeping videos series. As before, there is a clickable link to the video mentioned, but, as usual, playing that video causes a list of similar videos to be displayed alongside which might also be of interest.

The second of the beginner beekeeper's videos is <https://youtu.be/IGDXJUgyZaI> : Getting Started in Beekeeping 2: June, July & August. This is the busiest time of the beekeeping year and a time when most beekeepers watch for signs of swarming.

Once beginners start to feel more confident about dealing with bees they might want to consider collecting a swarm. There is a video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gihM9T7QQlk> Your own club will probably maintain a swarm list, which is a list of names and contact details of those in the area who would like to collect swarms. The club's swarm list co-ordinator will probably also hold a list of names of people looking to acquire swarms. The co-ordinator may also be able to advise on a suitable fee to charge the recipient for this.

Once they have left the hive, the main problem with swarms is that the bees may end up somewhere unsuitable, which is where they conflict with people. Making a swarm trap enables some of these loose swarms to be rehoused. Swarm trap construction is described in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HS37gIEsWuw>

Beekeeping microscopy enables you to understand a lot about the health of your bees and perform a health check at the start and end of each season. The first of our beekeeping microscopy videos is <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CgfXulicDM> which is "How to diagnose Nosema". The video describes the methodology in detail. If you find it fascinating you might even go on to buy 'Practical Microscopy for Beekeepers' by Bob Maurer, Master Beekeeper, and even a microscope!

If the weather gets cold for a protracted period over the winter, unless you use WBC hives you might want to consider adding insulation to your hives. The purpose is not the bees' comfort, but rather reducing condensation. The centre of the hive is warm and slightly damp. When the warm, damp air meets cold hive walls, the moisture in the warm air condenses on the inside of the hive and bacteria and fungus start to grow. These can kill bees or damage the overall health of the hive. The video at <https://youtu.be/egix-XrxDKk> describes the simple building of foam insulators. These are becoming more popular.

The varroa mite is a serious pest in itself and also it introduces other pathogens. Anti-varroa treatments seem to be successful only in limiting the numbers of the mite, not in eradicating it. If the infestation is bad, then it may be necessary to change the wax in the brood box and remove infected eggs, larvae and pupae. One of the most successful ways of doing this is to use "shook swarm". This is demonstrated at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4HtEloe_rg . It is also beneficial to change the wax in the brood box about every three years for general bee health reasons. Shook swarm is useful for that too.

Finally, this issue's swarm control method is Pagden Method. There is a very clear description of this in the video cartoon at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCReKLV6CB4>

Chris Harwood

Removal of bees from Tithe Barn, Litton Cheney



In November I received a call from one of our members who had been contacted by the owner of the above tithe barn about some bees in the roof. Did I know anyone who could remove them? It was an urgent request as the building was due to be demolished within the next week.

I couldn't find anyone who would do the job but I did get a suggestion that there was a posting on the BBKA Chat Forum about someone who does remove bees from roofs and gave me a link to his Facebook page. I passed this on to the owner, not really being hopeful it would come to anything as the person lived in Cheshire. However...I couldn't have been more wrong. This person (Chris Bowyer) came all the way down to tackle a job that was anything but easy. He has sent me his report of the whole event with a link to his site which has more photos and videos (lovely shot of Chesil Beach). This is his report:

"I arrived down in Dorset just after lunchtime on Friday 29/11/2019 after a four hour drive. I had been sent several photos of the building and had the plan in mind as to what I was going to do. I was hoping that there would be enough daylight left in the day to get the job done. Everything was going ok and to plan, however, when I began to carefully cut through the plasterboard some of it, due to it being damp fell away from the joists and opened up the hive.



I was now in a quandary! It was now time for Plan B and the colony had to be left as it had started to go dark. I checked into a local hotel for the night - The Ilchester Arms. The following morning I was up early, had breakfast and then off to the nearest timber yard at Bridport Timber for a piece of Plywood to replace the plasterboard and to box in the bees without having to disturb any of the combs.



So with the plywood, I covered the bottom of the cavity and one end between the joists. The other end I closed up using a cut piece of varroa mesh floor for transporting the bees and for ventilation. Now came the task of dropping the box down carefully and getting it into the back of my van. Luckily I had been speaking to the couple who lived next door. They had been providing much-needed brews and were intrigued at what I revealed and showed them. The gentleman gave me a hand to drop the box down and carry it to my van. Job completed! I gave the neighbours a couple of jars of my Cheshire honey for their hospitality and assistance.

If the building/roof the bees were in wasn't being demolished I wouldn't have taken on such a job at this time of year. The job would have then been to remove the plasterboard and cut the combs out a piece at a time and framed up and placed into a hive. It would have been left to at least March for that to be done and a much lengthier tricky sticky process."



Bees finally ready for transportation

Chris is a member of Cheshire Beekeepers Association and has 30+ colonies / Hives

<https://www.facebook.com/Honey-Bee-Removal-Relocation-UK-156066391617063/>

Sally Leslie

Bees in literature

Where there's bees there's honey, and where there's honey there's mead". So said the toper (drunkard) in the Thomas Hardy novel *Wessex Tales*.

When I came across this quote I wanted to know more and set off on a search for any mention of bees or bee keeping in novels from the 19th and 20th Centuries and beyond. My first search was in the books of Sherlock Holmes but most of his exploits were in London and written before the days of urban beekeeping. My next search was in the novels of Jane Austen. Beekeeping was seen very much as a hobby for those more closely connected with the land than with the landed gentry and again my search proved fruitless.

I did strike lucky with *Dracula* by Bram Stoker who gave us the useful advice that, "Chasing an errant swarm of bees is nothing to following a naked lunatic." Personally give me the swarm of bees any time. What is more it was pointed out that "The nosferatu do not die like the bee when he sting once."

So it was back to Thomas Hardy and the *Wessex Tales*. Not only does he know that honey leads to mead but also: "..honey sells well, and we ourselves can make shift with a drop o' small mead and metheglin for common use from the comb-washings."

And for those who do not know what is "metheglin" - it is mead that has been flavoured with herbs or spices.

One must be careful in the making of mead for in *Tess* we are told that "I found the mead so extremely alcoholic that it was quite unfit for use as a beverage, but as valuable as rum or brandy in an emergency; so i have put it in my medicine-closet."

But it was not just in the use of mead that Hardy had advice for the beekeeper. In *The Trumpet Major* we are advised that "It was the universal custom thereabout to wake the bees by tapping at their hives whenever a death occurred in the household, under the belief that if this were not done the bees themselves would pine away and perish during the ensuing year." So now you know.

But first you have to get your bees. "Sometimes throughout a whole season all the swarms would alight on the lowest attainable bough – such as part of a currant-bush or espalier apple-tree; next year they would, with just the same unanimity, make straight off to the uppermost member of some tall, gaunt costard, or quarrenden, and there defy all invaders who did not come armed with ladders and staves to take them."

However *Bathsheba* was one to spot the destination of a swarm for "It was in the latter part of June, and the day after the interview with Troy in the hayfield, that *Bathsheba* was standing in her garden, watching a swarm in the air and guessing their probable settling place."

Ideally "The bustling swarm had swept the sky in a scattered and uniform haze, which now thickened to a nebulous centre: this glided on to a bough and grew still denser, till it formed a solid black spot upon the light."

Once the bees were located handling the bees was not a problem as:

"She had dressed the hive with herbs and honey, fetched a ladder, brush, and crook, made herself impregnable with armour of leather gloves, straw hat, and large gauze veil -- once green but now faded to snuff colour -- and ascended a dozen rungs of the ladder."

Moving the hives was not a problem either as once captured they could be carried "in each hand a hive of bees tied in a cloth to prevent their egress."

In fact Thomas Hardy seems to have a good understanding in the ways of the bees until he advises us that, "With no longer a companion to distract her, *Tess* fell more deeply into reverie than ever, her back leaning against the hives."

However the bees were productive and in *Tess* we are advised that "She passed with her candle into an inner room, where, among other utensils, were two large brown pans, containing together perhaps a hundredweight of liquid honey, the produce of the bees during the foregoing summer. and on a shelf over the pans was a smooth and solid yellow mass of a hemispherical form, consisting of beeswax from the same take of honey."

For those post metrication that is about 50 kilograms of honey.

Reading the novels of Thomas Hardy is a relaxing way to learn aspects of beekeeping but don't forget

"marrying a woman is a thing you can do at any moment; but a swarm o' bees won't come for the asking."

Stephen Potts

Foubrood in Dorset 1999-2018

Richard Norman has extracted the foulbrood statistics from the NBY Beebase register. The information is given by number of incidents and alphabetically.

SY98 WAREHAM	98	ABBOTSBURY	3
SZ09 WEST BOURNEMOUTH	75	ADBER	1
SY99 LYTCHETT MATRAVERS	70	BERE REGIS	69
SY89 BERE REGIS	69	BLANDFORD FORUM	19
SZ08 BROWNSEA ISLAND	52	BRIDPORT	4
SY88 WOOL	51	BROADWEY	19
SU10 RINGWOOD	39	BROWNSEA ISLAND	52
SU00 FERNDOWN	33	CHETTLE	1
SU11 FORDINGBRIDGE	22	CHRISTCHURCH	10
SY68 BROADWEY	19	CRANBORNE	2
ST80 BLANDFORD FORUM	19	EVERSHOT	8
SY79 PUDDLETOWN	18	FERNDOWN	33
SY78 WEST KNIGHTON	15	FORDINGBRIDGE	22
ST81 IWERNE MINSTER	15	IWERNE MINSTER	15
ST60 MINTERNE MAGNA	12	LYME REGIS	4
SZ19 CHRISTCHURCH	10	LYTCHETT MATRAVERS	70
ST90 TARRANT RUSHTON	10	MAPPOWDER	2
ST50 EVERSHOT	8	MARLOW	3
SY67 WEYMOUTH	7	MINTERNE MAGNA	12
SY69 STRATTON	7	NEW MILTON	1
ST61 SHERBORNE	6	PUDDLETOWN	18
SY49 BRIDPORT	4	RINGWOOD	39
SY39 LYME REGIS	4	SHERBORNE	6
SU88 MARLOW	3	STRATTON	7
SY58 ABBOTSBURY	3	STURMINSTER NEWTON	1
ST51 YEOVIL (SOMERSET)	2	SWANAGE	1
SU01 CRANBORNE	2	TARRANT RUSHTON	10
ST70 MAPPOWDER	2	WAREHAM	98
ST71 STURMINSTER NEWTON	1	WEST BOURNEMOUTH	75
ST62 ADBER	1	WEST KNIGHTON	15
SZ07 SWANAGE	1	WEYMOUTH	7
SZ29 NEW MILTON	1	WOOL	51
ST91 CHETTLE	1	WORTH MATRAVERS	1
SY97 WORTH MATRAVERS	1	YEOVIL (SOMERSET)	2
	681		

NB The named town/parish is only a guide.

The infected colonies could be

anywhere in the 10k grid square. e.g. Brownsea Island includes part of the mainland.

Dorset Dates

Continued on p.30

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

Date / Time	Branch	Event	Contact	Venue
Monday 13 January 7.30pm	Blandford & Sturminster Newton BKA	Beekeepers Question Time. Three Master Beekeepers will answer questions on any beekeeping and hive products related questions.	Lesley Gasson	Shillingstone Church Centre
Tuesday 14 January 7.30pm	West Dorset BKA	Joint meeting with East Devon Talk by Wally Shaw from Wales on 'Self-Sufficiency, Locally Adapted Bees and Apicentric Beekeeping'	Carole Brown	Christian Fellowship Hall, East St car park, Bridport DT6 3QD
Sunday 19 January 12.30 for 1.00pm	West Dorset BKA	New Year get-together lunch (Smart casual dress)	Carole Brown	Bridport & West Dorset Golf Club DT6 4PS
Tuesday 28 January	West Dorset BKA	Start of Beginners' course	Carole Brown	
Friday 31 January 7.30pm	East Dorset BKA	Talk by Robert Field on "12 years of commercial beekeeping"	Jenny Wellman	Broadstone Community & Arts Centre
Saturday 1 February	Dorchester & Weymouth BKA	Skep making day	Richard Norman (01305 786585) richard@wykeregis19.plus.com	
Monday 10 February	Sherborne BKA	Talk by John Barber on Anaphalactic Shock	Judy Easdale	
Monday 24 February 7.30pm	Blandford & Sturminster Newton BKA	Talk by Susie Perkins, Honey Show judge	Lesley Gasson	Shillingstone Church Centre
Thursday 27 February 7.30pm	Dorchester & Weymouth BKA	Talk on queen rearing by Kevin Pope	Sally Leslie	Colliton Club Dorchester

Date / Time	Branch	Event	Contact	Venue
Monday 2 March	Sherborne BKA	Talk by Paula Carnell from The Newt in Somerset on "From artist to bees"	Judy Easdale	
Friday 6 March	Sherborne BKA	First day of "Introduction to Beekeeping" course	Judy Easdale	
Sunday 8 March 2.00pm and 3.30pm	Dorset County BKA	AGM (3.30pm) Preceded by a talk by Margaret Ginman Gen Sec, The Bee Farmers Assoc		
Saturday 14 March		Bee Tradex		Stoneleigh
Tuesday 24 March	West Dorset BKA	Talk by Lynne Ingram (Master Beekeeper from Somers- set) on "Dance like no one's watching"	Carole Brown	Christian Fellowship Hall, East St car park, Bridport DT6 3QD
Friday 27 March 7.30pm	East Dorset BKA	Talk by Mark White on Asian Hornets	Jenny Wellman	Broadstone Community & Arts Centre
Saturday 28 March	Blandford & Sturminster Newton BKA	Apiary tidy and frame making	Lesley Gasson	Shillingstone
3-5 April	BBKA	Spring Convention		Harper Adams University, Newport Shropshire
Saturday 4 April	Blandford & Sturminster Newton BKA	"Introduction to Beekeeping" day and start of beginners course	Lesley Gasson	Shillingstone
Monday 6 April	Sherborne BKA	Talk by John Bebbington on Bees and plant structures to aid pollination.		
Sunday 4 October		Dorset County BKA convention		Blandford

Who's Who in the Dorset County Beekeepers' Association

President Richard Norman

Vice Presidents: Ken Bishop, Mervyn Bown, Chris Slade

Chair	Lesley Gasson,	
Vice-chair	Trevor Ford	trevorlanners@gmail.com
Secretary	Liz Rescorla, 01305 889916	winkyozz@uwclub.net
Treasurer	Robert Camping, 01202 849338	yewcot@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Ben Benjamin	chrisbenbenjamin@googlemail.com
Education Officer	Geoff Buckland, 01305 567950	geofbuckland@aol.com
Examinations Secretary	Terry Payne, 01747 811251	twpayne@btopenworld.com
Honeycraft Editor	Tim Villiers, 01963 364384	tim@familyvilliers.co.uk
Website Manager	Stephen Potts	sbfpotts@gmail.com <u>web site</u> www.dorsetBKA.com
Asian Hornet Co-ordinator	Mark White 07747 620920	markaj2000@hotmail.com

Blandford & Sturminster	Lesley Gasson, 01258 861690	lmgasson@btinternet.com
Dorchester & Weymouth	Sally Leslie, 01305 823043	dwbkasecretary@gmail.com
East Dorset	Jenny Wellman, 01202 873292	jenny@jenny32.plus.com
Sherborne	Judy Easdale, 01963 220984	sherbornebee@hotmail.co.uk
West Dorset	Carole Brown 01308-456210	secretary@westdorsetbees.org.uk

Seasonal Bee Inspector	Kevin Pope 07775 119466	kevin.pope@apha.gov.uk