

WVBKA Charity Registration Number: 517008

**Pre-Christmas lunch
Saturday 3rd December**

This year's pre-Christmas lunch will be held again at The Castlefields on Saturday, 3rd December. If you would like to attend then please complete and send the attached form to June Williams by 14th November. The price is slightly up on last year but it does include coffee and a mini mince pie. We hope to see as many of you there as possible, especially those who were awarded trophies at the Honey Show. There will be a raffle as usual so contributions of modest seasonal items will be much appreciated.

§



Diary Dates

November 16th

- Planning meeting

December 3rd

- Christmas lunch

2017

January 18th

- Committee meeting - pre AGM

February 18th

- AGM 2:30pm Moccas Hall

§

Queen Colour of the Year 2016

is: **WEITTE**



Honey Show & Harvest Lunch

This year's Honey Show was held at Poston Mill, near Peterchurch. We had the use of a large upstairs room which was great for the running of the judging and for lunch afterwards.



Honey entries into the show were up on last year, I think because the honey crop was so poor in 2015, in some areas. However, surprisingly the number of cooking entries was way down – one member scooping the prizes unchallenged in some categories.



The quality of the honey entered was very good and the Judge, Dave Williams, spent time explaining why some of the entries were better than others, if only by a fraction.



In the Novice Honey Class Ruth Taylor was a runaway winner and she also received the award for Best in Show for her Honey. For the first time in a long while the Heather Honey cup was competed for by two members, who bought along some interesting examples.

Following the judging we all enjoyed a lovely roast beef lunch, ending with the presentation of cups and certificates.

§



Asian hornet update

The National Bee Unit (NBU) has confirmed a sighting of the Asian hornet north of the Mendip Hills in Somerset. A three mile surveillance zone has been set up and a local control centre will be opened.

The following has been received from the NBU on 04/10/2016. We recommend you give it your close attention and continue to remain on alert for any potential sightings of Asian hornets. The NBU has confirmed a sighting of the Asian hornet north of the Mendip Hills in Somerset. The Asian hornet is smaller than our native hornet and poses no greater risk to human health than a bee. However, they do pose a risk to honey bees. Work to identify, destroy and remove any nests is already underway, which will include:

- setting up a three mile surveillance zone around the location of the initial sighting
- opening a local control centre to coordinate the response
- deploying bee inspectors across the area that will use infrared cameras and traps to locate any nests
- readying nest disposal experts who will use pesticides to kill the hornets and destroy any nests.

Nicola Spence, Defra Deputy Director for Plant and Bee Health, said: *"We have been anticipating the arrival of the Asian hornet for some years and are implementing our well-established protocol to eradicate them and control their spread. It is important to remember they pose no greater risk to human health than a bee, though we recognise the damage they can cause to honey bee colonies. That's why we are taking swift and robust action to identify and destroy any nests. We remain vigilant across the country, working closely with the National Bee Unit and their nationwide network of bee inspectors."*

The first Asian hornet confirmed in the UK was discovered in the Tetbury area. A nest in the area has since been found, treated with pesticide and destroyed. No further live Asian hornets have been sighted in the area since the nest was removed. Bee inspectors in Somerset will be supported by nest disposal experts who will use an approved pesticide to destroy any hornets and remove any nests. The Asian hornet arrived in France in 2004 and is now common across large areas of Europe. It was discovered for the first time in Jersey and Alderney this summer.

For advice on what to do if you believe you have seen an Asian hornet please go to the non-native species website at <http://tinyurl.com/h98uc2d>

Anyone who believes they have found a nest should not go near it and report it to alernonnative@ceh.ac.uk

The cost of eradication on private land will be met by APHA. For details on the appearance of an Asian hornet go to the Bee Base guide or the non-native species identification guide. Further advice can be found on the National Bee Unit website at <http://tinyurl.com/z2vtpb7> including husbandry advice. It is very important that beekeepers remain vigilant and monitor their apiaries and surrounding forage for any Asian hornet activity. At this time of the year, Asian hornets can be seen foraging on the ivy for nectar and preying on other foraging insects for protein. Traps should also be hung out and closely monitored. When using bait, please refrain from using light beer or larger mixed with sugar as this does not work. In France a dark beer, mixed with 25ml of strawberry syrup and 25ml of orange liqueur has proven to work well. Additionally, a protein bait of mashed fish e.g. prawns or trout, diluted to 25% has also proven effective.

Anyone wishing to make their own traps may find the following factsheet useful: <http://tinyurl.com/gwj5qn2>

You can also find wasp and hornet traps (Vaso traps) on the BBKA website: <http://tinyurl.com/jzpx79d>

Please continue to monitor your own apiaries using hornet traps and encourage those whom you know are not registered on the NBU database to sign up. For further information and interview please contact: Diane Roberts BBKA press officer at diane.roberts@bbka.org.uk 07841-625797 

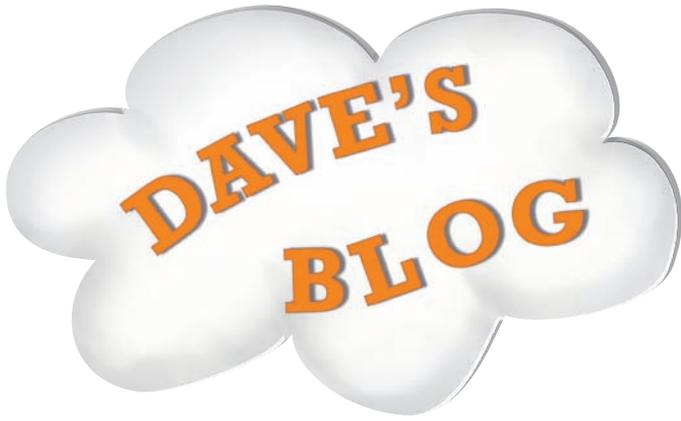
Asian Hornets: **Don't panic - but be prepared!**

So the bad news is that the first Asian Hornets have been spotted in mainland UK, the good news is that APHA have worked very quickly in Gloucestershire to find and destroy the nest. The sighting in Somerset has not resulted in the locating of a nest yet.

It seems inevitable that this pest is going to become established in the UK eventually and we will have to learn to cope with this. We can learn from France where they have had this problem for a while. The use of traps in apiaries in the spring has been shown to reduce the amount of these hornets in an area, presumably by capturing queens, before they can establish a nest. It also means you can capture specimens and alert APHA. So we all need to learn how to build and bait suitable traps, and I would suggest we start now, so we are ready. There is information on the NBU website at:

www.nationalbeeunit.com on how to make a trap from a lemonade type bottle. We will plan a workshop in February or March down at the apiary and for those that find the plans hard to follow we will do a Blue Peter session and get everyone making their own.

Peter W



Notes for November

Hi everybody, I'm writing these notes on the 20th October 2016. By the time they reach you I wouldn't be surprised if the bees have gone into cluster, although they don't seem inclined this morning. When I went to let my animals out the bees were flying and gathering pollen which should stand them in good stead to go through the winter, a little late pollen is probably quite good for them as they will store it for next year ready for use in the spring.

What can we say about last year? Well according to reports it has been a mixed bag up and down the country with some beekeepers saying they have quite a substantial crop, others saying it was quite poor. All in all, I suppose it's been one of those average seasons. I do hope you've all fed your bees and carried out the various treatments necessary. If you failed to treat your bees for Varroa all is not lost, you can treat them with oxalic acid later on.

Make sure your hives are tied down and having adequate protection from the elements is important. Don't forget to re-check the bees have actually received the food which you gave them, be aware of silent robbing. You may well ask – what is silent robbing? Well it's very simple, it is when a hive of bees detects a source of food in another hive and it silently takes advantage by quietly sneaking a little here and there, leaving the other colony short of food. This isn't all that common but it does occasionally happen.

If you've fed your bees properly, then they will probably consume between 1 to 1 ½ lbs of food per week until we get to mid-February, when they will gradually increase. That is the time you will need to be aware that they are consuming ever increasing amounts as they progress in size and the weather improves. The tell-tale signs are there if you look carefully. Towards the end of February you will see little bits of wax and debris at the hive entrance; this is quite natural and is a fair indication that all is okay within the colony. Recognising the signs enables the beekeeper to read what is going on in the colony without disturbance, you don't want to be poking

around at that time of year, releasing all the warm air that the bees have generated into the atmosphere. A cursory look of 15 to 20 seconds is permissible but do not overdo it. Subjecting brood nests to extreme temperature is not a good thing as the bees have to work harder to re-establish the brood nest again, at a time when the bees are at their lowest in numbers, any undue disturbance should be kept to a minimum.

Now what do I know? I was recently called to a property locally which had bees in the soffit board facing south. The scaffolders had refused to do any work because of the bees so I was called to see if I could help. This was in February 2016, when the weather was relatively mild, but still quite cold. Having teased the bees out of the cavity, I had my doubts whether they would survive. There were two or three small pieces of sealed brood which were put in a frame in a nucleus box and banked up with some combs which I had in store which had plenty of honey in them. All the rubbish was placed on the crown board above. At this point I was unsure whether they would actually survive but I need not have worried. They gradually gained in strength with my help, teasing old bits of comb over the crown board to get every last vestige of honey which they stored naturally. I did actually see the queen and was not too impressed. She seemed quite old but I was pleasantly surprised to see her build a good colony during the following season, so you see bees can make you look an absolute idiot on times.

Surviving against all elements

Some years back one of our members died and his bees were left in a perilous condition near a stream so his widow asked me to go along and sort them out. I found two hives vandalised, they had been pushed over and partially submerged in the water. Against all odds the bees had moved up into the area which was above water and despite almost floating away, they were still alive, so you see bees can survive very extreme conditions.

Dave

Postscript to Kington Show

I had the latest Newsletter from Bill Wiggin MP this week and was delighted to see that he had included in it the photograph of himself alongside David Williams and Fletcher Barker with this comment: *"It was a pleasure to meet with members of the Wye Valley Beekeepers Association and see all the excellent work they are doing to protect our local bees, which are so precious to us all."*

Nice publicity for us so I've thanked him.

Rosie Bashford

WVBKA Officers for 2016-17

Chairman:

Peter Woodward

peter_woodward@tesco.net

wvbkachairman@gmail.com

Vice Chairman:

David Williams

07875 426089

General and Honey Show Secretary:

Susan Quigley 01981 510183

New House Farm, Michaelchurch Escley, HR2 0PT

quigley.susan@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer & Membership Secretary:

Lee Howarth

47a Crossways, Peterchurch, HR2 0TQ

wvbkamembers@gmail.com

Librarian:

David Williams

Association Apiary Manager:

- TBC

Newsletter Editor:

Tim & Belinda Dale: beedale@outlook.com

Committee:

- David Bannister
- Geoff Dutson
- Jane Matthews
- Andy Strangeway
- June Williams
- Suzanne Wenczek

Catering Committee:

- Rosemary Bashford
- June Williams

Mentoring Team:

- Geoff Dutson 01981 500491
- Cliff Rose 01981 251844
- David Williams 07875 426089
- Peter Woodward 01981 240280

Technical Advisers:

- Gareth Baker 01600 714323
- Dave Williams 01981 550320
- John Howarth 01981 550733

Website Editor:

Greg Fisk

Honorary Auditor:

Mike Price

Association Website

A few years ago, Bryn Brookes set up the current website that we are using based on a BBKA template. At the time BBKA were helping associations get this technology established and so provided this standard template for associations to work with and they also provided free hosting of the website on their servers. Since that time Greg Fisk has taken on the management of the site while he was newsletter editor and has continued to maintain it for us on an irregular basis. We have not been able to develop the content on the site too much as it is limited by the template format.

This time last year we started looking into developing a new website to freshen up our website and to overcome some of the limitations of what we wanted from it, but did not progress too far with it as no one in the association was prepared to take on the role of webmaster helping with design and maintenance of content. Now events have caught up with us and BBKA have decided to pull the plug on us and from 7th November our website will not be accessible. Notification of this came in a typical bureaucratic diktat from BBKA telling us we had a month before they were shutting us down, with no discussion.

I am currently making plans to have a new website designed for us. There will be a design and development cost for this plus an annual fee for hosting the website on a server. More details of that once we progress.

At this stage I would welcome ideas of what sort of content might be useful to members. Some of the ideas I have so far – and these may not be feasible so don't hold me to it are:

- members only area where we can; locate information specific to members; run a discussion forum on bee related topics
- payment area where we can take money directly for membership, courses and event bookings
- sales area where members can offer second hand equipment for sale, or bee related craft products. We might be able to generate an income if we charge a commission?
- apiary training schedules and meeting preparation materials
- notification from the website via some form of social media of upcoming events (I am out of my depth at this point, but many groups do things like this, I am told).

If anyone wants to get involved in an advisory capacity or in an ongoing role related to the website please contact me.

Peter Woodward.