

**Editorial:** More than 16 years ago I wrote my first editorial for the very first Newsletter. This is my last. It has been fun—and a busy 16 years and I have loved it all. Thank you. However, times have changed and now most of the membership has email and the secretary sends out news and information to them this way. We have a website that is fully functional and easy to use and even the Branch name has changed...time to move on I think!! I will miss collecting all the news and photos—it helps being nosey! I don't know whether the committee will decide to appoint another editor or not....perhaps if you have views you would let them know. As an extra to this issue I have taken a photo or article from each of the issues as a snapshot of the Branch. You may recognise some of the members shown or events we enjoyed. Meanwhile, I wish you great beekeeping and see you soon.

### From your Education Coordinator: Autumn 2016

Rob Francis

As the busy beekeeping season draws to a close there's a busy winter ahead in preparing for next year. So here goes:

#### 1. PRACTICAL BEEKEEPING –Improvers course leading to Basic Certificate

We are running this basic course again in the new year. It is designed for those who have been keeping bees for a year or two and leads to a Basic Certificate.

Details about what we cover can be found at:

[http://www.bbka.org.uk/learn/examinations\\_assessments/basic\\_assessment](http://www.bbka.org.uk/learn/examinations_assessments/basic_assessment)

The course will be run over 7 sessions on Mondays fitted in between January and April taking place between 7.30 and 9.15pm at The Rising Sun in Backwell starting on Monday 9th January.

The course is ideal for those who, having kept bees for one or two years, wish to expand, extend and consolidate their knowledge and skills of beekeeping.

The course fee is £20 and includes the cost of all course materials. Needless to say it is subsidized by the branch and is open to any member from the Avon Beekeepers Association.

If you would like to sign up for the course or would like further information could you contact me,

[robfrancis@btinternet.com](mailto:robfrancis@btinternet.com) or phone 01275 462914 or 07970 298518

#### 2. WOODWORKING: Equipment workshops

Steve Willmott has agreed to run a number of workshop sessions early next year to make useful equipment for your apiary.

However to do this he will need a couple of volunteers to help him plan, prepare and set up the workshops. This is an opportunity to build up on your equipment, making, for example, nuc boxes, feeders, multi-faceted crown boards and much more.

If you would be interested in helping with this could you let Steve or me know.

#### 3. THE WINTER CLUSTER : Keeping the bee wisdom warm!

Come and join us for our monthly 'get-togethers' during the winter months. These usually take place on the third Tuesday of the month and the first one is on Tuesday 18 October at The Star in Congresbury, beginning at 12 noon.

#### 4. QUEEN REARING GROUP: Still meeting

The group has continued to meet this year and have enjoyed looking at the challenges of rear our own queens. The intention next year is to refine the activities to breeding local queens with calm temperaments and energetic foragers. We'll wait and see! Anyone is welcome to join the group and there will be further details in the spring.

Finally; congratulations to all those from the branch who successfully took their Basic Assessment this year (18 in all) and those who have passed a variety of modules. It's always worthwhile broadening your knowledge and honing your skills.

### Winscombe Show Sept 2016



*Congratulations to Belinda Kumpel for winning the Roly Hazell Cup at the Winscombe Show*

### Chair's Letter

Another year comes to an end and I was able to take some honey off my 2 hives this year. September has been rather warm and the brood still hasn't reduced significantly. They have taken plenty of syrup and I have moved a super below the brood box and removed queen excluder. I am hoping that as the brood area reduces they will move that up.

September also sees your committee start preparing for the AGM. There are a number of vacancies this year. If you would like to help please speak to a committee member, you don't have to be an experienced beekeeper to be on the committee. The committee meets about 6 times a year so not a great deal of time is involved.

Jan has been editor of the newsletter since 2000 and is standing down after 16 years, she has done a fantastic job not only cajoling reports out of members but also turning our ramblings into something coherent. Thank you Jan. With all communication now on the website what do branch members feel about the newsletter, should it continue?

I hope to see you at Tickenham for Megan's talk on disease on 8th October, I know that will be interesting as Megan is an accomplished and knowledgeable speaker.

Garry.

### **Members' Corner**

Thank you to everyone in the Branch who gave me articles, photos and information for the newsletter over the years. I am indebted to you all as the newsletter wouldn't happen. Sometimes it gets delayed due to illness or holidays of the contributors but mostly they were issued on time. *Ed.*

### **FORTHCOMING MEETINGS 2016**

**Thurs 20 October 7.30 Shipham Village Hall**

Megan Seymour will talk about her work as a Bee Inspector

**Sat 19 November 2.00 Churchill Memorial Hall**

#### **Branch AGM**

**Prof Robert Pickard talk on 'Wonderful things about bees'**

**Thurs 24 November 7.30 Shipham Village Hall**

Question Time with Megan Seymour. Questions and suggestions can be sent to Blagdon Clevedon Secretary  
<bcdbeekeepers@gmail.com>

**Fri or Sat 2, 3 Dec (TBC) Branch**

**Christmas Meal at Mendip Springs Golf Club**

*Efi: please contact John Banks 01275 855685*

*Ja.banks1@btinternet.com [www.northsomersetbeekeepers.org](http://www.northsomersetbeekeepers.org)*

*David Welham writes:*

"This Newsletter marks the end of an era, as Jan has decided this will be her last letter as Editor. Jan's Newsletter has been consistent in its professionalism over the years with a mixture of news, births, deaths, photographs and technical information.

I personally would like to thank Jan for all her hard work over the years and all the help she has provided to me and hundreds of our members. I firmly believe that the Newsletter was a primary tool in producing the successful Branch we have to-day."

On behalf of that Branch - thank you Jan."

David Welham, President BC&DBK

### **Asian Hornets**

While we have been away on holiday the NBU has contacted us to set up traps in some of our apiaries as our hives are within the area of finding the Asian Hornet north of Mendip...you may have been contacted too.

I was wondering what to write about it when the phone rang and a lady from Orkney –Jeannine Hazelhurst –wanted to speak to Ivor....but he was away teaching beekeeping in Surrey for the weekend so we had a chat.....

Jeannine was in Vietnam recently where Asian Hornets live and she warned me that they are dangerous to humans....the stings can kill adults (the Vietnamese tend to be of small stature) and children. She was very concerned that this has not been publicized enough and wanted me to write this.

She also had experience of trapping the hornets. She said they seemed to be attracted to soy sauce and recounted that the locals used old plastic bottles with about 2" of soy sauce in them with a bore hole through the bottle about 2/3 up from the soy sauce. These traps were strung up on trees, to attract the hornets. She urges people to try any method including this one to trap the pests at apiaries and at home especially if there are children about. Soy sauce may not work here but she thought it was worth the try.

I hope you do have a try.. The hornet is horrid...they wait at the entrance to the hive and then bite the heads off the bees as they come out and then take the bodies back to their nest to feed their young and then the larva is taken which decimates the colony. It is something we may have to learn to live with and we may lose a lot of bees ....*Ed.*



*Asian Hornet*

*This photo was taken from the NBU website*

### **In the Apiary**

*David Capon (Apiary Manager) [djcapon@gmail.com](mailto:djcapon@gmail.com) 07551994848*

The prolonged dry spell has meant that none of our Sunday sessions at the apiary have had to be abandoned, which makes a welcome change. Despite the setbacks to some of the hives earlier in the year, we hope that all the colonies are now in good shape for winter.

Our new beekeepers have been regular attendees at the sessions and I'm sure they are now itching to start flying solo next season; some have already taken their hives to their own sites. The best advice at this stage is to resist the temptation to look inside the hive until it warms up again next spring; you can learn a lot about the state of a colony by watching the comings and goings at the entrance.

The Sunday sessions have now finished for the season, Annabel and I would like to thank all those who have assisted this year. We have had a good attendance every week there has been a constant buzz (ha ha) of conversation. What is good is that we have had beekeepers with just one or two years experience as well as the old timers.

The appearance of the Asian hornet close by must be of concern to us all. Bee Inspectors from over the country have been called in to scour the area; two inspectors came to look at my own apiaries this week, luckily nothing untoward was discovered. While the weather is still warm it is a good idea to monitor the entrance to your hives, and also to look at any ivy still in flower. I was told by one of the inspectors that they had noticed that where there were Asian hornets on the ivy all other pollinators vanished, so wasps on the ivy is probably a good sign.

For those with a new hive built up from a nuc this year it is worth remembering that the colony will almost certainly expand next year to the point where swarm control is required. The best time to buy the extra equipment needed is in the sales which will be starting soon, rather than panicking when you discover queen cells next May.