



March 2019

Last Month

A social time at the Branch Annual Dinner at The Old Inn, Halwell, was enjoyed by all those present. Thank you Jeremy and Ena for organising it.

Get Ready

Devon County Show is coming up in May and if you enter 7 or more classes in the Honey Show there, you get a ticket giving free entry to the Show when you bring your entries along to the marquee. It costs very little to enter the classes and there is prize money if you are successful. Closing Date for entries: 20 April.

The Branch has been asked to put a stand in the Marquee but we need volunteers to get together and organise a display. Stewarding on the stand would also get you a free day ticket to the show. If you have time and energy to spare and would be interested, please let Lilah know.

Coming Up

This Weekend: Apiary Clear-up Days

Saturday 2 March and Sunday 3 March 10 am to 2 pm

The Apiary Team are going to be getting the Apiary ready for the new season on the first weekend in March. Jobs to be done include tidying up the Apiary surroundings, cleaning the equipment and sorting out the Shed and Store. Come along for an hour or two and help if you can. We will be pleased to see you. If you have gardening tools, eg secateurs, trimmers, or equipment cleaning tools, eg scrapers, washing-up gloves, blowtorches, which might be useful, do please bring them with you. Bring a container along if you want some *Suterra* bait (see below).

If you can't come but would like to help, we need volunteers to wash and/or repair various items, eg feeders, beesuits, wooden items. Contact Lilah (lilahkillock@btinternet.com) for details.

Sunday 7 April

An Asian Hornet Information Evening with Bob Hogge from Jersey Beekeepers as our special guest is on **Sunday 7 April** from 7.30 pm. We are meeting in the large comfortable

bar at Meadowbrook Club, Dartington TQ9 6JD. Put the date in your diary and come along and spend a social evening with your fellow beekeepers, both from our Branch and from South Devon generally.

While on the subject of the Asian hornet, don't forget to get your sample of *Suterra* to put in a monitoring trap - see below. This will be available for collection at the Apiary clear-up days.

Trip to National Botanic Garden of Wales: May 2020

Jeremy is organising this trip which is planned to take place in May next year. It's going to be a two-day/one-night break.

The NBG of Wales is both a visitor attraction and a centre for botanical research and conservation, and features the world's largest single-span glasshouse measuring 110m long by 60m wide. You can read more about the Garden on the internet - [Details here](#)

We have been invited to visit apiaries on the estate and see the work that is going on to promote interest in insects and beekeeping. The resident researcher/beekeeper, Lynda Christie, has offered to show us the floral research being carried out aimed at enhancing pollinator survival and improvement. The laboratory also analyses the pollen content of honeys and carries out DNA testing. Group entry is £7.50 per person (2019 price.)

The estimated cost for travel and accommodation is £100 per person. The cost includes travel by luxury coach, evening meal, overnight accommodation, and bed and breakfast, most probably at *The Ivy Bush Royal Hotel*, Carmarthen. Website: [Hotel Details](#)

Step 1: Express an interest before 30 April 2019 by clicking on the link below:

[Trip to NBG of W: Express Interest](#)

You will have an opportunity to express your preference as to days/dates in May 2020 on the website.

Step 2: If sufficient numbers are interested, the dates will be confirmed, and you will be asked to pay a £10 deposit per person before 31 May 2019 to secure your place. This deposit is non-refundable (unless we can fill your place with a latecomer).

Step 3: You will be asked to pay a further payment of £70 per person before 31 December 2019.

Step 4: A final payment of the balance due (not more than £20 per person) is payable 1 April 2020.

Any queries, please contact the trip organiser, Jeremy Wells 01364 72180, jeremy.ena@gmail.com

Wanted: Cottage for week beginning Sunday 27 October

One of the speakers coming to the South Devon Beekeepers Convention this Autumn is hoping to combine his trip to Devon with a family holiday. He's looking for accommodation for Mum, Dad, and three sons (13, 9 and 7) for the week before the event which is on Sunday 3 November this year. Can you help, or do you know anyone who could, with somewhere to rent for a reasonable cost? Lilah would love to hear from you.

Starting next week: Improvers Course

The Education Team are delighted that Kathy Lovegrove has offered to do a short theory course over four Thursday evenings in March for those members who have progressed beyond the beginner stage and have asked for some more training.

Kathy has successfully been running an "improvers" course at Mount Edgcumbe Apiary for a couple of years. The sessions have been planned with the Basic Assessment in mind, but anyone who wants to reacquaint themselves with some of the theory of beekeeping is welcome. There won't be any pressure on you to take the Basic Assessment - although, of course, we will help and encourage those of you who'd like to do it.

We have hired St Luke's Hall (underneath the Church in Buckfastleigh) and there will be a small charge of £10 to cover the costs of running the course. If you are interested and want to put your name down (places are limited), email Lilah on lilahkillock@btinternet.com or telephone 01803 866028.

Full details are at the end of this newsletter.

Buckfast Workshops for 2019: To find out more go on the Buckfast website www.buckfast.org.uk and click on events on the top bar menu. Then follow the links to bee events. There is a booking engine which is easy to use!

Monitoring for Asian hornets: can you help?

Our Branch has 5 litres of the wasp attractant *Suterra* for distribution to members. This bait was used very successfully in Jersey last year. European and Asian hornets are quickly drawn to it.

Members can collect 150-200ml of *Suterra* to use to see what insects are in their area. The idea is not to trap or harm any insect but simply to see what visitors come to the bait. The bait should be put somewhere that is easy to view regularly. It need not be near your apiary, but could be close to your kitchen window or back door, ideally somewhere you pass by or look out of often.

The photograph on the right showing *European hornets* on the bait was taken at the Torbay Branch Apiary last year. About 15ml of *Suterra* was added to absorbent paper. The stone is for stability. An upturned, coloured bucket is a useful stand and helps the insects orientate.



If Asian hornets are seen feeding, they can be easily photographed and the authorities or the local Asian Hornet Action Team alerted. Should you spot an insect on the bait but it flies off before you can see it properly, don't worry. If it's a hornet it will soon return for another feed.

The hornets are not aggressive while feeding. (The insects can be marked while they are quite still feeding on the bait. You are not expected to mark any insect yourself.)

Suterra will be available for collection on the Apiary Clear-Up Days (please bring a suitable leak-proof container), or you can collect some from Lilah later.

Hembury Bee Supplies

Agents for the main manufacturers and can supply all your beekeeping needs.

Contact John Harler, Outer Finches, Hembury Cock Hill, Buckfast, TQ11 0HN. Please phone or email before you visit. Tel: 01364 642517. Email: fire221@btinternet.com

2019 Branch Committee

President: Rod Saffery, 01803 762532, rodsaffery@gmail.com

Chairman: Graham Brown, 01364 642787, graham.brown@gmx.us

Vice-Chairman: Jeremy Wells, 01364 72180, jeremy.ena@gmail.com

Secretary & Trustee: Grant Elliott, 01752 894094, bees.westlakedevon@gmail.com

Treasurer: John Harler, 01364 642517, fire221@btinternet.com

Apiary Team Leader: Lilah Killock, 01803 866028, lilahkillock@btinternet.com

Other members: Annie Hill, Tammy Skinner, Kevin Gillard, John Hart, Joe McGuckin,

Branch Website

<http://beekeepingsouthdevon.uk/>

<http://www.totnesandkingsbridgebeekeepers.com/>

Need help?

Ken Basterfield holds the highest UK bee-keeping qualification, the National Diploma in Beekeeping, and if you feel in need of some instant advice, you can telephone him on 01404 815885.

Two of our most experienced beekeepers, John Harler in Buckfast (01364 642517) and Jeremy Wells in South Brent (01364 72180), are happy to be contacted at short notice by any member needing practical help and/or advice.

Improving Basic Beekeeping Skills

*A refresher course, especially suited to those beekeepers
hoping to take the BBKA Basic Assessment in 2019*

Tutor: Kathy Lovegrove

Target Groups:

- (1) Beekeepers who are thinking of taking the BBKA Basic Assessment in 2019 (*will be given priority if numbers are tight);
- (2) Beekeepers who feel confident in managing their own bees but would like to extend their beekeeping knowledge and skills;
- (3) Beekeepers who have completed a beginner's course and have kept their own bees for at least one season.

Details

Dates: Thursdays 7, 14, 21 and 28 March
Time: 7.00 pm – 9.30 pm
Venue: St Luke's Church Hall, Buckfastleigh
Cost: £10 (payable at the first session)

Programme The sessions will be informal and interactive so come along prepared to participate and “learn by doing”. Follow up sessions in the Branch Apiary at Dartington with the Apiary Team in April/May will provide practice and individual advice for those intending to take the Basic Assessment. The idea of these sessions is to help relate the theory to practice, ready for the forthcoming active season.

Sessions

Thursday 7 March: *Bee Colony: The Next Generation*

Covers the natural history of the three castes and the importance of forage in the development of the colony over the beekeeping year.

Thursday 14 March: *So, what does the queen do all day?*

This looks at the mating of virgin queens and drones; how the queen holds the colony together as a 'super-organism'; and what happens when a colony becomes queenless.

Thursday 21 March: *Beekeepers as Apicultural Paramedics*

When something seems to be wrong with a colony, the inexperienced beekeeper can assume the worst and feel inadequate. This session will give guidelines on how to keep your bees healthy; what danger signs to look out for; what is a relatively minor problem and what to do when an emergency arises.

Thursday 28 March: *Doing an artificial swarm is not the same as queen rearing!*

This deals initially with the value of swarm prevention rather than swarm control. The principles behind methods of swarm control is explained and demonstrated. Using this knowledge we explore the next stage - how to harness the reproductive urge to carry out simple queen rearing.