



S E P T E M B E R 2 0 1 8

# An Hes

'The Swarm'

Newsletter of West Cornwall Beekeepers Association

Secretary: [secretary@westcornwallbka.org](mailto:secretary@westcornwallbka.org)

[www.westcornwallbka.org.uk](http://www.westcornwallbka.org.uk)

## From the Chair...

At a conference in Aberystwyth I met Victoria Bushwell who is carrying out research into traits in strains of bees. She is very keen to look at bees in Cornwall and would like members to sign up to her research project - more details on page 4. She is also offering DNA testing of bees to try to establish what the genetic makeup of the bees across the county and beyond looks like. Previous research has provided a limited and potentially skewed picture due to the small sample size of colonies and beekeepers involved. Is there really a Cornish Black Bee? We may find out! I have signed up to the survey, and hope many of you will also do so too.

I hope you have all had a good harvest, and look forward to seeing you at the winter meetings.

**Well done to Val Hichman and Paul Antonelli for passing the basic exam this year!**

*Kate Bowyer*



**Winnie the Pooh:** "Christopher Robin...I think the bees S U S P E C T something"

**Christopher Robin:** "Perhaps they think you're after their honey."

**Winnie the Pooh:** "Well, it may be that. You never can tell with bees."

- A. A. Milne

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## Save the Date!

22<sup>nd</sup> September 2018  
A Bit of a Do (BOAD)

26<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
Black Bee Reserve Visit Lost Gardens of Heligan

8<sup>th</sup> October 2018  
First Winter Meeting  
Marazion Community Centre

13<sup>th</sup> October 2018  
Kehelland Apple Day

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018  
1st 'Better Beekeeping' Meeting  
Marazion Community Centre

12<sup>th</sup> November 2018  
WCBKA's AGM

# Monthly Hornet Update...September

From the Asian Hornet Task Group

## **Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina*) identified in Cornwall!**

### **Nest found & destroyed in Fowey**

The National Bee Unit has confirmed that a suspect specimen caught in a beekeeper's monitoring trap in the Fowey area of South Cornwall is the Asian Hornet, *Vespa velutina*. A nest has been found and destroyed by bee inspectors. As soon as the beekeeper had found 2 Yellow-Legged Hornets in his trap on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August, he contacted the Non-Native Species Secretariat who positively identified that they were indeed Asian Hornets. A surveillance zone was set up on Tuesday September 4<sup>th</sup>. The National Bee Unit used killing & feeding traps to attract further hornets and traced them back to their nest, which was subsequently destroyed.

More information can be found in the [Defra press release](#).

So we now have the first confirmation of the first Asian Hornet in Cornwall. The hornets were found in a beekeeper's Asian Hornet trap in Fowey - the NBU bee inspectors were on the scene immediately hunting for nests. You need to take the threat seriously and do all you can to make sure that it can't spread to other parts of the county and beyond. Things to do:

1. Make sure you are registered on the NBU Beebase for regular updates - most of you will have heard about the Asian Hornet first from their press release email this week because you are registered.
2. Put out monitoring traps in your apiaries, regardless of whether you visit them everyday. If you haven't made one yet - there are detailed instructions on Beebase. They are easy to make. Do this now!
3. Make sure you know what they look like - many of the press reports midweek had a picture of a European Hornet rather than an Asian Hornet. I am attaching the NBU identification guide - and if you are able to print it off and display it in a public place all the better. The NBU website also has details of an App that can be used for identification purposes.
4. WCBKA has an Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT). Contact details are at the end of the information leaflet (again attached to this email). You can contact the named individuals in your area who are able to help you if you think you have seen an Asian Hornet. If you need help collecting evidence they can help. Remember, the bee inspectors won't take any action unless given positive evidence (specimen, picture of specimen, etc.).

Please be vigilant! Help to make sure we don't get Asian Hornets established here.

*Kate Bowyer, Chairman WCBKA*

## **In the Field, with Dr Pete Kennedy, Our Resident Science Correspondent**

*Pete & his colleague Dr Jessica Knapp were in Jersey helping to track down Asian hornets and destroy their nests. Local beekeepers there have found 15 primary nests and 12 secondary nests this year so far. Eight of the latter were found in the week that Pete & Jessica were on the island! The concentrated efforts of Jersey Beekeepers assisted by Devon Beekeepers as well as Pete & Jessica definitely seems to have made a difference but there are certainly more nests to find!*

# News in Brief

## Cornwall's First confirmed Asian Hornet Sighting!

News broke on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2018 of an Asian hornet sighting had been confirmed in the Fowey area. Please read page 2 in detail and follow the link for more info.

## Winter Meetings

We have a new venue and all winter meetings will now be on Monday evenings. Our new venue will be the Marazion Community Centre where there is plenty of parking and a space to house our library so we don't have to keep boxing it up and transporting it for Better Beekeeping.

The meetings start at 7.30pm. The community centre address is **Gwallon Ln, Marazion, TR17 0HW**. So please make a note of the dates in your diaries.

Some of the speakers have already been lined up. The focus before the Honey Show is to help us prepare our honey and give ideas for wax making. Many thanks to all the speakers for giving up their time to share their knowledge and expertise with us all.

## WCBKA AGM

Our 2018 Annual General Meeting will take place on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> November, at the Marazion Community center.

The meeting will begin at 7:30pm

## BBKA Module Winter Study Group

Have you passed the BBKA Basic assessment? And would you like to learn more about how to manage your bees? For some years, West Cornwall BKA has been running a winter study programme in conjunction with Cornwall BKA, working through the BBKA Modules of study.

If there is sufficient interest, we are proposing to run a group studying Module 1, Honeybee Management, again this winter. Anyone wishing to join the group must have passed the Basic assessment and it is recommended that they will have had about three years of beekeeping experience. Although not mandatory, they will be encouraged to sit the exam held at the end of the sessions in March!

If you are interested, please contact me, or if you wish to discuss what is involved, I or Kate or Lindsay or Jenny or Barbara or Heather will be able to help and advise. It would also be worth looking at the BBKA website for more information about the BBKA education programme.

I hope to hear from lots of you!

Anne McQuade, Education Coordinator  
[annemcquade@btinternet.com](mailto:annemcquade@btinternet.com) or 01326 373749

## A Bit Of A Do

The hottest date in Cornwall's beekeeping calendar is creeping up on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2018.

A Bit of A Do – CBKA and WCBKA's very own beekeeping convention, is back and sure to be as fascinating as ever. Whether you're interests lie in bee behaviour, practical beekeeping, Asian hornets or simply chatting to fellow 'beeks' there's something for everyone! Get your ticket and order your pasty before it's too late! Details on the What's On page.

## Black Bee Reserve Visit

**Wednesday 26th September, 1pm-5pm**

The Lost Gardens of Heligan are becoming a Native Bee Haven! Guest speakers on the day will include Sir Tim Smit, Dr Mike Maunder (Eden's Director of Life Sciences), George Elworthy (Heligan's Managing Director), Victoria Buswell from the University of Plymouth, members of the [B4 black bees project group](#) and Donna Cox, from the [Moor Meadows](#) community initiative.

# Opportunity for Cornish Beekeepers

My name is Victoria Buswell and I am a Ph.D. student working full time at the University of Plymouth with Dr. Mairi Knight on a collaborative 4 year project with B4 (a community interest company: Bringing Back Black Bees). This project is funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). The aim of the project is to assess suggestions from beekeepers that European Dark Bees (*Apis Mellifera Mellifera*, also known as Black Bees) have a suite of different behaviours and characteristics in comparison to other sub-species, and further that these might be highly regional in their nature. The project will measure these differences, and match those with genetic signatures to confirm the lineage of bees showing different traits. The project also aims to evaluate the effects of hybridisation levels on the diversity and expression of traits. The wider aim of the project is to inform the management and conservation of honey-bees across the UK. While some of the trait differences might be well established in the beekeeping community, to date published, robust empirical evidence is lacking.

The kinds of traits that we're interested in gathering data on are, for example: drone brood timings; worker brood cycle; thriftiness; worker lifespan. We need as many people as possible to fill in the survey: this is a jointly funded project that relies on the beekeeping community just as heavily as the scientific one for its overall success. The survey was designed in collaboration with beekeepers and will try to get as much detail as possible whilst at the same time being practical and feasible for beekeepers to complete.

Once again, this project will be impossible without your help – it is a national survey, which will require you to measure and record specific parameters throughout the season. The survey is open to all beekeepers regardless of the sub-species you keep. We require comparison species so whether you keep dark bees, Italian bees, Carniolan bees or Spanish bees, we would really value your participation in this

project. We will regularly update the community on the progress of the project through updates on the B4 website, or we can send you email/mail updates too if you would prefer.

If you are interested in taking part in the survey please just send your name and address by email to [beesurvey@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:beesurvey@plymouth.ac.uk).

Please note there is no closing date to the survey.

Many thanks,

Victoria Buswell

The poster is titled "Investigating the phenotypic and genomic basis of local adaptation in the UK native honey bee (*Apis mellifera mellifera*)". It lists the authors: Victoria G. Buswell<sup>1</sup>, Jonathan S. Ellis<sup>1</sup>, J. Vanessa Huml<sup>2</sup>, Andrew Brown<sup>2</sup>, Mairi E. Knight<sup>1</sup>. The project is funded by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and the University of Plymouth. The poster is divided into sections: BACKGROUND, KEY AIMS, and RESEARCH METHODS. The BACKGROUND section discusses the importance of the UK native honey bee and the need for a survey. The KEY AIMS section lists four main objectives: 1) Examine phenotypic colony-level traits via a survey; 2) Investigate genomic differences; 3) Investigate areas of the genome; 4) Use the study to inform conservation. The RESEARCH METHODS section details the survey and genomic analysis. The poster also features images of bees and logos for the University of Plymouth and NERC.

## Members' Yearbook

In years prior to me becoming Membership Secretary, the Association had a members' "Yearbook". This was a publication of all the members' contact details that enabled members to be able to contact other members directly. Over recent years this activity has been side-lined - in part due to the Data Protection Act - a couple of instances of the data being misused by members for third party mailings. However, following some discussion by the committee we are going to re-introduce the Association's Members' Yearbook with an update on what information is included. Rather than divulge ALL members contact details we are proposing that only a member's telephone or email address are given under particular areas. This year's membership will enable you to opt in or out of the yearbook - but if you don't opt in you won't get a copy of the yearbook of other members contact details. I look forward to receiving your contact details after the AGM in November. Happy beekeeping!

*Mac Rowley Hawkins*

## Enys Gardens Bee Fayre

Over the weekend of August 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> the annual "Bee Fayre" was held at Enys Gardens just outside Penryn. In the midst of the lush gardens is the slightly dilapidated Enys House which is transformed once a year into a hive of activity. It's a charity awareness day helping to raise funds for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Bees Abroad & Help for Heroes-Beekeeping. We were greeted at the entrance by some lovely accordion music (we could almost have been somewhere in France!) Inside the hallway was the BJ Sherriff stall selling clothing & equipment. They helped to organize the whole day along with Cornwall Wildlife Trust. They ran the raffle & silent auction which helped raise money to fund the fayre. Off to one side of the house were many stalls selling beekeeping related products as well as soaps & cosmetics, candles, mead, bread & cakes. Our very own Tamsin Harris was there selling her delicious honey as well as bees-wax candles, furniture polish & balms & salves (she also espoused very good extracting advice-do it on a hot day!) Upstairs were more stalls including the Green & Black team who manufacture Bee Bricks & Blocks to encourage solitary bees to take up residence in our own homes! There were guest speakers over the course of the weekend in one of the rooms. Rodger Dewhurst gave a talk about Hygienic Behaviour in native dark European honeybees (*Apis mellifer mellifera* or "Black Bees"). Over a number of years now, Rodger has documented how his native bees groom each other to get rid of Varroa Mites, even biting them to maim or kill the mites. He has noticed a significant drop in Varroa count in his hives. Along with his wife Carol they run Gwenen apiaries (with hives in Enys as well as Heligan Gardens) & are part of the B4 project (Bringing Back Black Bees), helping to hopefully establish a viable Cornish strain of native bees. Outside the main house there were activities for all the family including a Bumblebee Safari. The Screech Owl Sanctuary brought along some of their feathered friends and we could explore the beautiful gardens and look out for the wild colony that has established itself in an old oak tree!

*Paul J Greco*

The WCBKA would like to extend a warm **WELCOME** to our newest members:

*Latesha O'Connell,*

*Gillian Benner*

*& Sue Higgins*



## Association Extractor & Apiguard

If you want to book the extractor contact Mike Dunnell on [mike.dunnell@btinternet.com](mailto:mike.dunnell@btinternet.com) the charge is £5 for 3 days hire.

We are currently holding a good stock of Apiguard. Prices are £2 per tray or £18 for a box of ten. You need two trays per hive (second tray applied two weeks after first). Call John Mills: 07764291106 or email [johnwindmills@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:johnwindmills@yahoo.co.uk)

## What's On?

### **Saturday 22nd September 2018**

#### **A Bit of A Do – Cornwall's Annual Beekeepers' Convention**

Fal Building, Truro College, College Road, Truro, TR1 3XX

The application form with which you can reserve your tickets and order your pasty is being sent out with this edition. Return to: Heather Williams [heather@quillet.org.uk](mailto:heather@quillet.org.uk)

Black Bee reserve Visit , Lost Gardens of Heligan. Contact Bob: [bbob@cornishbees.com](mailto:bbob@cornishbees.com)

**Wednesday 26th September 2018, 1pm-5pm**

### **Saturday 13th October 2018**

**Kehelland Apple Day** Can you spare a few hours to staff our stand at Kehelland's Apple Day? It's a really good day out, lots of stands, music and laughter. Contact Val: [secretary@westcornwallbka.org.uk](mailto:secretary@westcornwallbka.org.uk) – more details to follow in due course

### **Winter Meetings and Better Bee-Keeping Meetings**

Marazion Community Centre, Gwallon Lane, Marazion, TR17 0HW

Mondays at 7:30pm

More information will be in future editions of An Hes:

**Monday 8th October 2018** – First Winter Meeting

**Monday 22nd October 2018** - Better Beekeeping

**Monday 12th November 2018** – Annual General Meeting

**Monday 19th November 2018** - Better Beekeeping

**Monday 3rd December 2018** – Honey Show and Christmas Party

**Monday 17th December 2018** - Better Beekeeping

**Monday 7th January 2019** – Winter Meeting

**Monday 21st January 2019** - Better Beekeeping

**Monday 4th February 2019** – Winter Meeting with Guest Speaker: Tamsin Harris.

**Monday 18th February 2019** - Better Beekeeping

**Monday 4th March 2019** - Winter Meeting

**Monday 18th March 2019** - Better Beekeeping

**Monday 1st April 2019** - Winter Meeting

**Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019** - Better Beekeeping