



D E C E M B E R 2 0 1 8

An Hes

'The Swarm'

Newsletter of West Cornwall Beekeepers Association

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From the Chair...

Well, a first for me this week when I found a hive blown over! Bees still alive - just, but all I could do was put it back together and hope that they survive. Note to self – straps and blocks on for this stormy winter. Also an opportunity to go round and check the hive weights – a couple beginning to feel a little light, with four months to go before the bees emerge in spring. Just as well we have a large stock of reduced price fondant to top up the stores – see page 6. I'm also busy this month attending the Christmas fayres – selling honey and candles, pay back for those long summer months of hard work. Not all fun though – the BBKA ADM looms in January, and as your delegate, I need to have a grasp on all the propositions etc. that need to be voted on. If your interested, they are on the BBKA website – and I would always welcome your views. So, off to check on my moulded candles now – ready for the Honey show on Monday... hope to see many of you there, and if not – have yourselves a very merry little Christmas!

Kate Bowyer



"Balm for each blade of grass: the hours prepare
A festival each weed's invited to:
Each bee is drunken with the honied air:
And all the heaven is eloquent with blue"

- **Madison Cawein "After Rain" - 1893**

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Save the Date!

Mon 3rd December 2018

Christmas Party & Honey Show

Mon 17th December 2018

Better Beekeeping

Mon 7th January 2019

Making Space for Nature in Cornish Towns with Melissa Ralph



News in Brief

Membership Matters

Are you ready for the Christmas season? It's almost that time of year when we take the Christmas tree out of the attic, dust off the baubles and the tinsel and make preparations for receiving family and celebrating. Hopefully you'll receive something bee related as a gift and be thinking of next year's not too far off season.

With all the festivities in mind (& I know that everyone is very busy with all things Christmas) might I remind those of you who haven't renewed their membership yet to put pen to membership form & rejoin. We have so many good reasons to renew:

- Bookers access for all things (Not just sugar!!)
- Our fabulous library.
- Two Winter meetings a month out of season.
- Weekly meetings at our "Jewel in the Crown" training apiary where you can help out & get "hands on" experience.
- Reduced rate consumables for feeding and treating our girls:-Apiguard, Apibioxal, Fondant, Foundation, Ambrosia.
- 20% reduction on beesuits from BBWear (On confirmation of membership)
- BOAD (a "Bit Of A Do") -our own beekeepers convention and end of season bash where the day is on "All things bee" with keynote speakers.
- Affiliated membership with BBKA (for full members)
- Bee Disease Insurance FREE for up to three hives (for full members)
- Access to a Beekeeper's insurance policy for equipment with an independent broker (Recommended by BBKA) at extraordinary rates.
- A closed Facebook page that members use as a forum.
- Our monthly newsletter "An Hes" keeping you up to date with what's happening regarding bees within your association and out in the wider world.
- And. NO INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP FEES FOR THE THIRD YEAR RUNNING!!!
- What are you waiting for?

Thank you to all those who have already sent back membership forms. This year I have been inundated from the moment the form was released so please be patient with me while I work my way through them all. Yours will be next I promise! On behalf of the association might I thank you for your continued support and wish each and every one of you a very Merry Christmas and a fabulous New year. . . . May your bee season in 2019 be a great one!

Mac Rowley Hawkins

Monday 3rd December 2018

Honey, Mince Pies, Honey, Mulled Wine, Honey, Seasonally Flavoured Raffle, Honey... Why! It must be the **WCBKA Annual Honey Show and Christmas Party!** This is always a fun event, so enter some competitions, show off your wares and have a good old natter with fellow members! John Roberts will be this year's judge, and don't worry all the rules are clearly laid out in this edition!

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

Pierre Flores



Local Volunteering Opportunity

The 'Making Space for Nature' Team at Cornwall Council would be pleased to hear from you!

This is what they have to say:

"We welcome all offers of help to look after newly improved urban habitats.

We have green spaces in Penzance, Hayle, Camborne, Pool, Redruth, Bude and Saltash.

The sites include playing fields, public gardens, closed churchyards and cemeteries, wildlife gardens, and small woodlands.

Tools, gloves and support are available if required.

Tasks range from planting bulbs and perennials, weeding and mulching, wildflower meadow sowing and aftercare, biodiversity surveys and building bug hotels.

You may like to work individually or in a group.

We will gauge interest and organize tailored sessions / tasks to suit you.

Please contact us via GI4G@cornwall.gov.uk to register your interest, availability and which town(s) you may like to volunteer in.

Your details will only be used to contact you about the 'Making Space for Nature' project.

Look forward to hearing from you!"

Bulk Purchases

At the 2018 AGM in November, it was announced that there would be a few changes to the bulk purchase process.

Mark Richards has put together all the information you need to source Fondant, Wax Foundation and Syrup so please ensure you read and refer to the information later in this edition before trying to make an order!

Yellow Legged Hornets on Jersey

We hear a lot about the invasive Yellow Legged or Asian Hornet (*Vespa velutina*) & how, in the UK several nests have been located & destroyed by The National Bee Unit (NBU), which is part of Defra's Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). The number of sightings of Asian Hornets in the UK has steadily risen since the first nest was located & destroyed in Gloucestershire during 2016.

Asian Hornets are voracious predators of pollinating insects as well as honeybees. Asian Hornets are happy to gather easy & plentiful pickings from hives. Beekeepers who manage & visit their apiaries regularly, tend to notice any Asian Hornet activity, & then notify the correct authority. However, it must be stressed that the invasion is not just a Beekeeping problem.



You will notice we use the description 'Yellow Legged' or 'Asian Hornet' rather a lot in this article. This is to differentiate between the several types of Hornet that exist: Several other Asian ones, the Oriental Hornet, and of course our own native European Hornet.

The Yellow Legged or Asian Hornet can be identified by:

- *Its yellow legs (socks)*
- *It is mainly dark with a completely dark thorax*
- *Its fourth abdominal segment is orange/yellow*
- *It has a narrow yellow strip near the top of the abdomen*

It is smaller than our European Hornet Guidance available on Bee Base and from WCBKA.

The Channel Islands were invaded by Asian Hornets several years before any were seen in the UK & they have established themselves there extremely quickly and effectively. In September this year we travelled to Jersey & assisted Jersey Beekeepers & Government officials in the location of nests of Asian Hornets to enable destruction by specialists.

Jersey is self-governing & has different legislation to that of the UK. Some of the things we carried out in Jersey would be in breach of UK legislation – in the UK only the authorised body (the NBU in this case) are permitted to release any invasive species. The Jersey Government has engaged & empowered Jersey Beekeepers Association (JBA) to work with the Government Environment Department to capture, mark, release & track hornets to locate their nests.

We met, worked with & learnt from some remarkable passionate, caring beekeepers on the island and assisted in what is a time consuming process of setting up bait stations, awaiting the arrival of Asian Hornets & then capturing them, marking them using queen marking pens & cages, releasing them, as well as timing them & taking bearings on their flight paths. All the time honing down by triangulation until the return flight times become very small. With a little practice it is amazing how far you can see an insect fly if you are using binoculars!

Different methods of tracking are being deployed from basic triangulation of sighted flight paths –to marking hornets with feathers (in my younger years I heard of old farmers saying they did this with wasps to locate wasp nests) a technique which has been further developed by folk on Jersey using UV activated glue. The research work carried out by Exeter University using high tech tracking devices has helped to find nests. Every method should be tried because it is important to locate & destroy the nests before the Asian Hornets produce drones & virgin queens.

Continued...

Only mated queens overwinter by hibernation as the rest of the colony dies out completely. In spring the overwintered queen locates a nest site & builds what is known as a “primary nest” about the size of a tennis ball. In this she lays eggs, tends & feeds the larvae, which then go through a pupal stage & emerge as female workers. They all then move to another nest site know as a “secondary nest”. As the new nest is created, the queen continues to lay but now the larvae are tended by an every increasing colony of workers. Growth of nest & colony continues until early Autumn when the colony starts to produce drones & virgin queens for mating. The mated queens then find somewhere to hibernate and the process repeats annually. One nest can produce around three hundred virgin queens, & although not all will survive or be viable, it does demonstrate how multiplication takes place.

Whilst we were on the island, there was a British-Irish Council conference with delegates ranging from the Minister & other Jersey government officials as well as the NBU. Keren was featured on Channel Island TV in which she highlighted the fact that all beneficial pollinators are under threat, not just honeybees. In her piece to camera she also encouraged engagement with everyone, individuals to businesses, who have an interest in any type of beneficial pollinator.

Keren was also invited to take part in the removal of a live nest from a tree. At a height of more than 10m it called for the use of a mobile elevated work platform & some serious protection in the form of a Hornet suit.



*Left:
Keren kitting up. The sting of a Yellow Legged or Asian Hornet is 6mm long – the suit is made from 8mm thick material.*

*Right:
Fully kitted up and ready to elevate.*



The nest was removed live & then gassed using CO₂. If the nest had been poisoned in-situ, dissection of the nest, counting and sexing the hornets & examination of lava could not have been carried out.

It was a very interesting and rewarding visit. We made friends with both the beekeepers & locals we met. If you are able to help them in the future or you wish to learn & understand how we may (subject to changes in UK legislation) have to work in the future, we are sure they will welcome help & support next year. West Cornwall Beekeepers Association has an Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT) who you can contact for further help & advice.

The Yellow Legged or Asian Hornet is a beautiful insect & supreme in its correct environment, living and hunting in a world where its prey have their built-in defence mechanisms developed over many thousands of years. But it's now here, in Europe, preying on our pollinators who do not have any defence &, if we do not intervene effectively the landscape of beneficial pollinators & eco systems within the UK could change forever. Spread the word and keep vigilant!

Keren & Phil Green

Asian Hornet Trapping

From Pete Kennedy – Our resident Science Correspondent

Two recent papers published raise concern over the efficacy and potential impact of kill traps being adopted by some on the Continent trying to manage the invasive non-native predator, the Asian hornet: *Vespa velutina nigrothorax*. A study from Galicia, north-western Spain, looked at the efficacy of spring trapping for Asian hornet queens using a diversity of commonly used traps and baits. Similar to a previous study from France, Asian hornet queens rarely made up more than 1% of a trap's catch even in areas known to have suffered high Asian hornet nest densities. Typically, 98-99% of trap catches contained non-targets; often a diversity of flies including hoverflies, as well as moths, beetles, and various other Hymenoptera. Actual numbers of Asian hornet queens caught were estimated to be a fraction of those likely to have been produced by nests in the vicinity, casting doubt on how effective a control method spring trapping for queens would present.

The other paper from France looks at the option of using carnivorous plants, particularly *Sarracenia* sp. (pitcher plants), to trap Asian hornets after it was originally proposed that they may offer a more selective way to trap this worrisome predator. Sadly, the authors found the plants to be non-selective, flies again forming the bulk of insects caught, alongside a diversity of other Hymenoptera (including honeybees), moths, butterflies, etc. Again, actual numbers of Asian hornets caught were just too few to have a likely impact on Asian hornet populations.

The studies also showed species caught in traps include some that rarely form part of the diet of Asian hornets, undermining the popular belief that those insects accidentally caught in traps are likely to have otherwise been subsequently eaten by Asian hornets anyway. Even though only a fraction of hornets are caught, trapping is needed but with caution so as to avoid adding to the problems this invasive predator is causing for our insect fauna in those areas where it is well established.

In the UK, there is still no justification for kill traps and we should be monitoring for Asian hornets in such a manner that we can frequently identify what was caught and release any by-catch of non-target insects unharmed. As hornet queens are now in hibernation, monitoring traps should be back in storage until the spring.

The above is perhaps depressing reading but there is further research underway, including work on pheromones and chemical lures that may offer hope of more selective control methods in the near future.

Rojas-Nossa et al. (2018). Performance of baited traps used as control tools for the invasive hornet *Vespa velutina* and their impact in non-target insects. *Apidologie*. DOI: 10.1007/s13592-018-0612-0.

Wycke et al. (2018). *Sarracenia* carnivorous plants cannot serve as efficient biological control of the invasive hornet *Vespa velutina nigrothorax* in Europe. *Rethinking Ecology*. DOI: 10.3897/rethinkingecology.3.28516.

Bulk Purchases

First of all I just want to introduce myself as the new "bulk sales coordinator" for the WCBKA & to thank John Mills for the years he carried out this role prior to myself & for his recent and valuable help to me in taking over from him.

Fondant

We wish to inform club members on the availability of our recently acquired stock of fondant, which is now available from club member Mick Jordan. The fondant is available in either a box of 12.5kgs (5x2.5kg slabs) at £15.00 or as individual slabs of 2.5kgs at £3.00 each. Mick has asked if you could please ring him prior to attending on either 01209 860630 or 07974 154472 to arrange a convenient time/day to pay and collect. He resides at North Calvadnack Farm, Polgear, Carnmenellis, Redruth, TR16 6PS. Payment can be by cheque (made payable to West Cornwall Beekeepers Association) or cash. Please state on the rear of the cheque what the payment is for.

Wax

Now is also the time to consider our wax foundation/candle making orders. We are very particular about our source of wax foundation in terms of quality. Subsequently we intend to submit a further annual bulk order very soon to Kembles Wax. We have always been impressed with their products & service, which is exemplary. We are convinced the quality of their foundation helps play a significant role in our bee & colony welfare which is why we will continue to use them for 2019.

The wax products and prices are as follows:

Wired

BS Shallow (super)-worker	£7.80
BS Shallow(super) drone	£7.80
BS Brood	£12.50
14x12	£21.00
Commercial Brood	£16.50

Unwired

BS Shallow (super) Worker	£6.90
BS Shallow (super) drone	£6.90
BS Shallow (super) for cut comb	£5.50

Candle Rolling

Natural	
BS Brood	£11.50

Coloured

BS Brood (only)	£15.00
Waxed Candlewick (50g hank)	£6.20

We need to submit our wax bulk order asap as there will be a price increase in early January 2019, so could you please email your orders to me at mjred93@outlook.com

I will update you as to when the order has been submitted and when the wax has arrived. Again, payment can be by cheque or cash and please endorse the rear of the cheque regarding what the payment is for.

Mark Richards

Latin America Beckoned



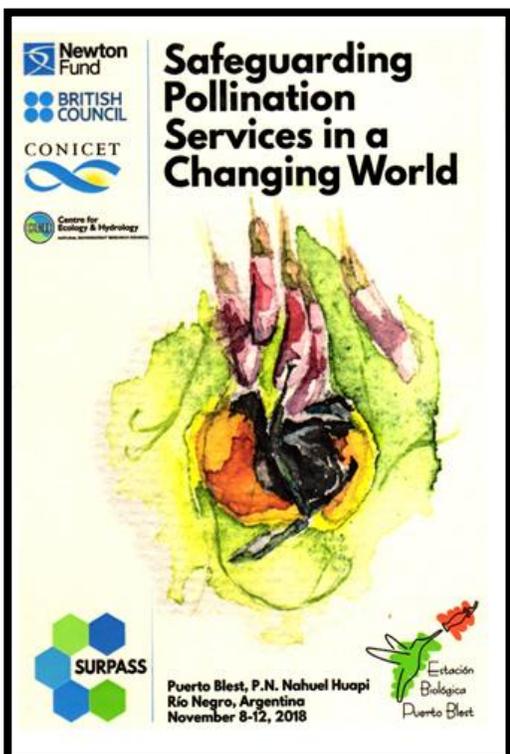
Bombus dahlbomii

I can count myself as amongst the fortunate, having just returned from a workshop and travels in Patagonia, Argentina. I was actually just the 'plus one', joining my wife with UK colleagues on a gathering of UK and Latin American bee researchers to share experiences and notes in monitoring wild bee populations and factors that are impacting their survival. UK tax payers needn't worry – I paid my own way (aside from board & lodgings generously

provided by our Argentinian colleagues). Those there officially were funded by the Newton Fund, British Council and CONICET (the National Scientific & Technical Research Council for Argentina) on the SURPASS project: Safeguarding Pollination Services in a Changing World.

What a great event! Based close to the Argentina-Chile border in the northern Patagonian foothills of the Andes; staying in Puerto Blest on the western fringes of the Nahuel Huapi National Park; and meeting such greats as Marcelo Aizen, Lucas Garibaldi, Lorena Vieli, Denise Alves & the amazing but now sadly rare native Patagonian bumblebee, *Bombus dahlbomii*. The latter sadly another victim of human interference and global trade, suffering since the introduction (& inevitable escape) of commercial *Bombus terrestris* colonies to aid pollination of glasshouse and poly-tunnel crops in Chile. Ironically, Argentina blocked their introduction into their own country out of concern for impact on native pollinators but the bees nevertheless reached there after spreading across the Andes.

Remarkably familiar, the impact on the native pollinator is thought to be less a consequence of competition but more of pathogen spill-over. We saw *Bombus terrestris* virtually everywhere but only rarely got a glimpse of the massive ginger *Bombus dahlbomii*. Work aside, there was lots of opportunity to climb mountains up to the snow line, stomp through magical temperate rainforests, gaze endlessly at mountains reflected in deep lakes, and eat more red meat than I would normally consume in a year. But the steaks are to die for!



Pete Kennedy



Bombus terrestris

What's On?

Winter Meetings and Better Bee-Keeping Meetings - Mondays at 7:30pm
Marazion Community Centre, Gwallon Lane, Marazion, TR17 0HW

Monday 17th December 2018 - Better Beekeeping

Nectar, pollen, propolis, water, their collection and uses/Conversion of nectar into honey/Wax-how it's made by bees, its uses by bees and man/Feeding, robbing

Monday 7th January 2019 – Please put this date in your calendars so that you don't miss the first of our Winter meetings of 2019!

Melissa Ralph CMLI who is the Green Infrastructure for Growth Project Lead in the Public Open Space team is coming along to give the talk: '**Cornwall Council - Making Space for Nature in Cornish towns**'. She will update us on the range of GI (Green Infrastructure) projects that the team is delivering, with particular discussion of plants for pollinators.

Monday 21st January 2019 - Better Beekeeping

Pests & Diseases, Varroa, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), Apiary Hygiene & the Importance of changing frames

Monday 4th February 2019 – Winter Meeting

Member Tamsin Harris will be giving tonight's talk

Monday 18th February 2019 - Better Beekeeping

Bee Improvement/Queen Selection/Basic Queen Rearing/Where to source bees/Nucs, their uses and how to make one up

Monday 4th March 2019 - Winter Meeting

Monday 18th March 2019 - Better Beekeeping

Swarming, its prevention and management, Collecting a Swarm, Supercedure, Queenlessness, Drone Laying Queens (DLQs) & Laying Workers

Monday 1st April 2019 - Winter Meeting

Monday 15th April 2019 - Better Beekeeping

Everything else – local flora, forage through the season, the beekeeper's year, siting hives, avoiding nuisance, stings, the importance of bee space top & bottom, equipment needed for starting out, and a Nosema testing workshop