



Photo: Mist over Shenmore by Tim Dale

WVBKA Charity Registration  
Number: 517008



**Bee Festival 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at Hampton Court Castle**

WVBKA have been invited to the festival again this year and it is a great opportunity to meet other beekeepers and the public. We need volunteers to help set up and tend the stand, so please check your diaries and see if you can spare half a day or so to help. If you can, please contact Rob Doran or any committee member.

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**Diary Dates 2019**

- June 4<sup>th</sup> Committee Meeting, Moccas 7.30pm
- 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> June Three Counties Show, Malvern
- 30<sup>th</sup> June Bee Safari. Itinerary TBA by Apiary Team via WhatsApp group. Contact Duncan Penkey

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Queen Colour of the Year  
2019 is: **GREEN**

**Boneco the Beekeeping Donkey**

Boneco, is the world’s first beekeeping donkey. He lives in Brazil and helps his owner, Manuel Juraci, make honey. This isn’t just a hobby for Juraci and Boneco, though – beekeeping is their livelihood.



In their region of Brazil, it’s too arid to farm the land so a large number of locals have turned to beekeeping and honey production to make ends meet. Juraci is actually one of 120 beekeepers in the small town of Itatira, which is in the north eastern part of the country. He’s also one of the most productive thanks to Boneco and his homemade donkey-sized beekeeping suit.



It makes such a difference that the Association of Honey Producers wants Juraci to make more suits for other beekeepers’ donkeys.

*Andy Strangeway*

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## Asian Hornet Update

Peter Woodward and I have joined with four members of Hereford Beekeepers to form Hereford's Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT). The coordinator for the group is Rob Williams (07581 008601). Rob is the named contact on the [BBKA AHAT](#) map for Herefordshire and will be responsible for triaging calls from the public who report potential sightings of Asian hornets (AH). Peter and I will be asked to help the public with identification where it is thought that potential positive sightings have occurred but no picture was taken.

The Regional Bee Inspector, Colin Pavey, attended the first AHAT meeting and reiterated the importance of:

- a) registering all hives on [Beebase](#) for the purpose of notification in the event of sightings and
- b) for those with smart phones , installation of the NBU Asian Hornet App for [Apple](#) and [Android](#). The app allows pictures to be uploaded and sent to the NBU together with an automatically included grid reference locating where the picture was taken. Please photograph any hornets sighted in situ rather than back home or elsewhere.

Colin also stressed the importance of vigilance around our hives and whenever possible raising awareness with the public as to AH. Supplies of laminated posters and postcards are freely available from me or direct from the NBU.

Thank you to all those who have been monitoring traps and bait trays, it's anticipated that queens will have now emerged and will be constructing primary nests. Should any nests be found please notify the NBU together with a supporting photo of AH and they will take the appropriate action to deal with the nest.

Monitoring traps and bait trays should be resumed in August in the hope that any sightings will lead to the destruction of nests before mated queens depart for hibernation later in the year. Late flowering plants like ivy may be a strong attractant to AH.



Image © [Gilles San Martin](#) via Flickr (CC BY-SA 2.0)

Three speakers at this year's Spring Convention in Newport gave personal accounts of AH. It is believed that the AH can probably fly the 22 miles that separate the UK and France and that, given very little time, could become a significant problem. While the situation in the UK remains containable, the NBU will have government funding for location and destruction of nests.

The two speakers from Jersey, Bob Hogge and John de Cateret, have seized any opportunity to raise awareness with the public. The former is studying the AH and its behaviour as a means to understand more about how best to combat the threat it poses. He urges all beekeepers to do likewise and to experiment with any ideas they have, no matter what. As a result of their efforts there is considerable public awareness on the Island which contributed to the destruction of 42 nests last season.

*Malcolm Nevett*

Mobile: 07809 568816

Email: [nevett139@btinternet.com](mailto:nevett139@btinternet.com)

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## June Notes

### Shook Swarm Pros and Cons

The shook swarm has gained a lot of prominence in the fight against EFB and there is no doubt that used properly it can be a very useful tool. However, used incorrectly it can be an absolute disaster and one such case has been brought to my attention this year. Timing is very important, please do not carry this operation out too late in the year.

When carrying out this procedure you must under all circumstances understand the requirements of the bees. This procedure is very drastic indeed and in most cases the bees are in a bad shape anyway. It is most important that the bees have sufficient pollen, food and good weather to re-establish, in addition they will need plenty of wax building bees.

It must be understood that bees cannot rebuild a colony with bees which are incapable of these tasks. Some simply are not and should be destroyed or supplemented with bees from a healthy colony or combine several together to rebuild themselves.

We have practised this method from the mid-70s but with modification. My approach is not to put the bees under such great stress. One of the ways in which this can be achieved is by simply putting your shook swarm on to drawn, clean comb. This is very simple to achieve as most if not all beekeepers, will have supers available or deep frames which can be used to facilitate this. I would endorse this way as providing drawn, clean comb is a great benefit for the bees and helps to reduce the stress they are under. In a year like we have just experienced, it's a disaster for the bees if they can't get out to replace the pollen, which we all know is vital for colony development.

So as you can see, the shook swarm is not as straight forward as you may think. Timing, bee numbers, condition of bees and weather conditions all have a great impact on the success or not of this method.

You must strive to satisfy these requirements in order for a shook swarm to be successful. If you don't satisfy these needs you run the risk of bees absconding which is not what you are trying to achieve. Don't forget it's important to place an excluder beneath for a short while to try and prevent this happening.

If you capture a prime swarm in the active season you will know how quickly they can establish themselves. The difference here is, most if not all the bees, will be in prime condition to rebuild themselves in a new environment and in most cases they will do just that, racing away and drawing nice new comb. Then there seems to be a quiet period until the first round of brood hatches, when there will be an explosion of young healthy bees again. More often than not this will be in the height of summer so here again timing is important to become established. In most cases adequate flora and pollen, coupled with good weather conditions, will promote good health. For years we have suffered with our flora being reduced to such an extent, that sometimes there is insufficient pollen to go round. With this in mind, please do not keep too many bees on one site.

In summary, personally I'd simply like to see a shook swarm fed with antibiotics – this has been proven over the years to be successful. Together with nice clean comb, it is in my opinion the best way and after six weeks there is no antibiotic residue. In years gone by, antibiotics were the only treatment for EFB, there was no comb replacement, just treatment and in a great many cases it was successful.

There is much more we can learn and much more that we can achieve so don't be complacent, keep trying and eventually you will succeed. There is no doubt you won't be successful all the time but practicing good husbandry, coupled with having sound knowledge will promote good beekeeping. Be prepared to try new ideas and don't become set in your ways.

*Dave*

*PS. These notes are meant to be helpful and assist you with good husbandry practices. They are born out of many years of beekeeping experience. However, I have much more to learn and I'm sure you have also.*

## WVBKA Officers for 2019

### Chairman:

- Rob Doran: 01432 830056  
[brandoran@btinternet.com](mailto:brandoran@btinternet.com)

### Vice Chairman:

- Juliet Parker-Smith: 01497 847214

### Secretary:

- Patricia Ronan: 07903 054699

### Honey Show Secretary:

- Vacant

### Treasurer & Membership Secretary:

- Roger Jenner: 01873 890467  
Grove Cottage, Walterstone, Hereford, HR2 0DT  
[wvbkamembers@gmail.com](mailto:wvbkamembers@gmail.com)

### Librarian:

- Vacant

### Association Apiary Management Team:

- Dave Williams
- Duncan Penkey
- Geoff Dutson

### Newsletter Editing:

- Tim & Belinda Dale: [beedale@outlook.com](mailto:beedale@outlook.com)

### Committee:

- Geoff Dutson
- Duncan Penkey
- Andy Strangeway
- June Williams
- Peter Woodward

### Catering Committee:

- Jane Matthews
- June Williams

### Mentoring Team & Technical Advisors:

- Geoff Dutson: 01981 500491
- Cliff Rose: 01981 251844
- Peter Woodward: 01432 839251

### Website Editor:

- Rob Doran

### Honorary Auditor:

- Mike Price

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## Brian Sherriff

A recent piece in the Western Morning News reports that Brian Sherriff, designer of the famous brand of safety suits for beekeepers, celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday last weekend. He has also had a biography published by local Cornish author Felicity Notley, entitled *The Bras and the Bees: The Extraordinary Life of B J Sherriff*. Why bras? Because before branching out into beekeeping outfits Brian made womens' underwear.

His novel design for a bee suit with a zip-fastened hood won first prize at the Royal Cornwall Show. If you want to know when that was, why not read the book, published by Scryfa and available from Sherriffs at Carclew Road Mylor Downs Falmouth TR11 5UN.

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## WVBKA Articles

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER SO PLEASE  
CONTRIBUTE TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS.

## Hive Site Offered

A neighbour near Talgarth has offered his property as a site for hives in open farmland.

If you are interested then contact Rob Doran for more information.

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