

USEFUL CONTACTS

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TAUNTON BEE-KEEPERS

E Mail FORUM

tauntonbeekeepers.org.uk/joinlist.html

Contact James Fidell 01984 623030

SBKA website at :

www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

FUTURE MEETINGS

Saturday 12th March

Somerset B.K.A.
A.G.M.

Monkton Village Hall

See 2011 SBKA Year Book for
further details

Saturday 19th March

SKITTLES

Nag's Head Thornfalcon

at 7.30pm

buffet £9 per head.

Orders with Rosemary 01823 283482
by 14th March please

Sunday 27th March

AUCTION

of second hand beekeeping
equipment

Ruishton Village Hall

at 2.00pm

Items can be booked in from 10.00am on
morning of auction.
Contact Chris Harries 01823 442734 for any
further information required

Saturday 30th April

FUN WITH WAX

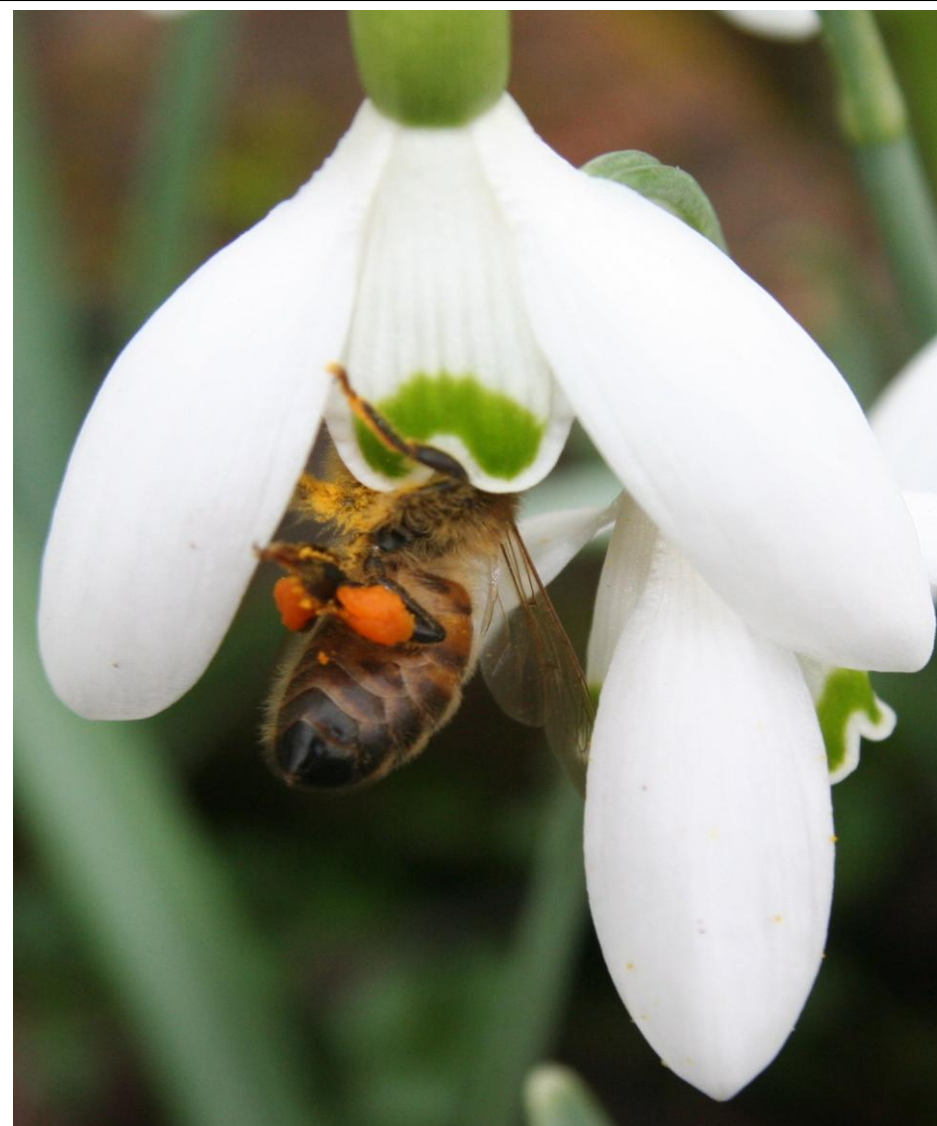
See separate panel

BEE LINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TAUNTON & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS

February/March 2011

Number 69 Vol 10



Making the most of the Snowdrops

Photo David Morris

EDITORIAL

You should be made aware, that our Chairman, Andy Coles will be out of action for some time due to illness. He has asked to be kept in touch with everything 'beekeeping wise' and of course we will ensure that his request is met. We wish Andy, Jennifer and the family a speedy recovery. Rest assured, your roles in the Taunton Beekeepers will be awaiting your return.

The next month sees three major events in the beekeeping calendar. First on 12th March the County Body, S.B.K.A. will be holding their A.G.M. at Monkton Village Hall. This event comes to Taunton every 12th year and it is hoped that many members from our Division will there to support the event. The main speaker in the afternoon will be Professor Ratnieks from Sussex University speaking on the Sussex Plan for Honey Bee Health & Well Being. You may recall that this was the programme that we supported with the research donations contributed by yourselves over the years. Please contact Neil Trood 01458 241368 if you would like to attend the pre meeting lunch in the Merry Monk.

Our second event is the annual auction to be held on 27th March at Ruishton. This is always a popular event and is very well attended. With this 'BEELINES' is a copy of the excellent guidance issued by 'BEEBASE' on points to follow. Anybody coming to the auction for the first time should be aware that the Division has never accepted live bees or used comb for sale.

When you receive this, the first of six sessions of the annual introductory course will have commenced. This course is now in it's eleventh successive year, the first one being undertaken in 2000 with Milns Priscott and myself as the tutors. This year, there will be ten different tutors, many of whom started beekeeping after attending one of our courses. This bodes well for the future educational provision of the Diivision.

Finally a very big 'thank you' for the recent donations received for the new building. To date they amount to over £800.

David Morris Editor

HIVE WATCH

This is the time of year when too many colonies succumb to starvation. If the autumn feeding was inadequate, then our bees may be lucky to survive. Even where the autumn feed was adequate, there are colonies that will expand quicker than others and in doing so, will consume their stores at a rapid rate.

It is important if our bees are not to meet an early demise that we check their weights. Any indication that they appear lighter than their neighbours, then action must be taken. **This is important for any over-wintering nucs.**

At this time of year it is not recommended that the hives are opened, so the insertion of a frame of food is not the solution. Instead, place a patty of candy or bakers fondant over the feed hole of the crown board. You may need to repeat the exercise so keep an eye on its consumption.

The bees will need water to dilute any food to a digestible state. Flying bees will not always be returning empty. They are more than likely collecting water that will be vital for the colony's survival.

When we see them bringing in the first pollen of the year we can safely assume the queen is laying well and the colony is in good heart. This is a good time of year to spend a few minutes each day watching their activities.

Editor

FROM THE MONTGOMERYSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

via e bees

I thought this picture showing how the varroa mite would appear if we were the size of a bee larvae about to be infested, just before capping is completed, puts things in perspective ! Ed



VEILS

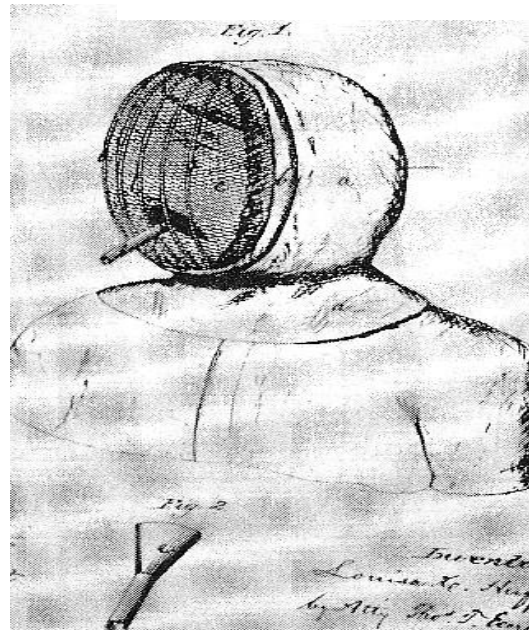
Some early examples of that vital piece of equipment, the veil.



Left One style tried glass in the Veil to make visibility easier

Below An 1873 patented mask for protecting beekeepers. The pipe was used to blow smoke on the colony.

From 'Bee Culture' 1996



We are fortunate in having Jenny Gammon who is able to repair our veils. Having used her skills, I can vouch for a job well done.

Look out for some more veils next time.

50 YEARS AGO

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food

Survey of Bee Health and Beekeeping in England and Wales 1961

Last time I gave the figures on Bee Health that appeared in the Somerset Beekeepers Year Book for 1960. This time I have extracted the figures for England for 1961 and 1959 with the Somerset figures for 1961 in brackets.

Year	No. of colonies inspected	No of colonies in which foul brood disease was found			Percentage of infected colonies	Appointed officers engaged
		A.F.B	E.F.B.	Total		
1959	86,523	558	72	630	0.7%	290
Somerset	(4,912)	(14)	(1)	(15)		(13)
1961	84,805	658	172	830	1.0%	233

You will see that with the reduction in the number of officers undertaking inspections there is an increase in the incidence of disease. Is there a correlation between the two? Is there a lesson to be learnt? It can certainly be deduced that our three appointed officers in Somerset and elsewhere deserve to be supplemented in number.

Editor

Which way up are your hive entrance blocks?

As the winter progresses, there will be more and more dead bees on the floor. If the weather is cold, the undertaker bees won't break cluster so the bodies just pile up; it could get to the state that the entrance becomes inaccessible. Having your entrance block "upside down", with the cut-out at the top, allows the bees to get out.

Ipswich & Suffolk BKA via e bees

I heard about this in the 1960's from the County Bee Instructor for Norfolk and I have put it into practice in the past.

Editor

What is this?



I have had this since the 1960's when I helped in the clearing up of the bee keeping equipment after the death of the semi-commercial beekeeper I helped in my youth. Made of aluminium, it holds two brood frames between mesh walls. The top right has an opening and the top has a sliding cover.

I have asked a number of beekeepers if they had come across anything like it before. It must be used for transporting bees but I wonder if it has a specialised purpose.

Perhaps somebody out there has the answer that I can relay to you in the next edition.

Editor

**Some handsome young drones from a hive
Assembled - a queen might arrive!
They were easily led
And did as she said
And now they're no longer alive!**

Thanks to Stratford-upon-Avon BKA and Leicestershire & Rutland BKA via E-Bees

ADVANCE NOTICE

Wax afternoon at
Heatherton Park.

Saturday 30th April

Entitled 'Fun with Wax' Jenny Gammon will impart some of her creative skills using Bees Wax. Participants are limited to 15 and early registration is advised for this popular session.

The event will start at 2.00 pm (and not 2.30 pm as shown on the programme card) and finish between 5.00 and 5.30 pm.

There will be a £5 charge for the afternoon plus a payment for materials used such as the wax etc. The initial £5 charge will go to the building fund.

To secure a place, please forward the fee to Jenny at 500 Cheddon Road, Taunton TA2 7QX as soon as possible.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome more new members have joined us for 2011.

Nick Coray
Wellington

S. Holmes
Taunton

Owen Meredith
Bishops Hull

Roy Abbott
Honiton

Mrs K Goldsworthy
Cotford St Luke

Samantha Vickery
Burrowbridge

Mark Lewis
Fitzhead

Elizabeth Smales-Cresswell
Fivehead

A steward stopped this beekeeper in the queue at Stoneleigh. "You are in the wrong queue, sir!" he said. "This one's for badge holders only." "But I have got a bad shoulder!" the rather deaf beekeeper replied.

Thanks to Stuart Ching Notts BKA & e bees

B.B.K.A.

2011 SPRING CONVENTION

16th April at Stoneleigh

This is one of the major beekeeping events of the year

Full details can be found in the latest edition of

BBKA NEWS