



YEOVIL BEE NEWS

January 2012

Welcome to the newsletter of the Yeovil & District Division, Somerset Beekeepers' Association. See also our website: www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk for a wealth of information on all things 'bees'

Next meeting – Educating beekeepers with Dan Basterfield – Tuesday 17th Jan, 7.30pm, Abbey Manor Community Centre

Daniel Basterfield grew up with beekeeping with his Dad, Ken, who started beekeeping in 1974 when he decided to exchange some amateur radio kit for a hive of bees. Daniel decided to revive the family hobby in 2004 when he began to feel less than satisfied with his career in IT. After a year of building up the hives and equipment as a spare-time activity, he handed in his notice in early 2006, allowing him to become a full-time beekeeper. His plan is to steadily build up to 300-400 hives, producing a range of high-quality honey and hive products which will be sold through local shops, farmers markets, Agricultural Shows, and of course online through their web site – like the good old days.

Daniel is joining us on Tuesday 17th January to talk about “Educating Beekeepers”.

Last Meeting

Our December meeting managed to avoid cancellation this year. The snow held off and Alex Morris came to talk to us about climate change.

It is doing strange things at the moment, but that is the "weather" and only the long term average can indicate a change in the climate. The data collected so far indicates an accelerating warming trend. The effect on the UK climate is uncertain as other effects like the Gulf Stream which may be change, have a dominating effect. However, the weather is expected to have more extremes with potentially warmer summers and colder winters.

The bees are expected to cope well with any climate change (better than we humans can!) and, just as different bees perform better in Italy compared to England, the beekeeper will select his bees and adapt his techniques according to any new weather conditions.

Chairman's Chatter

A Happy and Prosperous New Year to all beekeepers and their bees!

This unseasonably warm weather may not be bad for the bees but, unfortunately, it does find a way to hinder them. The warm weather means that the queen will carry on laying uninterrupted so there should be plenty of young brood to replace the older bees and no problem with failing older bees. However, the young brood and extra bees require stores to feed them as there is not yet enough forage to support them. Also, the uninterrupted brood means that there is no convenient gap during which the colony is broodless and when the Varroa mites are all on the bees (and not in the brood) and thus vulnerable to bee grooming and treatment by beekeepers with Oxalic Acid. So the colonies will stay healthy if they have enough stores and if the Varroa mite count was sufficiently low. So 'tis a time to take care and keep a close eye on your colonies as they develop. Monitoring their weight will be very important, especially as the spring develops. But at least the good weather should allow you to visit the bees without getting cold!

Divisional Committee meeting

We held a divisional committee meeting at the end of the year to discuss the divisional programme and other divisional matters. You should see the results in announcements in this newsletter for the hive assembly and "healthy bees" foundation.

I have attached a list of divisional equipment. This equipment has been purchased to support the divisional members in their beekeeping. If you would like to borrow any, please get in touch with a committee member, or the member who has charge of the equipment.

Nic

Foundation Replacement

It was decided at our committee meeting to continue with the foundation replacement for another year. The scheme replaces your old comb with new foundation. The old comb should be destroyed. This simple procedure will remove disease-carrying frames from your apiary and encourage healthy colonies. Replacement in spring will give the bees extra room to develop and foundation to draw, reducing the tendency to swarm. A practice that should be exercised every year to maintain healthy colonies.

The scheme will purchase and supply to each full member **10 new sheets of foundation in the spring**. The member will in return replace the old comb and either destroy them themselves or return to a committee member for destruction. The important action is to remove the old disease-carrying comb from circulation.

To participate in the scheme, you must let Andy & Lorraine know what frames you want by the February meeting (20th). They will then order the frames so that they are here for the March meeting, ready for replacement at your spring inspection. You will need to provide the following information: * what type of frame; * size of frame; * wired or un-wired foundation.

Important: You must let them know by 20th February so that the frames can be ordered in time for distribution in March, ready for the spring inspection, so SEND YOUR REQUESTS NOW, do not wait until the last minute. This will be your ONLY newsletter reminder! Any foundation that is ordered and not collected in a timely manner will be donated to the raffle prizes.

Contact Andy & Lorraine as soon as possible on 07825 912274 or by e-mail at a.dobson@virgin.net

Subscriptions are due!

Subscriptions for 2012 are now due. The cost is **£25 for a full member**, to include BDI cover for three colonies. This is £15 for BBKA, £5.50 for SBKA, £2 for BDI, £2 to the research fund and 50p for Yeovil Division.

If you have more than three colonies you will need to add the following amount:

🐝	Total number of colonies up to 3 nil	
🐝	up to 5	£2.00
🐝	up to 10	£5.25
🐝	up to 15	£7.75
🐝	up to 20	£9.50
🐝	up to 25	£11.10
🐝	up to 30	£13.60
🐝	up to 35	£16.10
🐝	up to 39	£18.10

The cost for an associate member remains at £5.00.

Any queries about this please phone **Sharon Blake** on **01460 242124**

If you prefer to send your subscription please post your cheque made payable to **SBKA Yeovil Division** to:

Mrs Sharon Blake,
Stratton Court,
Over Stratton,
South Petherton,
Somerset, TA13 5LQ

Summary of the 2011 National Bee Unit Apiary Inspections Programme

This season has been an average year for beekeeping, with mixed reports of honey yields, however, many beekeepers reported making an increase in colony numbers. It has also been a good year for the National Bee Unit inspectors who visited more beekeepers (5781), more apiaries (8920) and more colonies (37,785) than last year. Despite having fewer inspectors on the ground in 2011 due to retirements and unfilled posts, these inspection figures represent 12% increase on the total number of colonies inspected last season.

Hand-in-hand with increases in the number of inspections was an increase in the amount of disease discovered, and increase

in diagnostic support required from the NBU diagnostic laboratory at York. There were three times more cases of American foulbrood in 2011 (104 cases) and one third more European foulbrood in 2011 (695 cases) compared to 2010. Therefore as a beekeeping community we need to remain vigilant to these damaging brood diseases, and remind everyone to report suspicions of disease to their local Bee Inspector (see below for contact details). The NBU visit apiaries based on the risk of finding disease, or finding exotic pests, and conduct so called priority inspections. The risk of an apiary having disease is derived from the proximity of each apiary to known disease outbreaks, so the closer an apiary is to known disease, the higher the priority of inspecting that apiary.

The Random Apiary Survey was commissioned by Defra and the Welsh

Assembly Government to help the NBU obtain an accurate estimate of disease prevalence by visiting apiaries in all areas, rather than concentrating on high risk areas. Over the last 2 seasons the NBU have checked for disease at over 4700 apiaries selected at random from across England and Wales. We know from this massive surveillance exercise that the priority inspection programme, routinely used by the NBU, detected significantly more American and European foulbrood than the inspection of apiaries selected at random. Also, the apiary risk classifications used by the NBU to prioritise inspections, were confirmed as being very useful for targeting disease. The final part of this exercise was to look at 13 pathogens in adult bee samples collected from each visit, including viruses, fungi and bacteria. We can confirm that every one of these pathogens was detected across England and Wales, but the prevalence of each ranged from being very common, to a single finding in the survey!

Some good news is that the viruses linked to Colony Collapse Disorder in the United States were of very low prevalence, and none of the 19,615 colonies assessed in the survey, were suffering from this condition. The final report for this surveillance exercise will be shared with beekeepers in spring next year, so look out for updates in magazines, on BeeBase (see www.nationalbeeunit.com) and presentations at the WBKA and BBKA Spring conventions. NBU staff will also throughout the year be giving presentations across the country as well which will include these details.

This season was also another successful year for providing training and advice building on what has gone before. To date, NBU staff have given 833 training events with 25,200 attendees. Also seasonal

husbandry advice was sent to 4500 beekeepers who had registered on BeeBase and provided their email addresses, and 105 disease alerts were sent to 2076 registered beekeepers who own bees within 5 km of foulbrood disease. If you wish to receive seasonal advice and updates or be informed when foulbrood has been found in your area, please provide us with your email address (see contact details below).

The NBU can only provide training and advice, and effectively control disease when we are in a position to contact you! This might seem like an obvious statement, but if we do not know you are a beekeeper, we cannot warn of disease threats near you or provide timely husbandry advice. A large number of beekeepers that remain unknown to the NBU seriously compromises our ability to control notifiable disease and to contain any future incursion of an exotic pest like the Small Hive Beetle. Many beekeepers presume that by registering with a local association, NBU inspectors will know automatically where beekeepers are. However, this is not always the case. For example a survey in 2011 revealed that 45 of 64 county level associations do not share such information with the NBU, leaving large gaps in our ability to control disease and future exotic pest incursions. Recent efforts by the NBU inspectors has resulted in an estimated additional 2291 beekeepers becoming registered, and therefore becoming part of a responsible community of beekeepers who are serious about improving honey bee health.

If you want to register with the NBU as a beekeeper, and help us to help you, then please contact us. National Bee Unit Contact us on 01904 462510 , by emailing nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk, or find more information by visiting our website www.nationalbeeunit.com

Coming up, don't miss...

Event	When	Where	Details
Educating beekeepers	Tues Jan 17 th , 7.30pm	Abbey Manor Community centre	Dan Basterfield
Thieving Bees – more common than you think	Monday Feb 20 th , 7.30pm	Abbey Manor Community centre	Jim Tew
Somerset County Lecture Day	Sat Feb 18th	Cheddar	
SBKA AGM with speaker at 2pm	Sat March 10th	Raleghs Cross inn, Brendon hill	
Value added products	Tues March 20 th , 7.30pm	Abbey Manor Community centre	Alan & Margaret Johnson
Auction of beekeeping equipment	Sunday March 27 th , 2pm	Ruishton Village Hall	

Mock BBKA Basic Assessment

Sunday 13 May 2012, 2.30pm at the Blake's Apiary in Over Stratton

This additional afternoon session has been arranged with Ken Edwards, who is one of the examiners for the BBKA Basic Assessment. For this afternoon, he has kindly offered to go through what would be required for those wishing to take their basic assessment in 2012. If you have been keeping bees for more than one year i.e. one complete season and are contemplating taking the BBKA Basic Assessment, this session will guide you through what to expect.

The syllabus for the BBKA Basic Assessment was sent out with the last newsletter. It is not as daunting as it might look; if you read it through you will see that you all have the skills to pass after a little guidance from Ken.

Ken says "The session would be a dummy run of the Basic Assessment. Using 3 volunteers to be assessed. One person for each of the 3 sections. Periods of discussion would be interspersed between each section, and alternative answers explored. By the end of the session everyone should be clear about what the procedure of the assessment will be and have taken part in assessing and being assessed."

For this to be a productive session there needs to be a minimum of 6 people and a maximum of 10 so on this occasion we will ask you to book a place with Sharon or Malcolm Blake 01460 242124 or sharon.blake@bbka.org.uk

If this number is exceeded we will organise another session with Ken, so please book early to ensure your place which will also help with the organisation.

Sharon and Malcolm Blake

European Foul Brood 2011 Summary

This year saw no outbreaks of EFB within our members. However, there were 20 reported cases in Somerset including 8 within the Yeovil divisional area. We seem to be keeping EFB at bay. I hope this is down to our members dutifully changing old comb for new on a frequent basis as well as adopting good hygienic practices in the apiary. Keep up the good work and don't let it slip or EFB can destroy all your colonies!

Sugar supplies

If anyone is thinking of buying sugar for making candy, just to say that Farm Foods have it for £1.50 for 2 x 1kg bags which is cheaper than Bookers.

Alice

Divisional officers

President	Fred Horne	01935 421623	Treasurer & membership secretary	Sharon Blake	01460 242124
Chairman	Nic Bard	01935 424759	Librarian	Jane Bard	01935 424759
Vice-Chairman	Neil Evans	01935 822933	Newsletter editor	Sue Eaton	01935 421155
Secretary	Andy Dobson & Lorraine Fleming	07825 912274			

Please contact them with any comments or suggestions.

Yeovil 2012/13 Programme

Date	Description
2012	
17th Jan	Dan Basterfield "Educating Beekeepers" at AM
20th Feb	Jim Tew "Thieving Bees – More Common than You Think" at AM
20th March	Alan & Margaret Johnson "Value Added Products" at AM
28th April	Queen marking and clipping, with a practice on drones at Malcolm & Sharon Blake's apiary, Over Stratton and pub lunch
13th May	Mock Assessment for the Basic Exam (Sunday)
19th May	John Hamer "Queen Rearing" at John Carnegie's apiary, Chilton Cantelo
20th May	"Hive Making" with John Hamer at Over Stratton Village Hall (Sunday)
09th June	Keith Delaplane "TBA" at Over Stratton Village Hall and pub lunch
16th June	Bee Happy Plants Nursery, South Chard
21st July	Simon Jones "Managing supers ready for extraction, queen management & production of a 5 frame nucleus for over wintering" at Nick & Jane's apiary, North Perrott
18th Aug	Ivor Davis "Preparing for Winter" at Marvin Collins' apiary, Lufton
18th Sept	Max Watkins "What's new in Vita's Research" at AM
29th Oct	Joint Meeting with SW at the Over Stratton Village Hall
20th Nov	AGM plus Questions & Answers at AM
07th Dec	Ian & Ruth Homer "Christmas quiz" Over Stratton Village Hall
2013	
15th Jan	Richard Ball "Bee Improvement" at AM
18th Feb	SBKA Lecture Day Speaker at AM
19th Mar	Tony Herbert "Basic Genetics" at AM
21st July	Alice Hunter's apiary Sherborne

AM - September to March meetings at Abbey Manor 7.30pm
 April to August outside meetings 2.30pm