



Newsletter September 2024

Committee members:

Pat Coleman (President), Ken Jeanes (Chair), Mat Phillips (Treasurer), Anne Collyer (Secretary), Jane Jeanes (SBKA Trustee), Tony Johnstone (Programme Secretary), Jeremy Lee (Apiary Manager), Brian Magor, Dennis White and John Wood

Welcome to our September newsletter. I have attached the honey show schedule again in case anyone has mislaid it (!) together with a poster – any help in promoting the show is much appreciated. It is not just for branch members but also an opportunity to involve members of the public and increase awareness of the role of bees and all pollinators in the environment, plus the opportunity to sign up for the 2025 beginners' course in January. And, of course, it's not just about the honey in jars, it is a chance to showcase the many varied uses of beeswax, cooking and preserving with honey, handicrafts and much more. There is an opportunity for those members who enter the show to sell their honey and honey/beeswax products plus an excellent cake stall.

As ever, if anyone needs more information or has a question to ask, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will put you in touch with someone who can help.

Anne Collyer, Branch Secretary SESBKA

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Annual Membership Renewals

Mat Phillips, Treasurer. mat@neovoca.com

The Autumn (and therefore annual) period for new membership has now closed for 23-24. We will be informed of next year's renewal fees (BBKA, SBKA, BDI) sometime after September 30, and the branch will send out an automatic renewal email, after the AGM on 21st November, to all currently registered members (same as last year). A reminder that BDI coverage runs from Jan1 to Dec 31st. An email alert will be sent just prior to this so that it is less likely to be missed.

Lionel's September Bee Notes

For further information please contact Lionel: lhorer934@talktalk.net

Every year we complain about the weather and blame the conditions one way or another for the poor performance of the bees, but this year I consider an exceptionally bad year. It started well, early spring the weather was good at the time of the apple blossom and the bees brought in plenty of stores and then it all changed. Rain and cold kept the bees inside, the plants did not know if they should flower or not so the bees stayed inside and consumed the stores they had previously laid down. This meant there was no early summer harvest for the beekeeper.

It was late June before we saw nature get back into sync and the sun shone, the flowers bloomed and the bees got busy. We have now removed the honey for the main harvest and although most of the bees worked hard it has not been a heavy yield but, as usual, I live in hope that we may get a late harvest as the productive year does seem to trail further into autumn since the climate has changed and the warm weather seems to last further towards the end of the year. We can but hope.

Another problem this year has been with Queens. Either not returning from their mating flights or not mating properly and after starting to lay for a short time, simply disappearing without the courtesy of leaving a virgin queen to replace her. This is very difficult for the beekeeper as the first sign of a problem is to suddenly find a queen less hive with no eggs and no young brood. This problem has become a lot more pronounced this year. I'm afraid I don't know the answer to this but as usual I hope the bees can sort it out.

2024 Programme of Events

Tony Johnstone, Events Secretary tmj67@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 07973341557

Hello everybody.

Please find below my programme update, Paragraphs are edited each month so please read on-

Important. When visiting any Apiary, including our own, it is important to be mindful of Apiary Hygiene. Please ensure your bee suit is clean and that you use new disposable gloves. If carrying tools make sure they are **disinfected** please, particularly between each colony inspection.

In line with the changes imposed by the SBKA we will be asking members to sign in on arrival for each apiary visit. This is a health and safety matter just in case someone suffers a serious bee related response or injury. It is essential that members carrying an EpiPen disclose this and ensure that it is not out of date and that the phone number given is **NOT** their own but that of a partner/relation.

Hook Valley Apiary.

Jeremy Lee will continue to open the Apiary on a weekday evening, weather permitting, and will publish details on WhatsApp in advance. This is a great opportunity for new members, and others, to get hands-on experience.

Saturday 14th September 2024 Yarlington Fair @ Yarlington House, BA9 3DY Set up @ 9.30am Pack up @ 4.30pm

Again, we can take our gazebo to promote beekeeping and sell our honey.

There are sufficient volunteers for the morning set-up. **Can you help 1.00pm to 4.30pm please?** We cannot participate without volunteers, so please let me know if you can help half day or all day.

Thursday 19th September 2024 At The Market House Castle Cary- Meet at 19.15 start at 19.30 hrs

A presentation by Ken Edwards of the Quantock branch.

Ken is going to give a presentation about his visit to East Africa where he was surprised by the ability of the African beekeepers.

Saturday 28th September 2024 from 10.00am. At the Ansford Academy carpark.

Dianne Sleigh will be offering her "Click & Collect" service to furnish your apiary needs. Sadly, she is unable to be at our Honey Show this year.

Her contact details are- sales@thebeedepot.com or 07879 811967 to place your orders

Saturday 12th October (Set-up on Friday 11th) At the Market House Castle Cary. The SESBKA Honey Show.

We are lucky to have Jack Mummery as our judge this year. Jack is a BBKA accredited honey judge.

Please see the full schedule and rules attached.

Honey Show Poster- Copy attached- I have supplies of our poster (both in sizes A4 & A5) which will need to be circulated through our Branch area- **Can You Help Please?**

As usual I am looking for volunteers to set-up on Friday- 5.00pm – 8.00pm and on Saturday from 9.00am to 2.30pm.

We will use our Gazebo, this year from which to sell honey, located on the cobbles.

It is important that you let me know if you want to sell honey.

Brenda Wood has kindly agreed to run the Coffee & Cake Stall again so will need helpers. Please let her know you can help and contact her directly (but copy me in please) bwood47@btinternet.com

And, of course, don't forget to "Bake a Cake"

Thursday 21st November.

At The Market House Castle Cary.

The SESBKA Annual General Meeting followed by an invited speaker.

News From the Apiary

For more information, please contact Jeremy Lee, Apiary Manager jglee@me.com

I can't believe another beekeeping season is nearly over. I look back to see what I've learnt this year & as usual it's the same old - whatever you do, the bees know best & generally sort themselves out. Saying that, despite our best efforts, will still swarm for no reason when everything on the hive seems perfect leaving the colony in a perilous state. As mentioned in last month's missive, we had three big strong colonies that decided to 'take a run for it' late season and the virgin queens never returned ending up with laying workers. Luckily, with a bit of quick thinking from Brian and some fairly 'violent' shaking out and reshuffling, all had queens at varying stages when we looked last week. It was also good to 'out queen spot' James 3 v 2.

The time now turns to getting 'the girls' ready for winter. It appears that the most of the drones have been turfed out and the brood nests are retracting - sometimes a relief from the June/July 'boiling boxes' of bees. Any spare honey at the apiary is redistributed amongst the weaker colonies negating the need to lug feed around and honey is far better for them than sugar syrup.

Then there is the decision to treat or not to treat. I'm afraid I'm in the camp of 'treat the autumn bees regardless' as they are the key survival over the winter - give them the best possible chance. Last year we treated with the chemical treatment Apivar but will alternate this season with the naturally occurring Thymol. Whether you choose to do so or not, make sure you treat at the recommended dose and time to avoid any resistance issues.



Honey and Banana Biscuits

Ingredients

125g of Unsalted Butter	1 Ripe Banana
100g of Just Bee Honey	1 Tsp of Vanilla Extract
100g of Ground Almonds	125g of Self Raising Flour

1. Preheat the oven to Gas mark 6 or 200°C (180°C for a fan assisted oven)
2. Line or lightly grease a baking tray
3. Cut the butter into small chunks and add to the saucepan. Over a very low heat, warm the butter gently on the hob to melt it.
4. Next add the honey and give it a good stir until it's mixed in with the butter. Then add the vanilla extract and stir through until everything is combined.
5. Finally mash the banana with a fork in a small bowl until it's soft and mushy, then add to the pan and mix in well. Don't worry if there are some small lumpy bits of banana, that's fine. Remove the pan from the heat and leave it aside for now.
6. Sift the flour into the mixing bowl, then add the ground almonds and mix together with a fork until combined evenly.
7. Add the wet ingredients from the saucepan into the bowl of dry ingredients and give it a really good mix together
8. Using a tablespoon, scoop a spoonful of dough out of the bowl onto the baking tray and spread it out using the back of the spoon or a silicon spatula to create a nice-looking biscuit around 5mm thick. Continue until the tray is filled, leaving a small gap between the biscuits
9. Bake in the centre of the oven for 12 - 15 minutes.
10. Once baked remove from the oven and allow to cool for around 10 minutes before carefully moving to a wire rack to fully cool.

Recipe
Corner

A Beginners Guide to Forage

Geoff Blay, Master Beekeeper and member of SESBKA has published an article regarding planting of forage for bees in BeeCraft September 2024 and they have kindly allowed me to share the link with you all. It is interesting reading and hopefully will provide ideas for you all. Just click on the link in the covering email.

BBKA News

This year's Asian Hornet Week takes place 2nd – 8th September when we will be continuing our work to raise awareness, improve identification and encourage people to download the 'Asian Hornet Watch' app. Please follow the BBKA on social media for the latest updates throughout the week.

Zoom Talk: Asian Hornet - Beekeepers Update, Wednesday 4th September at 7pm

Andrew Durham will be giving a 'Beekeepers Update' for Asian Hornet Week 2024 via Zoom.

Link to join Zoom talk: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88324939286?pwd=k6Qd9FZVD2IXctx1XTcF2cGvRBI6kU.1>

Meeting ID: 883 2493 9286 Passcode: 307972

This talk will also be streamed to YouTube for those unavailable to watch live.

BBKA WhatsApp Group

Our Asian Hornet WhatsApp Announcement group has been really successful and is now full so we've made a second group. <https://chat.whatsapp.com/BgMZwl9JpCMBrHUEkNmao>

The messaging will be identical to the first group so you only need to be included in one.

Diane Drinkwater

BBKA Chair