



1906 Centenary Year 2006

# SBKA Exmoor Division

Newsletter: May – June 2021 edition

## Oil seed rape honey

*Be prepared to extract capped honey as soon as the OSR stops flowering.*

At the time of writing, we had no indication that the weather would be so cold and dry, nor any hint that the warm spell that followed would come to an abrupt end, followed by this heavy period of wet weather. We could then, only speculate on the long term effect it will have on early foraging.

Reports were emerging that where the OSR had been sown, the cold air is preventing bees from foraging among it. The Dunster area has no obvious fields of OSR so probably no great threat of swarming there then. Starvation? Yes! (*Of my own hives three had stores and two, nothing, so both had to be fed. JE*)

Never the less, because OSR is high in glucose it will set rapidly in the comb making it almost impossible to extract if it sets. Always try to filter as you extract as this will make handling the honey a little easier at a later date. If you are storing your honey to use later store in food grade buckets, try to fill buckets completely and seal to stop contamination and moisture entering, honey is thixotropic and will draw in moisture if it can.

Good oil seed rape honey will set rock hard in a very short time and will set with a smooth texture unlike our summer honey which will granulate with a coarse texture, this is why OSR is so good for soft set/creamed honey.

To turn your bucket of solid OSR honey (which will bend your spoon), into a soft smooth spreadable honey you will need a way of warming a solid bucket.

### EXMOOR DIVISION BEEKEEPER'S PROGRAMME 2021

#### June

Nothing has been reported to date. Watch for communications direct from Lance Moir, or Caroline Ralph.

#### July

Sun. 12 **Bee Tea and Apiary Inspection** at Lance's apiary, 2.0 p.m. Catford Cottage Escott, Stogumber. TA4 4JQ. Followed by food and drink (bring things to BBQ and drink). Partners welcome.

Weds. 28 **Dunster Show** Details to follow, but as usual help will be needed, especially on the day.

#### August

Sun. 1 **Porlock Show** Details to follow, and as with Dunster, help will be needed to set up. Details to follow.

Sun. 15 **Bee Tea and Apiary inspection** 2.0 p.m. followed by bee tea at Alan and Tricia Nelson, Meadowstream House, Bilbrook TA22 6HE.

*Future announcements may either appear here in the newsletter, or particularly an email from the Secretary, Caroline Ralph.*

Items for publication would be most welcome.

**ebkanews.eastaugh@btinternet.com**

Take a bucket of solid honey and put it in a warming cabinet at 35°C for about a day until it is like a thick porridge and you can squeeze in the sides of the bucket. Next, using a masher to break up the crystals to mash it like you would do mashed potato, try to keep the masher below the surface to avoid introducing air into honey.

When you have broken up the crystals, you should have a smooth pourable product. Transfer this into a settling/bottling tank and leave for a few hours to settle, then jar-up. If possible leave the jars in a room with a temperature of approx 12-14°C, this will be ideal to set honey into a smooth honey which can be spread on your toast.

Rob Fox

Has anyone tried honey and Marmite on toast or crumpets? Sounds revolting I know, but discovered it by accident, I now love it. J.E.

# There is progress with the new apiary

The concrete floor for the shed is down and a row of bricks for the plinth for the shed to sit on has been laid (*see picture below*). Roofing material has been ordered and Barry is hopefully soon to put the shed up. The windows and doors have been made, and we now have to finish laying drains levelling a path, and do the hard standing for parking, preferably over the next couple of weeks. Then once the building is up the committee can approve our requirements for the internal fittings.

The ground is very wet and seems to retain water readily, this may prove to be problem, however at this stage we shall just have to wait and see as there is still much to do.

As you can see from the pictures taken on Saturday evening (22nd), the grass and weeds have taken hold, all of which will have to be cut back. It is too, growing over the old barrels and rubbish, but it does hide them for the moment.

As an aside I (JE) found it quite a change to walk the field in the dry. Yes the grass was damp underfoot but it was not raining and the sun was shining (*see picture*).



## Shows: various

Unless we all get put into another lockdown Dunster Country Fair is going ahead on Wednesday 28th July. We think that Lynda may have managed to get us into the food hall this year, that being the case, we would not need the tent at that show.

We have been contacted by Mid Devon Show, who would like us to have a stall/tent at their show on Saturday 24th July. So do we want to have a stall at Knightshayes?

Neither must we forget our other regular event, that of Porlock. A decision is still to be made on that one.

One thing that has to be said is that all these shows need plenty of help on the day, and we do need to raise money buy selling honey. Offers of help are welcome

Exmoor Beekeepers have arrangements to sell honey at the Exmoor Shop in Minehead. Also through Torre Cider at Washford. We are keen to sell our members honey through these outlets – the wholesale prices are slightly better for sales through the Minehead shop (as we have volunteers working there), but the rates are competitive for beekeepers.

Can any member who has surplus honey please contact me ([exmoorhoneyshow@gmail.com](mailto:exmoorhoneyshow@gmail.com)) as it looks likely that we shall run out before the main crop this year. We will also want to sell members' honey at the various shows that happen this year too.

Lance Moir 01984 656240

Ian Boyes has informed us that a local lady would like to buy 20-30 jars of member's honey. If anyone has some stock and is interested in selling, please let Ian know and he will put you in touch.

Ian lives in Exford. If anyone is interested give him a call, his number is — 01643 831 857.