

The Newsletter



Vol no 29 Issue 3 April March 2022

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



Spring has finally arrived

What a wonderful week at the end of March, which allowed first inspections and being able to assess the 'state of the nation'. Most of my colonies came through the winter well, but we are promised a return to cooler weather - so beware!

April, is a tricky month, and sudden cool weather can spell low stores and possible starvation, so keep an eye on the weather forecasts. Sorry to be a prophet of doom.

Somerton Beekeepers March committee meeting

Following a member's concern regarding the perceived lack of a spending plan. Somerton BKA committee looked at the feasibility of several projects. The installation of a septic tank was considered an unnecessary expense, as the existing composting system is hardly used at all. A permanent and semi-permeable tarmac coating of the car park was assessed and two, quotations received. Both prices were in the region of £14,500 and this was considered to be an extravagant use of funds. A bonded gravel pathway to allow disabled access to the bees suffered a similar fate, with a quotation being received for £9,500.

It was thought that disabled access to the hives could be achieved with a more realistically priced product, and this avenue is being pursued. Disabled access to the 'Beespace' can be achieved by making our own ramp and platform. This is being priced, and will be presented at next month's meeting.

The apiary's bees are presently being inspected by a team of three, but this will be augmented. Joe King's [proposal appears later in the newsletter.

The electricity supply to the 'Beespace' will be connected on June 6th - Western Power Distribution have finally managed to extract their digit. What's two years between friends?

It was suggested that a stock of frames and wax foundation should be acquired for members to purchase from the apiary. The stock will all be for National hives. This is being pursued and further details will be available soon.

Joe King is investigating the possibilities of a Bee Safari with a Bee Inspector as our 'Tour Guide' but as the inspectorate has undergone a re-shuffle, we await news on this.

As Ukraine is/was home to a very large population of beekeepers, Alison Clewes mentioned the possibility of supporting Ukrainian refugees who also happen to be beekeepers. As very few refugees have arrived in the UK, so far, Alison will investigate the possibilities.

In the past, we have welcomed groups wishing to visit the apiary, and it was suggested that as COVID restrictions have, for the most part, been lifted, it might be an idea to re-boot these visits, for a small donation to funds.



Hydroxymethylfurfural

Every beekeeper knows that if you subject honey to excessive heating you create Hydroxymethylfurfural, or HMF, which degrades the honey. Well! After all the kerfuffle, it now seems that we have been misled over a period of years. The photograph above is absolute proof that HMF is safe.



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West Country Honey Farms Award

Stewart Gould is this year's winner of the greatest honour Somerset Beekeepers' Association can bestow, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the craft. He was presented with the magnificent trophy at the Association's annual meeting by Joe King, Chair of the Award committee.

Stewart, who is Chair of Somerset Beekeepers and has previously been chair of Somerton Division, the editor of the year book and county newsletter editor, is current editor of the Somerton Division newsletter, and has made a major contribution to beekeeping at a county and local level.

Eric McLaughlin, Chair of Somerton beekeepers, said in the award citation that during lock-down Stewart had opened up Somerton's new beekeepers' course to people across the county and further afield: "There were over 90 participants for the Zoom sessions followed by successful practical sessions for the 30 allowed by Covid regulations at the time."

He praised Stewart's drive and determination in negotiating the purchase of land which led to Somerton division getting its own apiary. He further designed the building, submitted the planning application, and acquired several charitable grants, as well as all the hedging. He also organises bulk purchase schemes to help members get the best price for a range of beekeeping essentials and has coordinated the new beekeepers' courses for ten years.

Joe King



Estate Honey Gift Set

This super sweet gift set includes our delicious estate honey made by our bee keeping team, paired with a ceramic honey pot made for us by Richard Pomeroy. All of which make for a deliciously perfect gift for any honey lover. Our estate honey is made in very small batches making this gift extremely unique as these jars are in very limited supply. Sourced from our gardens, orchards and a specially planted Apiary around the Beezantium, comes The Newt Estate Honey.

Our bees have some splendid choices of habitat – from straw skep hives to wild hives in the trees. To safeguard their wellbeing, Head Beekeeper Paula Carnell and the bee team work with the bees, limiting honey harvesting to ensure there is always plenty leftover for the bees, too. Harvesting is a careful meditative practice, one frame at a time, with each jar of honey being dedicated to the queen bee responsible for that hive – Winifred and Sylvia to name but two.

The real makers we celebrate here are our pollinator friends, which began as just two wild colonies back in 2017. Nurtured by Paula and co., we now stand proud with between 15-20 colonies, perfectly adapted to their environment. A medical herbalist and consultant on beekeeping and the healing powers of honey, Paula is particularly interested in the connection between bees' health and our own.

"Once you understand the importance of bees, they change every aspect of your life. I am now far more aware of the connectivity of all things, including our impact on nature and our environment. Bees are a key indicator species, and when we understand what makes them sick or starving, you can't help but be inspired to try your best to help them!"

£90.00

— 1 + ADD TO BAG

- MORE DETAILS

You might have to zoom in a bit to read the text, but the price is clear enough. You can buy a jar of honey, with a wooden honey dipper and a ceramic pot from The Newt in Somerset for just £90.00 - with free delivery.

This isn't an April Fool's prank

Apiinvert. Syrup ready to feed bees. Unlike sugar solution it requires no mixing, more readily accepted and less work required for the bees to invert (not wasting energy), more close to a natural food.

13kg 1 - 4 boxes £24 each, 5 + boxes £23 each

Apifonda. If you are venturing on a Queen rearing project this fondant is what you need. Very similar to Apiinvert, it is a paste not a liquid. If a colony becomes light through the course of the winter a dollop of fondant could well be the difference between life and death of the bees.

1 x 2.5 Kg bag £5.00, 1 box 12.5 Kg £25, 2 + boxes £24 each

The Apiinvert can be fed as a 'gee up' in the spring, emergency feeding during the 'June gap' and of course at the end of the season when preparing for winter.

Foundation. National brood and super, 14 x 12 brood available

Eddie Howe email:- redrascal444@gmail.com **Mobile 07812 738793**

Tel. 01458 272114

Apiary visits

It's all going well so far. We have offers from two members to let us visit their bees in the summer. We could do with a coupe more, so if you would like throw your apiary open for about 15 beekeepers, then here's your chance. To find out more, **contact Joe King on 001749 890357 or by email at jk.pilton@btinternet.com**

Simon Jones _ NBU Regional Bee Inspector



Not the most flattering of photographs, but Simon Jones who has been Regional Bee Inspector for the South West of England for many years, has retired to spend more time with his own bees. Simon has been an inspiration to many and helped a good few beleaguered beekeepers through the traumas of EFB and other less destructive dis-

eases. He has also been and will remain a leading light in Taunton Division.

Simon's replacement is somebody who is well known to many a Somerset beekeeper already. Megan Seymour hails from Wells and has been a Seasonal Bee Inspector for North Somerset and Avon for several years now. She took up the post of RBI in February.

We wish her all the very best in her new endeavour. She is an extremely knowledgeable beekeeper and a worthy replacement for Simon.



Land for bees

We've had an email from a member about land for bees in Somerton.

My neighbour's father lives in Somerton and he would like to offer his garden to a beehive. He doesn't want the responsibility of looking after them but feels that his garden and the bees would be mutually appreciative.

He doesn't do email but wondered if someone would be interested in talking to him about the possibilities.

He has given me his name and number:

Peter Llewellyn 07973757997.

New BBwear suits for sale

When Spring cleaning at the apiary recently, and delving into a hidden cupboard, Eric McLaughlin discovered 3 full BBwear suits and 3 BBwear jackets all unworn and in their original packaging. All are small size. Chest size 86-92cm (33"-36") chest, height 170cm (5'7"). The current price for a full suit is £162.99 and a jacket is now £122.99. As these were purchased a couple of years ago, we can pass the full suits on for £100.00 and the jackets for £75.00 each. If you're interested, please **contact Eric McLaughlin on 07910 764069**

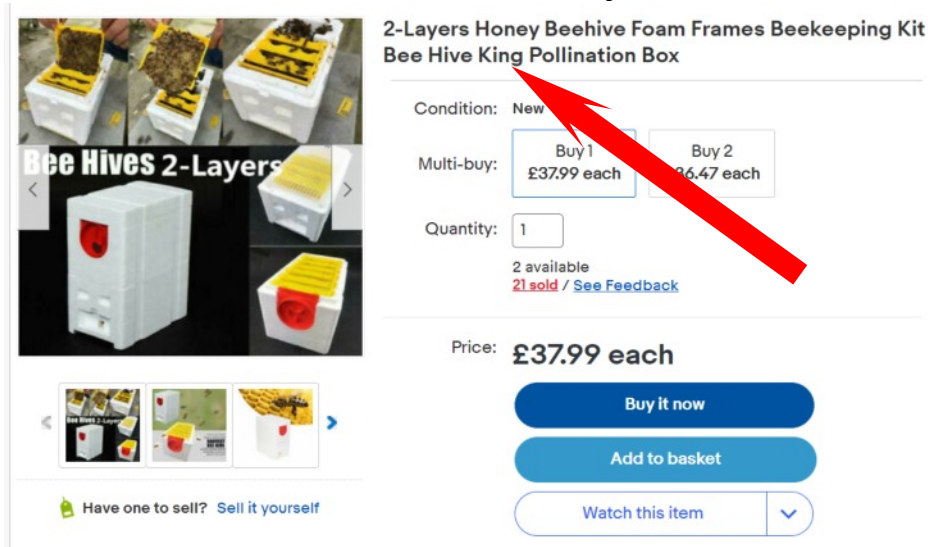


2 Full colonies of bees

Steve Horne was contacted recently to re-home 2 full colonies of bees. The owner of the bees had sadly died and the family wanted them to go a good home. Steve is monitoring their health and the fecundity of the queen, and would be pleased to hear from anybody interested in buying them. The hives which they are in appear to be home made Langstroth type hives and Steve is thinking of doing a shook swarm into National hives. Each colony is selling for a bargain £150 each. **Contact Steve on 01278 662335.**

Now you can breed your own King bees

Purchase on Ebay



2-Layers Honey Beehive Foam Frames Beekeeping Kit
Bee Hive King Pollination Box

Condition: **New**

Multi-buy:

Buy 1	Buy 2
£37.99 each	£36.47 each

Quantity:

2 available
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Price: **£37.99 each**

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BOOK NOW!



Spring 2022 Convention

Friday 8 - Saturday 9 – Sunday 10 April 2022

Harper Adams University, Shropshire, TF10 8NB

Lectures, Workshops and Seminars covering a wide range of practical and scientific topics, directed at all levels of experience, presented by leading experts. Bumper Trade Show Saturday 9th

Speakers and Tutors include; Marin Anastasov, Mark Barnett, Shirley and Richard Bond, Norman Carreck, Lars Chittka, Celia Davis, Joyce Nisbet, Juliet Osborne, Julian Parker, Sara Robb, Nigel Semmence, Jo Widdicombe, Geraldine Wright, and more...

For further information, **and to book** from 31st January
see the Spring Convention pages at www.bbka.org.uk

Visit to Buckfast Abbey Bees

In previous years this has been a very popular excursion, to meet up with Clare Densley and Martin Hann, who manage the bees at the Abbey. Those who subscribe to Beecraft will know their faces and wry sense of humour when dealing with readers' queries.



Clare and Martin are extremely experienced beekeepers and the Buckfast Abbey bees are used for educational purposes only. It is no longer a commercial queen breeding establishment. Nobody has bought a queen bee from Buckfast Abbey in many, many years.

Response to this visit on **Saturday August 27th** has been very low, so please let me know if you would like to come along. There are only 16 places up for grabs. There is no charge as such, but we do make a donation of about £5.00 each, just to help with the running costs of the bee shed.

Contact Stewart Gould at somertonbees@btinternet.com

Auction of second hand Beekeeping Equipment

Ruishton Village Hall

Cheats Road, Ruishton, Taunton, TA3 5JD

Sunday April 3rd

Sale starts promptly at 2.00pm

Submitting items & viewing from 10.00am

News from our Teaching Apiary at Downslade Quarry.



During the winter months we have been managing our Teaching Apiary with a small team of three beekeepers Eric, your Chairman, Nigel Gregory, and myself. We have met weekly to carry out the necessary tasks in the apiary, plus drink coffee, eat kitkats, and generally put the world to rights. This has been a very successful combination. Much of the work has involved the maintenance of the site, cutting hedges, cutting back the vegetation in the bee meadow and barrowing

away the cut vegetation. This helps to deplete the soil fertility and therefore favours wild flowers rather than coarse grasses. We have been hefting the hives regularly and supplementing them with fondant if needed.

Last week's exceptionally warm weather allowed us to open up a couple of the smaller hives briefly, to check on them. Nearly all the hives are busy and the bees bringing in plenty of pollen suggesting that brood is present. We have removed the mouse-guards, placed entrance blocks and removed the anti-woodpecker wire netting.

Your Committee has discussed how we are going to manage the apiary during the summer months. The Apiary will be used at the weekends for the Beginners' Course which starts shortly, but it would be nice to offer any of our members, who fancy broadening their experience, the chance to come along on any Tuesday morning at 9.30 and join in with us to go through the hives together and carry out any necessary work, such as swarm management etc. It is not essential that you commit to every Tuesday morning, but come when you can. It might be helpful to know in advance if you are coming so that there are adequate kitkats and coffee/tea. Just ring me on the number below.

Come along and join a friendly group to go through the hives and learn from each other as we always do.

Joe King - 01749 890357
Apiary Manager

Apimondia 2022

Apimondia is a huge international gathering of beekeepers, which is held every two years.

The next one was due to be held in Russia in 2021 but was put off until August 2022 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The conference was to have been held in an area of Russia where tree beekeeping, known locally as “wild hive beekeeping” has been practised for over a thousand years, and rediscovered by the rest of us recently, overturning many assumptions about how to keep bees. It is also an area with naturally varroa resistant bees. However, due to the war in Ukraine, a request was made by the Polish Beekeeping Association to expel Russia from the International Organisation of Beekeeping Associations Apimondia.



On 7th March 2022 Apimondia issued the following statement. “The Executive Board of Apimondia voted unanimously this week to cancel the Apimondia Congress planned for September 2022 in Ufa Russia. We condemn the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Please know that we heard all your voices during these trying days. We are looking forward to organising a great Apimondia Congress in Santiago Chile in 2023, when beekeepers and researchers from every nation will once again be able to meet. We may organise some Symposia prior to the Congress: please follow our website for updates. We appreciate your continued support of Apimondia. Sincerely, Jeff Pettis, Apimondia President”

Since then, the Executive Board of Apimondia have decided to stage the 47th Apimondia Congress in Istanbul between 24th and 28th August 2022.

Courtesy of Lune Valley Beekeepers - via Ebees

From The Guardian

It may take bees multiple generations to recover from being exposed to insecticides even just once, research shows. Although studies have long shown the damaging effects of pesticides for the bio-diverse environment, little is known about how much they affect insects in the long term. This new research, published in PNAS, shows that even a single exposure to insecticides in **a bee's first year of life** affects offspring production, and since the effects of the pesticides are cumulative, this results in an overall decrease in the bee population.

Dates for your diary

**Beginners Practical Sessions
At our apiary
First session**

Saturday April 9th -
10.00am

Taunton BKA - Spring Auction

Sunday 3rd April

Viewing from 10.00am
Auction starts at 2.00pm
Ruishton Village Hall, Cheats Rd,
Ruishton, Taunton
TA3 5JD

BBKA Spring Convention

8th - 20th April
Harper Adams University,
Newport, Shropshire

Somerton BKA Honey Show

Saturday September 17th
Keinton Mandeville Village Hall

President

Jackie Mosedale
01458 241146

Chairman

Eric McLaughlin
jandemclaughlin@gmail.com
07910 764069

Vice Chairman

Jack Barr
01458 252850
jrbarrxv@btinternet.com

Secretary

Alison Clewes

pansypots@icloud.com

Treasurer

Sarah Griffiths
s_e_lund@hotmail.com

Membership Secretary

Alison Dykes

Librarian

Sarah Kent
01749 670423

Honey Show sub committee

David Rose, Alison Dykes, Fred Clarke

Newsletter Editor

Stewart Gould
01749 860755
somertonbees@btinternet.com

Events Programme

Stewart Gould
01749 860755

County Delegate

Keith Sturgess

Deputy Delegates

Sally Lye
Suzy Perkins

Apiary Manager

Joe King
01749 890357

Extraction Equipment Loan

John Speirs
01458 241831