



Newsletter April 2023

Committee members:

Tina Harley (President), Lionel Horler (Chair), Ken Jeanes (Vice Chair),
Mat Phillips (Treasurer), Anne Collyer (Secretary), Jane Jeanes (SBKA Delegate),
Tony Johnstone (Events Secretary), Jeremy Lee (Apiary Manager), Guy Clothier,
Dennis White and John Wood

Welcome to our April Newsletter. We have had a busy March with spring cleaning, frame making and the Annual Supper – more of those later. April will hopefully bring warmer weather and the first of the apiary visits. Everyone is welcome and these are the ideal opportunity for those who do not yet have bees to come and experience bee keeping with real bees and question the more experienced bee keepers. Be warned though – there is a very true saying that if you ask six beekeepers the same question you will get six different answers! Bee keeping is an art and everyone has their own way of doing things. As you learn more from your own bees you too will develop your skills in the way that suits you. Everyone who attends these visits, regardless of how many years they have kept bees, always discover new ideas to take away with them.

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, Divisional Secretary SESBKA

amcollyer838@gmail.com 07803 243643 Presscombe, Shepton Montague, Wincanton, BA9 8JG

Tina Harley, President

We look forward to opening up our hives for the first inspection of the year with a mixture of anticipation and mild anxiety wondering what we will find. When new to beekeeping there seems to be so much to think about, so it is a good idea to look at your notes and try to be as organised as possible. The weather may not be as warm as you would like it to be so you don't want to waste time retrieving something forgotten and exposing the colony to more of a drop in temperature than necessary. Two things that have caught me out more than once over the years are - starting off the inspection and realising I had forgotten my specs (having a magnifying glass in your basket is a help if you find eggs difficult to spot even with your glasses). The other thing is that if you know your queen went into the winter unmarked, she will be much easier to find with fewer bees in the hive, so have a queen cage and marker pen with you.

It was disappointing that so few of Lionel's Beginners' Course were present at the frame-making session but I understand some arrived to find the gate into Hook Valley was locked. Please would all members attending sessions at the divisional apiary arrive 10 to 15 minutes before the start time as the gate cannot be left open for late-comers, the site does not belong to the SE Div. By the time you have parked, put on your bee suit and walked round the North end of the solar panels it will be time to begin.

Good luck with the coming season and do attend as many of the events that Tony has organised as you can. When help is asked for, please volunteer. To make this division successful we need as much member participation as possible.

Lionel's April Bee Notes

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

On a warm day in early March, I checked on the fondant under the roof of all my hives and was surprised to find that some colonies had consumed all I had put there a few weeks before so I gave more fondant to any that needed it. It is still too cold to feed sugar syrup.

On the 28th March Eleanor Burgess gave a very pertinent talk to a good number of members about preparing for the coming season which was particularly useful to those who came to our apiary later in the month to help clean all the equipment in the shed. I think all those who stuck it out for the day deserve a medal, it was so very cold and wet. Although we were able to erect the gazebo to shelter some from the weather while scorching the boxes.

While all this was going on James Butt and Brian Magor were erecting a lean-to shelter for some protection for the equipment that can be stored outside. We must also record our thanks to Jan and Gordon Holley who have donated cupboards from their old kitchen and paving slabs from their garden for use at the apiary and to Denis for fitting the cupboards.

Our frame making day went well although a few more beginners would have made it more worthwhile, but we did make enough frames to fill ten nucleus boxes ready for later when we produce some bees for the beginners. It was too cold to look at bees.

Once again, an enjoyable evening on the 21st when we had our annual lunch this year again at The Orchard Inn, Galhampton A good opportunity to meet and chat with friends.

Just a reminder of the talk by Catherine Fraser at The Market House, Castle Cary, 7pm on 04/05/23

Can you help Morgan?

Please see email received from Morgan Morrison re 'Mowing your Lawn'

Dear South East Somerset Beekeepers,

Are you interested in helping to save important flower visiting insects all from the comfort of your garden? My name is Morgan Morrison, and I am a PhD student at Royal Holloway, University of London. I work on pollinator conservation and citizen intervention.

I am looking for participants for my citizen science study 'Optimow'. As members of a beekeepers association, your interests and existing knowledge could be great participants for my study. My research is looking to explore the best way you can mow your lawn to make your gardens a better place for important pollinating insects. The study would only take 15-20 minutes a week, all from your garden in May.

If you are interested in taking part you can sign up using the following link to the google form for more details and to register your interest, <https://forms.gle/mhySH8vQ5zqn9eSB7>

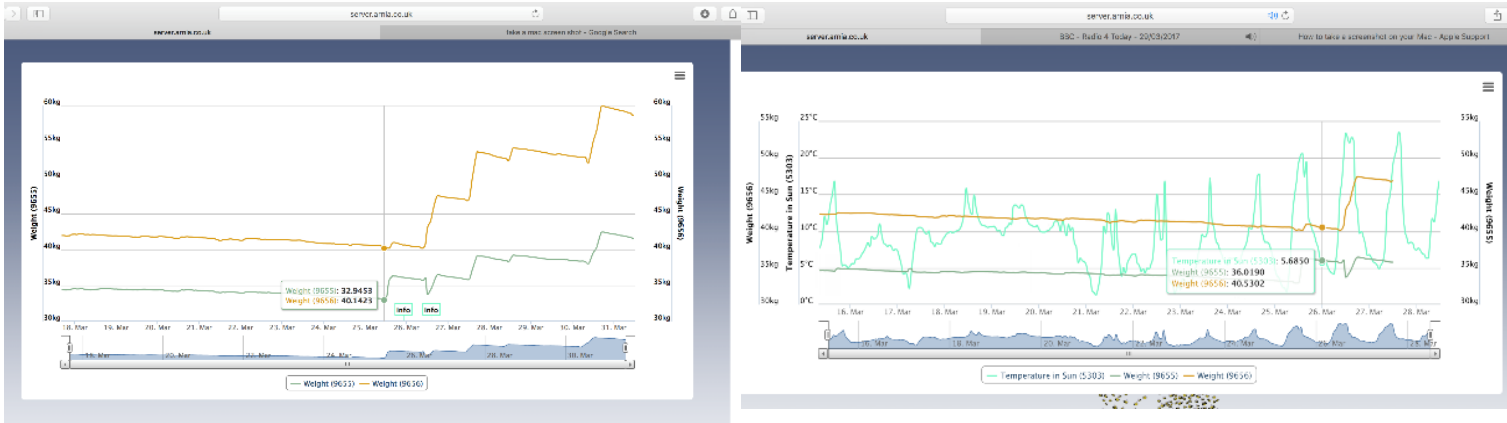
Any questions don't hesitate to drop me an email. Thanks in advance, Morgan Morrison Twitter: @morgsmorrison73

Please note: This email has been created for the study and is not my academic email. If you're apprehensive to click unknown links please google 'mark brown lab optimow'. This will provide you with information and a sign-up page

News from the Apiary

Jeremy Lee, Apiary Manager

March has been a productive month even though spring still seems to be out of reach. I was going through my records in preparation for a talk to a local gardening group and stumbled on the fact that 24th March 2021 we had the hottest March day ever recorded at 24.5C. I remember that the oil seed rape was in full flower and I had one colony bring in 15 kilos of nectar in 5 days. The oil seed rape around me is at least 3 weeks away from flowering this year.



That aside, we have had two very constructive Saturdays at the apiary where a hardy group assembled in near freezing temperatures to scrape and clean hives. The second was warmer and I was very appreciative of the team who assembled over 60 brood frames - apologies to those whom we locked out!! We discovered that fairies are alive and well in the area and some cupboards and paving stones were installed as if by magic. So, we have no excuses from our end (the girls may think differently) to expand the enterprise further this year and supply all the beginners with bees should they so wish. When we get a warm weekend day, we are very happy to include all those who want to come and get some hands-on experience with the first inspections of the year. Just let me know if you would like to come up – jgwlee@me.com



Editor's Note:

This is why you are advised to park on the gravel at the entrance to the Solar Park (mentioning no names Jeremy L!!!)



2023 Programme Update

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

Hello Everybody,

Please find below the April programme update. From a refreshment point of view, it would help if you can let me know that you will be coming our events please.

Don't forget Dianne Sleigh is doing her "Click & Collect" on **15th April** so please contact and place your order with her, and on **29th April** there will be our first Nuc building session at Hook Valley

As ever, I am always looking for new ideas and hosts. All suggestions are welcome so please contact me.

Tuesday 4th April @ 7.30pm At The Market House Castle Cary A Talk by Catherine Fraser on Bee Pests and Diseases. Catherine is a member of the Somerton division and an expert on these subjects with a reputation for giving interesting and informative talks.

Saturday 15th April. Dianne Sleigh Click & Collect Ansford Academy Carpark, Castle Cary

Please let Dianne know what you need for the new season and she will give you a time slot for collection.

Payment by card only by phone or on the day. Dianne is an agent for Thornes and has a range of Hives, wax & frames, smokers etc at competitive prices. By arrangement you can also collect from her home in Buckland Dinham. Dianne Sleigh, The Bee Depot, 07879 811967 or sales@thebeedepot.com

Saturday 29th April @ 10.00am SESBKA Apiary, Hook Valley, Wincanton

A practical session on how to build Nucs from our existing colonies at the apiary. This is the first time we have been able to offer all our members practical experience on how to achieve new colonies. Please bring beesuits and refreshments or advise Lionel if you wish to borrow one. Please let Lionel know that you will be participating and whether you need to borrow one of the divisions suits.

Saturday 13th May @ 2.30pm An Apiary visit to Lionel Horler's apiary in North Barrow

Lionel plans to demonstrate a simple approach to Queen Rearing.

Thursday 1st to Saturday 3rd June The Bath & West Show. This is on "our patch" and where volunteers will be needed for whole or half days. Entrance included.

Further details to follow

Saturday 17th June @ 2.30pm An Apiary Visit to Adam Morcka's apiary in Bratton Seymour

Adam is a progressive beekeeper who has brought many interesting techniques with him from his native Poland. Further details to follow

Saturday 15th July Commencing @ 10.00am. The SESBKA Annual Safari

Geoff Blay has kindly agreed to facilitate our event which is planned to start at our own apiary at Hook Valley followed by a visit to James Butt's apiary in Milborne Wick where we can enjoy our picnic lunches. Simon a local resident former gamekeeper and conservationist will give us a talk on his work. Finally, to the Lattiford estate, home of both John Wood and Brian Magor. Brenda Wood has kindly offered to serve tea and cakes. Further details to follow

Saturday 12th August @ 2.30pm An Apiary Visit to Mat Phillips' apiary in Marston Magna

Matt currently has four colonies Further details to follow

A Saturday in September @ 2.30pm An Apiary visit to Pippa Shillington's apiary at Quarr Farm

Further details to follow

On A Date To Be Decided A practical Honey Preparation Session

Geoff Blay has kindly offered to hold a practical session where members can learn the skills of preparing and bottling honey for our Honey Show with the aim of increasing both the number of entries and quality.

Further details to follow

Saturday 14th October At The Market House Castle Cary The SESBKA Honey Show With set-up on Friday 13th

Thursday 16th November @ 7.00pm At The Market House Castle Cary The SESBKA Annual General Meeting

Ginger and Honey Cake

Ingredients



Little oil for greasing
100 g (4 oz) Honey
50 g (2 oz) caster sugar
50 g (2 oz) butter
Grated rind of ½ small
orange and ½ small lemon
125 g (4 ½ oz) self-raising
flour

1 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground mixed spice
1/2 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

100 ml (3 ½ fl oz) milk
1 medium egg
25 g stem ginger, (about 1
medium sized nodule),
drained, chopped
40 g (1 ½ oz) whole candied peel, cut into very thin
slices

To glaze: 1 tablespoon honey
Grated rind of ½ orange 1 teaspoon orange juice



Method

- 1 Lightly brush six mini loaf tins with a top measurement of 10 x 5 cm (4 x 2 inches) with a little oil and line the base and the two long sides of each with a strip of non-stick baking paper. Stand tins on a baking sheet.
- 2 Add the honey, sugar, butter, orange and lemon rind to a medium saucepan and heat gently until the sugar has dissolved and the butter melted.
- 3 Remove the pan from the heat and leave to cool slightly. Mix the flour, spices and bicarbonate together in a bowl and then mix the milk and egg together in a jug. Add the flour mix to the pan, stir well then gradually beat in the milk mixture until smooth. Stir in the chopped ginger.
- 4 Pour the gingerbread into the prepared tins, decorate the tops of each with a few strips of candied peel then bake in a preheated oven, 180°C/350°F/Gas Mark 4 for about 20 minutes or until well risen and a skewer comes out cleanly when inserted into the centre of one of the cakes.
- 5 Warm the honey, orange rind and juice together in a small saucepan then brush over the tops of the cakes while still warm. Leave to cool for 10 minutes, loosen the edges with a knife and turn out on to a wire rack and leave to cool completely. Peel off the lining paper when ready to serve.
- 6 If you don't have mini tins then, double the recipe and bake in a 20 cm (8 inch) deep square cake tin, at the same temperature but increase the cooking time to 35-40 minutes or until a skewer comes out cleanly when inserted into the centre of the cake. Make sure to cut the candied peel decoration into very thin strips, if it's too chunky it will sink.

Great Somerford Bee Auction

on
Monday 1st May 2023



Save the date !

Have you got a shed full of old kit ?
downsizing your operation ? or
looking for some bargains to help you
expand or buy your first hive ?

On Monday 1st May 2023, our 1st
Annual auction will take place at The
Showground, Great Somerford, nr
Chippenham, WILTSHIRE SN15 5JA

Viewing from 11.30am with the
Auction commencing at 1pm

Entries are invited for the auction :
please email :
somerfordbeeauction@gmail.com
or contact via our Facebook page
'Somerford Bee Auction' or call
07767 838317 / 07841 291449

Lots to include Beekeeping
accessories, Beehives, Extracting
Equipment, Beeswax, Honey,
Beekeeping Books, Antique
Beekeeping Equipment and a Live
bee (nucs and complete hive)
auction at the end.

A full catalogue of lots entered will
be available from 24th April

The Showground, Great Somerford, Nr Chippenham, Wiltshire SN15 5JA

Bee Disease Insurance Ltd

Please see message below from Martin Smith, President BDI Ltd

I enclose the formal agenda for the Annual General Meeting of Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd (BDI) of which your association is a member. The draft minutes from last year's meeting and the 2022 financial statements are also enclosed for your reference. (Please click on the links to open [BDI AGM Agenda 2023](#) [BDI Minutes AGM 2022 DRAFT v3.pdf](#) [BDI 2022 accts Final \(signed\).pdf](#))

BDI Financial Statements for the year ending 31st December 2022

Despite a reduction in investment assets of £106,00 during 2022, BDI remains financially strong. These investments are held for the long terms and enable us to fund research, as well as to build up a buffer in case of a major outbreak of disease, particularly any new 'exotic' pest that might arrive on our shores. They are in addition to the reserves we hold in cash equivalents to cover our insurance requirements.

The company continues to use some of the investment surpluses to fund research into bee diseases, with just under £20,000 invested in this area in 2022. Details of all the projects being funded by BDI can be found on the [research pages of our website](#)

Virtual AGM via Zoom Monday 22nd May 2023 7pm

In order to allow the widest possible availability to your entire membership of the meeting and the talk (see below) the event will be live streamed on YouTube that will be accessible from BDI's home page on the evening of the talk. <https://www.beediseasesinsurance.co.uk/> Please feel free to publicise the talk to your members Immediately after the formal business, there will be a talk by Maggie Gill, Regional Bee Inspector for Wales

*Maggie and her NBU colleague Dan Etheridge recently visited Thailand to study first-hand the **Tropilaelaps mite** and how beekeepers there deal with it. This trip, that was part funded by BDI will enable the National Bee Unit to gain a greater understanding of the pest and help with the contingency plan should it ever arrive in England & Wales.*

Whole Apiary Shook Swarm Trial

As you may recall, we concluded the 2nd year of this trial at the end of 2022. BDI and the National Bee Unit decided to extend the trial for one more year, to obtain more data, but we are pleased to note that, whilst it is very early days, no reinfection has been found in apiaries that were subject to the whole apiary shook swarm. [More details on this trial can be found on our website](#)

I look forward to see as many of you as possible - albeit virtually.

Best regards Martin Smith, President martin.smith@beediseasesinsurance.co.uk

BBKA dates for your Diary

Dates for your calendar:

National Dandelion Day - April 5

World Microscopy Day - 13th April

BBKA Spring Convention - 21st - 23rd April - book via the website

World Bee Day - 20th May

Bees Needs Week - 10th - 16th July

Asian Hornet Week - 4th - 10th September

National Honey Day - 21st October

BBKA Spring Convention update: Harper Adams University April 21 – 23

Book by 11th April for in-advance three-day and single-day wristband ticket rates. Thereafter, tickets & £6 Sat 22nd Trade Show only tickets are available at the Convention at 'On-the-day' prices. Several workshops & seminars are already booked up, so ten extra have been opened and some have places still available. Associations teaching Beginners' Courses could perhaps recommend the workshop – "Build your own hive". Something that many beginners struggle with. The cost (£205) may seem a lot but is a bargain for a complete cedar hive correctly assembled! There is no shortage of tickets to the Convention and its lecture programme – a choice of 25 topics, everything from cutting-edge science to basic practical beekeeping. We look forward to meeting you.

For full details please see <https://www.bbka.org.uk/planning-your-bbka-spring-convention>

Additional event weeks of note

Pollinator Week 19th - 25th June

Solitarybeewee.com - 3rd - 9th July