

The Newsletter



Volume no 26 Issue 7 August 2019

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



Liquid gold

Good year, or bad year? As always, some have fared much better than others, with 20°C on several days in February and oil seed rape giving a great spring harvest, for those who have it in their area. The main crop was blighted for many by the unusually harsh June gap, followed by the swarmiest year in a long while.

Regardless of how large your, or small, your harvest is, you may need to borrow an association extractor, for a small sum. If so, contact John Speirs on 01458 241831, before everyone else gets their 'mits' on them.

When the chips are down

You may know that Roy White, a long standing and very knowledgeable member of our Association, has been under the weather lately. His illness has prevented him tending his bees and this concerned him greatly.

Fear not, because within a few days of my requesting help from our members, a rota was set up and implemented. Roy was relieved and his bees responded by delivering him a fair honey crop.

The point of me writing this short note is to publicly thank Pat Lehain, Eddie Howe, Karen Cox, Stuart Dennes, Christine Howard and Sue & James McInnes for coming to Roy's aid in a time of need. What a public-spirited association we have.

Thank you all on behalf of the Association.

Fred Clarke
Chairman

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300: What does it mean to you?

Three hundred: a cricket score, number of miles to travel to reach your destination, number of raspberries picked today? The list is endless. It reminds me, however, of the great success we had last year in achieving 300+ entries in our Honey Show. Can we repeat, or better this, this year?

Our show will be held on **Saturday 21st September 2019 at Keinton Mandeville Village Hall** (note the change of venue). The show is an opportunity to compare your exhibits with those of your peers and to learn more about the art of beekeeping, in a friendly and pleasurable atmosphere.

Your Honey Show committee are working hard to make the show enjoyable but it will not be the “best in the west” without your involvement. So please make a big effort to enter the show with your exhibits, and help achieve a bigger and possibly better show than last year. I set you this challenge.

The Entry form and schedule are being published with this newsletter. Please send all completed entry forms to me - email address: pauline.fred@outlook.com or by post to Oak Lea, 63 Broadway, Chilton Polden, Bridgwater TA7 9DJ.

Honey show: cake entries

Food allergies and food intolerances have become a more serious issue of late. Last year one of our members pointed out that our cake entries were not labelled with reference to their ingredients. This presented a problem for her because she suffers from a nut allergy.

To avoid this issue, all those entering an exhibit in the cake section this year **must** abide by the “show recipe” which accompanies the schedule. Hopefully this will avoid any potential problems for those who suffer from allergies.

Fred Clarke

Chairman & Honey Show Entry Secretary

Sale of Second Hand Equipment

One of the responses in the online questionnaire highlighted a desire to have a sale of second hand equipment. Others wanted a for sale/wanted section in this newsletter. If you have any beekeeping related items that you want to sell, you can always email details and they will be advertised here, totally free of cost. This does already happen from time to time.



As a result of the interest in a sale, we will be holding a car boot style sale of used and unwanted beekeeping equipment at the apiary on Saturday October 12th starting at 10.00am. The sale will be restricted to unwanted or used items of beekeeping equipment (**excepting used frames**). All members are welcome to bring goods. Any hive parts should be scorched clean beforehand, so as to avoid the spread of contamination. Bee suits must be washed. As with all second hand goods, the better the condition, the better the price. Let's hope it's all in better condition than the hive above

The association will take a 10% commission on all sales.

The Association has itself got equipment for sale. We have an excess of polystyrene nucleus boxes, brood boxes, feeders, roofs, crown boards etc.

No need to book - just turn up and open up the back of your car.



Beekeepers Question time

Another suggestion from the questionnaire was a 'Beekeepers' Question Time', in the fashion of the radio 4 programme Gardeners' Question Time. Several venerable and very knowledgeable beekeepers have already agreed to be on the panel of 'experts', although as you know, we all approach beekeeping from different angles, and have varying views. It will be interesting to hear how different people with vast experience handle various scenarios.

There are web based information sources where everybody and anybody can chip in and offer their opinion. Unfortunately, people with little knowledge or biased opinions are free to add their five penny worth. It can all get very confusing, especially for new beekeepers, and innocent questions sometimes get poo- poed.

Recent examples:-

'Is it alright to use Apiguard at Christmas, if I have the supers on?'

'Has anyone used super foundation in 14 x 12 frames successfully, if placed in between fully drawn frames?'

Realistically, is it too late in the season to re-queen a nuc?

Does anyone have any peer reviewed papers or other scientific evidence of any possible adverse impact on bees caused by mobile phone networks and 5G specifically?

Does anybody else's nose start itching the second you open a hive and you are holding onto frames?

From the sublime to the incredible, but to some people these are relevant questions.

Our experts will be trying to help you with your problems at the Somerton Parish Rooms, TA11 7NB, on the evening of Thursday September 12th

Honey Show Schedule and forms

As Fred mentioned in an earlier article, all entry forms and relevant information are attached to the email containing this newsletter. Also attached is a copy of the booklet by Chris Jackson of Melksham Beekeepers - 'How to win points at Honey Shows'. This is a really useful guide to what judges will be looking for.

It's always useful to remember that Honey Show Judges have to find a winner, and in order to do so, they sometimes have to be very harsh with other entries. Just because you don't win first prize at our show, it doesn't mean that your honey is no good - just that you were up against stiff competition in one of the biggest honey shows in the country.

New beekeepers often surprise us, and just a few years ago, a new beekeeper won 'Best in Show' with his first crop of honey. New beekeepers can enter most classes, but there is also a Novices' Section where new beekeepers can watch their exhibits being judged - a useful learning experience.

Please enter the show, even if this will be your first year's crop. Dates and details on back page.

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.

1 - 4 boxes @ 16 Kg £23 each, 5 + boxes £22 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.

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. 1 x 2.5 Kg bag £4.75, 1 box 5 x 2.5 Kg £22, 2 + boxes £21 each

Foundation. National brood and super, 14 x 12 brood, 16 x 10 brood

Eddie Howe. email:- redrascal@tiscali.co.uk Mobile 07812 738793 Telephone 01458 2721144

Jackie Mosedale retiring

I was invited to take on the role of Secretary in 2007, initially for one year, but here I am in 2019, deciding to draw my 'one year' to an end. So this is in a sense, a job advert to appeal to a successor.

This is some of the work involved. The secretary attends the monthly committee meetings, takes notes of the discussions and prepares and circulates Minutes to the committee. This is an historical account of the Division's management and is retained in a file.

Prior to the AGM I prepare a message which is circulated to all members who have consented to, receiving emails notifying them of the AGM date and including the previous AGM Minutes. I also invite nominations for the various committee roles. For members who do not wish to be contacted by any mail form, or do not have internet connectivity, the details will be published in the newsletter.

We hold regular winter lectures for which I book the Parish rooms or any other venue. When we hold additional meetings not in the programme, for example, Food Hygiene courses, First Aid training, workshops, I make the arrangements with the trainers and find and book a suitable venue, and as a member of the committee, I attend as many divisional as possible - training days, the Taster Day etc.

Each February, Somerset BKA holds a Lecture Day. Tickets come to me to sell. I record sales, take payments and pass them on to the County Treasurer.

When people have been generous in gifting items such as equipment or books, I write on behalf of the Division to thank them. Occasionally, there are less easy letters to write when a member has become very ill or has passed away.

This is a snippet of the role. If becoming Secretary of this very active and progressive Division appeals, please contact me. I will be happy to talk things through with you, without any obligation or pressure. It must be an interesting task or my one year wouldn't have become 12!

Jackie Mosedale - Retiring Secretary, Somerton BKA
Jackiemosedale@gmail.com 01458 241146



Skep making Master class

Talking of retiring, Diana Robertson, who has run our skep making classes for many years, has shouted her last hurrah. On Saturday July 27th, she held her last skep making class. She was supposed to give just a few hints from the sidelines, but being Diana, she insisted on providing all the materials, and tools needed, as well as committing her friend Lena to be tea lady for the day.

Ten members gathered around our pond at the apiary in a very pleasant 24°C, and wall to wall sunshine. Some brought along skeps which they had started at an earlier session, while most started from scratch. Well! When I say from scratch I mean from a starter knot prepared by Diana. One member did decide on the hard route and started a depriving skep, entailing a 3 inch hole in the centre of the top, which can have a small queen excluder put over it, so that a skep 'super' can be placed over it.

Thank you Diana for a really interesting and informative day, as always. Your sessions will be sorely missed, but there comes a time to call a halt, sit back and relax, although I can't see you doing that.

Stewart Gould

Taster Day 2019

A bit like the Honey Show and Beginners' Courses, we always start to panic about two weeks before the event. Are we going to get enough people to make it viable? Then it all comes together. This year we had people from South Gloucestershire and a couple from Salisbury as well.



Fred Clarke took the speaking slot that Joe King normally occupies, giving a background to the history of beekeeping, and after the coffee break and honey tasting, Stewart Gould did the second session, a general introduction to beekeeping.

The honey tasting always produces interesting results and of the 13 honeys available, only one person liked the Lidl everyday honey at £1.05 per lb. It was exactly as popular as the 5+ NPA Manuka honey at £12.00 per lb. The French chestnut honey wasn't liked by anybody - again. The most popular honey, by a large margin, came from Alison Dykes who, surprisingly, had another honey that only one person liked.

Alison and Sally Lye produced a marvellous buffet lunch that many commented on, and we then donned bee-suits so that we could introduce our guests to the bees. For most it was their first interaction with a bee hive and the colonies we chose all behaved extremely well. Anthony Devine, our youngest member, Jackie Mosedale, Eric McLaughlin, Fred Clarke, Steve Horne and Stewart Gould all took 3 or 4 people each for their first experience of opening a hive. The common theme to reactions seemed to be that they hadn't realised there would be so many bees in a hive.

Steve Horne has received several emails thanking those who had organized the day, so we must be doing something right, and several indicated that they would like to come back and join in the Beginners' theory sessions this coming winter - including the couple from Salisbury.

NDB Success



“The National Diploma in Beekeeping (NDB) Examination Board are delighted to announce the success of Lynfa Davies in passing the NDB exam which was held in Ayr, Scotland in July 2019. The all-day practical assessment was in addition to the written exam and thesis submitted earlier in the year. The examination is the highest beekeeping qualification in the UK and requires a tremendous commitment due to the depth and breadth of the syllabus so we offer our warmest congratulations to Lynfa on her achievement.

More details on the NDB can be found at <https://national-diploma-beekeeping.org/>”

Assessments are held every other year, the last being in 2017. Only just over 90 people have ever achieved the National Diploma in Beekeeping. Makes you wonder who marks it.

BeeBase

If you have recently acquired bees, you should really consider registering your colony/colonies on BeeBase. The advantages are manifold and there aren't any good reasons for not doing so.

BeeBase is the Animal and Plant Health Agency's (APHA) National Bee Unit website. It is designed for beekeepers and supports Defra, Welsh Government and Scotland's Bee Health Programmes and the Healthy Bees Plan, which set out to protect and sustain our valuable national bee stocks.

The website provides a wide range of apicultural information for beekeepers, to help keep their colonies healthy and productive. It provides a wide range of beekeeping information, such as the activities of the NBU, honey bee related legislation, pests and diseases information which includes their recognition and control, publications, advisory leaflets and key contacts.

To see the advantages, log on to Beebase using this link <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com>

Bee Wars in New Zealand

An extraordinary rise in the popularity of manuka honey has led to mass poisonings of bees, thefts, vandalism and beatings.



It was the day the bees died – tens of thousands of them in 300 hives, mysteriously killed. “The massacre”, as it is being called, happened in the otherwise idyllic landscape of Doubtless Bay in New Zealand’s far north. And for David Yanke and Rachel Kearney, co-owners of Daykel Apiaries, the cause of death was obvious: malicious poisoning. “It is a nightmare, I don’t feel safe any more,” says Kearney as she sits at her kitchen table on her family’s farm, 40km east of the Northland hub of Kaitaia. “I feel violated. It has almost turned into a PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] experience for me.”

So far there has been no official ruling on what led to the Daykel bees’ demise, although a biosecurity incident has been ruled out by the government, but Daykel and many other apiarists are in no doubt that the mass bee death is just the latest act of violence in the increasingly crime-ridden manuka honey industry.

The global craze for manuka, highly valued for its medicinal properties, has created a gold rush in rural New Zealand that some believe is rapidly spiralling out of control.

Last year produced a record haul of nearly 20,000 tonnes of honey, a 15% increase on the year before. In 2010 the top price fetched for **bulk** manuka honey was NZ\$37.50/kg (£22/kg) – today it can command more than NZ\$100/kg/ £59.50/kg.

The export to the UK, China and other countries is expected to reach NZ\$400m (£238m) in the next few years.

Dates for your diary

Fifth Beginners' practical sessions

10.00am

Sat. 3rd & Sunday 4th August

At our apiary

Taking the honey

Sixth Beginners' Practical Sessions

10.00am

Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th August

At our apiary

Baltonsborough Village Day

Monday 26th August

12 noon - 5.00pm

Baltonsborough Village Playing Field

Beekeepers' Question Time

Thursday 12th Spetember 7.30pm

Somerton Parish Rooms, TA11 7NB

A panel of expert beekeepers
answering awkward questions

Somerton BKA Honey Show

Saturday September 21st

Keinton Mandeville Village Hall

TA11 6EB

(New venue)

Used Equipment Sale

Saturday 12th October 10.00am

At our apiary

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