

The Newsletter



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SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



Flow hives & OSR honey

Nothing signals the coming honey harvest more than wasps patrolling the hives, and many have pondered how to get oilseed rape honey out of the plastic frames of a Flow Hive. Put the two together, and the wasps will do all the hard work for you, and your bees can rest safe in their hives. Look closely and you'll see that the central seem is solid wasps. If only they had a taste for propolis too. Not the best of photos but it is a 'still' from a video

Words from the Chair

I hope this newsletter finds you and your families safe and well. Although we are lucky to live in an area that has not been badly affected by Covid, we still need to take care. Your committee met on 25th July, for the first time since February . We had originally planned to meet outside in the apiary car park but weather conditions drove us inside the building. We must have looked a strange sight, sitting around the perimeter of the building, socially distanced and mainly masked. It was good, however, to meet up with friends and colleagues.

The second of the jar orders was mainly collected on the 18th of July and appeared to go smoothly with no reported problems. The two jar orders had a total expense of £4,471.70 and made a small profit of £25.81 for the association. Thanks to all who helped sorting boxes and counting lids.

We now have a temporary mains water supply on site although it still needs to be connected into the building. Hay-making has taken priority for the moment but I am assured the work will be completed soon. Once the water supply work has been finished, we will explore mains electricity supply.

Hive inspections have continued at the apiary. The honey harvest has been poor this year. As other local beekeepers have not had this problem it appears that the apiary bees are not the best foragers.

The committee has decided to explore re-queening and the possibility of a Queen Rearing course in the spring.

We hope to arrange a work party at the apiary in the Autumn to cover general maintenance including hedge cutting.

I mentioned in our last newsletter the problem of CBPV. We have a more pressing danger at the moment. There has been a serious outbreak of EFB in the north of the county. We need to be vigilant in our inspections and report concerns to our bee inspectors.

As we approach the main harvest time can I remind people to order equipment hire in good time and to return the borrowed equipment in a clean state please. There have been problems in the past when members arrived to collect equipment to discover it had not been properly cleaned and had grown mould.

On a more positive note membership of Somerton Beekeepers is now in excess of 260.

I hope you have a decent honey crop and well-tempered bees.

Eric McLaughlin

Bulk MAQS order

For those new to beekeeping, MAQS (mite away quick) strips is the speediest way to treat your bees for varroa, at the end of the beekeeping season, and is the only recognised and approved treatment which can be used when there is honey in the hives. Unlike most other treatments, it will kill mites in sealed brood cells, which is where varroa lay their eggs, and where a large percentage reside. Most other treatments will only kill phoretic mites, that is those on adult bees, or wandering around the hive, and a period of 4 - 6 weeks is needed in order to catch the mites in sealed cells, as they emerge. MAQS only needs to be on the hive for 7 days. It is also useful for treating newly arrived swarms.



Some people believe that MAQS, which is a formic acid preparation, is too harsh for National hives, but I have found that provided temperatures do not rise above 25°C, there is not a problem. The manufacturers state a top temp. Of 29°C.

In the past we have bought MAQS from Bee Equipment Ltd, but because of a dispute on price, they are no longer stocking it. I have found an alternative supplier and we will pass on savings to our members. It is only available in tubs of 2 or 10 treatments, but unlike the jar order, **we will split tubs, so that if you only have one or two hives**, you will not have to buy a whole tub, but can order exactly the amount you need. As with the jar order, we will add an extremely minimal handling charge. If you bought 2 treatments direct from Thornes it would cost you £23.00 incl. p&p. If you bought 10 treatments direct it would cost you £64.00 incl. p&p. We will be selling at a much, much lower price than that and as with most bulk buys, we should avoid post and packing charges. It all depends how much we buy, and that is up to you.

If you are interested, please email me with your requirements at :-

somertonbees@btinternet.com

Stewart Gould

Bye Bye Bees

After 18 pleasant years with bees and their keepers I have parted with the bees but hope to see some of you again at meetings. The following kit is for sale. All items are National, good secondhand condition. Wooden items are softwood. Prices are open to offer.

7 – Supers with dry comb, as from the extractor last year. These were fumigated last winter and are apparently clean and free of pests. I would normally use these for another season ‘as is’. - **£15 each**

10 – Empty Supers, no foundation. - **£12 each**

30 sheets - Super foundation - **£5.00 per 10**

7 – Brood Boxes, no foundation. - **£15 each**

5 sheets – Brood Foundation – 60p **per sheet**

9 – Crown Boards - **£7 each**

2 – Snelgrove boards - **£15 each**

2 – Labyrinth Escapes £10 each

3 – Wire Queen Excluders £10 each

5 – Slotted Steel Queen Excluders £5 each

5 – Roofs, zinc or felted £20 each

8 – Mesh Floors £12 each

2 – Solid Floors £10 each

2 – Plastic Feeder, small 4 pt £5 each

8 – Plastic Feeder, large 4 litre £12 each

4 - Frame Feeder £8 each

2 – Miller Feeders £20 each

6 – Ekes (for use with above) - free

3 – Stands (single) home made but robust! £5 each

2 – Nucleus Hives (5 frame) home-made and unsuitable for winter use £15 each

Ring Andrew Pugh on 01749 890535

Fun Photo Competition!

Hello fellow Somerton Beekeepers, we hope you and all your friends and family are keeping well in these strange times. Part of the current situation we find ourselves in has meant that we have had to cancel our ever popular Honey Show. But, we didn't want the summer to pass without giving you a little bit of fun or for you all to lose your competitive edge so we thought we'd have a digital photo competition! Yes, get those phones out and get snapping! There's only one category



and that's **a bee visiting a flower**. Could be a honey bee could be a bumble bee - we don't mind. Just make it the best it can be! We're looking for a top 5 and then we'll put them to the public vote via our Facebook page! Email your entries, making them 2MB or less, to david@davidrosecreative.com. Closing date will be Saturday 12 September, which would have been show day! There will of course be prizes, we're still in negotiations with the committee, but it looks like no expense will be spared, literally!

Happy snapping

The Honey Show Committee

Mike's Bee Supplies

Just phone before you call
T: 01278 445158
E: mikes-bees@outlook.com
www.mikes-beesupplies.co.uk

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And more!

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Wembdon
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Somerset.
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Payment logos: PayPal, VISA, Mastercard, American Express, Discover

Sugar Prices 2020

These are the only sugar prices I can find online, but Booker Foods deal is a good one, provided you need 50kgs. You could always share with a friend. The BBKA have struck a deal with Booker Foods, and all full members of Somerton Beekeepers Association can get a Bookers card, by contacting the stores. Some of the staff are unaware of the tie up, so be persistent.



Bookers also have white bread flour at £11.99 per. 16kg sack.

Supplier	Package size & cost	Price per kg
Tesco	5kg - £3.15	£0.63
ALDI	1kg - 65p	£0.65
B & M Stores	1kg- 59p	£0.59
Booker Foods	2 x 25kg - £26.00	£0.52
Iceland	5kg - £2.85	£0.57

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

Challenging times ahead in August?

It seems totally counter-intuitive, but we start preparing our bees for winter in August and this August may be particularly challenging as the very hot dry May meant that many plant species have been flowering earlier than usual and many of the stalwarts that we rely on in August, such as the blackberry, have ceased flowering in a substantial way.

I had the chance to chat with Meg Seymour, one of our Bee Inspectors, and she found a good number of colonies starving during the June gap, and feels that it is a real danger in August, once the honey has been taken off. Since the nectar flow is likely to be unusually poor. We may well need to feed much earlier usual.

There has also been a considerable spike in European Foul Brood locally recently, while we have been distracted by coronavirus. She suggests that it is very important to inspect your brood combs thoroughly and check for any atypical larvae. It is necessary to shake the bees into the brood nest to make a thorough inspection, and to angle the comb so that you can see down into the cells. If you have any doubts contact the Bee Inspectors and ask for a visit.

August is also the time to treat for varroa infection. As a Division we facilitate this by buying MAQS, one of the more popular treatments, in bulk, thereby ensuring that you have the opportunity to purchase at a favourable price - **see page 3** - so place your order as required. There are a number of other approved medications available such as Apiguard, and you may have your own favourite. The mite count has slowly been building up over the summer. They breed in the sealed brood cells, feeding on the bee larvae during metamorphosis, and infecting them with a wide range of viruses. It is important for the health of the over-wintering bees that the mite count is as low as possible at the beginning of autumn. These bees have to survive for six months over the winter whereas summer worker bees usually survive only six weeks as adults. The winter bees need to be healthy or the colony is more likely to die. In a typical winter, in the southwest, 15% of colonies die - i.e approximately one in six. It is therefore important that we do all what we can to help them. Treating is part of this, as is making sure that they have ample winter stores. They may well need forty pounds of stores to be certain of surviving.

Some sobering thoughts for August perhaps, but enjoy your honey crop and the sense of achievement that goes with it. Sadly because of the Coronavirus we are not able to celebrate together at our usual annual Honey Show, but hopefully all will be back to normal by next autumn.

Joe King.

Beginners Course 2021

This year the Beginners' practical sessions were cancelled because of COVID 19, and unlike some of the less scrupulous airlines and holiday companies, we have offered all those who paid for the course, a full refund. We have also offered all those who attended the theory sessions, in January & February, the chance to attend next year's theory sessions free of charge. We are unsure as to how they will be conducted at present, but if needs be they will be run as Zoom sessions. This will avoid the need for a physical gathering, and save money on fuel at the same time.

We will charge for £30.00 for all 6 sessions and that will include a copy of Haynes Bee Manual, as usual. This will be relatively easy to organise, as we already have all the Powerpoint presentations, which can be relayed to participant's homes.

Somerset BKA have secured charitable status with Zoom, which means that unlike users of the normal 'free service', there is no 40 minute time limit, or restriction on numbers attending, and any division can make use of this facility.

As we have not been attending public events this year, fewer people will be aware of our courses, so if you know anybody who would be interested, get them to email Stewart Gould at somertonbees@btinternet.com.

Stewart Gould & Joe King

Sad pursuits during COVID 19

If for one moment you thought that beekeepers could be classed as ‘sad individuals’ - worry not, we have been surpassed. In Australia people have been photoshopping their cats’ faces onto bees



EFB Outbreak

The EFB outbreak that Joe King was referring too earlier in the newsletter is in the Axbridge, Cheddar and Burnham on Sea area, but Bee Inspectors have been trying to contact all beekeepers in Somerset BKA Central and Mendip divisions too. It is even possible that one or two Somerton members may be contacted.

Tracing outbreaks of this type are made harder when when beekeepers have colonies in other divisional areas, but what is even more frustrating is that not all colonies are traceable, as they are not registered on Beebase, or their owners don't belong to any association or club, and are therefore anonymous.

Catastrophic Insect population decline

Somerset Wildlife Trust are so concerned about the loss of insects that they have contacted each Parish Council in the county asking them to get involved with their 'Action for insects' campaign.

If you could like to help insect populations more than you already do, click on this link

<https://www.somersetwildlife.org/search?search=Action+for+insects>

Then click on Action for insects.

Will you help the most important creatures on the planet?

41% of insect species face extinction.

The loss of their habitats and overuse of pesticides are two major reasons why these little creatures are dying out eight times faster than large mammals.

However, it's not too late and with your help, we can put insects into recovery.

Claim your [FREE Action for Insects guide](#) and start to make a difference today.

By working together, we can change the future of insects. Starting right now, you can make small changes in your home, lifestyle and community that will help these fascinating creatures. Follow the advice in our Action for Insects guide and create an insect-friendly garden that is teeming with wildlife.

[Take Action for Insects](#)



We are witnessing the largest extinction event on earth since the dinosaurs

Dates for your diary

Online Zoom talks

Various upcoming online talks. Watch your emails.

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