

The Newsletter



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SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



Wasps, wasps, wasps

If it's not one thing..... We all thought the swarms had finally come to an end but a member turned up at the apiary on Saturday July 29th, with a freshly caught swarm in a nuc. Box.

And now it's wasps. With weak colonies it's a good idea to reduce entrances or place one of the simpler wasp foxing gadgets over the entrance. Some are still after the protein provided by the muscles in the bee's thorax while most are now turning their attention to sweet substances they can no longer get at home.



Somerton Beekeepers



present a spectacular

HONEY SHOW

AND

ARTISAN MARKET



SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 16TH

NOON – 5PM

at

Keinton Mandeville Village Hall

TA11 6ES

Come and see the bees!

Something for everyone:

Cider, Cheese, Cakes, Pastries, Pies,

Cards, Plants, Jams, Preserves,

Cosmetics, Candles, Gifts

and of course HONEY!



FREE
admission

Australian varroa problems

Beekeepers in New South Wales are demanding the end to the killing of honeybees as part of the state's ongoing battle with the spread of varroa mite. A petition calling on the government to "stop the killing of honeybees", increase financial support, roll back regulations, and release the modelling underpinning the state's strategy has garnered over 25,000 signatures.

Dolfi Benesh, a NSW Central Coast beekeeper who co-authored the petition said he felt bullied by the Department of Primary Industries after it ordered the destruction of his 60 hives. "They have imposed an impossible and needless actions against farmers. Surely with their budget of billions of dollars per annum they could have come up with a much better solution," Benesh said. "The biosecurity laws have turned into the bio-insecurity of the farmers."

Benesh said officials, escorted by the police, arrived at his property to exterminate his hives after several injunctions and protests failed to save his bees. He says government compensation measures have failed to cover his losses, particularly those not directly linked to the sale of honey, such as loss of brand awareness and customer base. He said the DPI's approach would decimate the industry and its relationship with authorities. Arguing the strategy would cause more damage than it was worth as the varroa mite disease would probably become endemic to Australia as it is across the world. "No one will go back to beekeeping. This is the culture of the people once they get hurt. And if they go back to it, they'll go unregistered."

The NSW minister for agriculture, Dugald Saunders, said the government's eradication program had been developed in consultation with industry in accordance to the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed 2005. "The NSW Government understands how difficult this emergency response has been for beekeepers, especially those in the eradication zones," he said. "The goal of our Varroa mite response is the entire eradication of the parasite from NSW. Any other approach would impact not just our beekeeping industry, but our state's horticulture, broad-acre cropping and pastoral plant sectors due to lack of pollination."

Opinions across the beekeeping community, and Australia in general, cover every possible solution. The Australians are, frankly, scared witless by the prospect of varroa spreading beyond New South Wales. When I was in Mel-

bourne in 2019 to give a talk to Melbourne beekeepers, the only subject that they wanted me to address was varroa. You can see from this comment, in a bee chat forum, exactly what I mean. The thought of managing and treating, as we do here in the UK, hasn't occurred to them.

This is bad advice. If Varroa escapes, the losses Australia wide, in European bee populations, will be massive!! 99% of feral bees will die and anywhere between 50 & 75% of managed bees will die. Just about all recreational beekeepers will loose their hives!! So what is better! The reason you must kill bees in the red zone is it is almost impossible to tell if your hive has Varroa. 1 mite is enough. So pls think long term and the massive impact Varroa will have on all of us!!

Meanwhile the authorities have stopped the movement of all colonies of bees, except in certain circumstances. Now that's going to work isn't it?

Beekeeping Supplies - Minehead

Beekeeping Supplies, Minehead, have apparently sold their business to a company of exactly the same name in Aylesford, Kent. The Minehead website is still up and running, but according to Howard Horsfall, one of our members, the landline phone line isn't working. The mobile no. shown on both the Minehead website and the Aylesford, Kent website are the same and the number does ring out, but I got an answering machine.

The Minehead company is also still listed on the Somerset BKA website, so take care.

Swarms in Hi (Fi) places



Swarms like a void of approximately 40 litres, or so we're told, but it seems that some also like their music loud. This one took up residence in a speaker cabinet which had been put out, in somebody's shed for disposal.

Supplies available from the apiary

There is a stock of frames, foundation and jars at the apiary which are available for purchase every Tuesday morning and on Saturdays when there is a New Beekeepers' practical session. The stock of jars is rapidly decreasing and won't be topped up until late July. Check with Eric McLaughlin if you wish to visit.

All frames and foundation are for National hives

DN4 - Deep National Hoffman frames - £1.35 each

10 frames - £13.50

11 frames - £14.85

Standard brood foundation - £1.30 per sheet

SN1 Shallow National frames - £1.00 each

10 frames - £10.00

11 frames - £11.00

Super foundation - 80p per sheet

SN1 frames are straight sided and will need plastic/metal spacers

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

This edition of the newsletter is a slim volume

**It's not because it is on a diet, but because of the
lack of material from members.**

**I appreciate that not all members read the
newsletter. That is their choice, but without
your support it can't function properly. If you
see something that would interest others. Send
it in.**

**Are we, perhaps, entering an age where news-
letters are redundant? Please let me know
your feelings on the subject.**

Stewart Gould

somertonbees@btinternet.com



July in the Divisional Apiary

As Joe and Eric are otherwise engaged, our roving correspondent Julian Marter fills in this month.

It's been a month of two halves, early July saw us clearing supers ready for extraction of honey and subsequently a Saturday work party was arranged to carry out the extraction. Thank you to everyone who gave up there time to help out. The apiary now has a stock of honey to sell (admittedly a lot of which is in buckets awaiting a delivery of jars).

We now have our own power tools for cutting hedges and strimming, so the poor weather gave us a chance to do a little tidying up of the grounds. Eric has also made a map of hive placement which is now on the notice board.

The second half of the month saw the bees seemingly marking time and generally calming down, even the now notorious hive 17 has less of an edge to it, the amount of honey or honey being produced has also slowed, so it could be a calm before the storm if and when a late season nectar flow arrives.

Apart from the usual regulars we now seem to be getting a steady influx of new faces making an occasional visit, we are always pleased to see them and hope the trend continues. Just to remind you all that we meet every Tuesday during peak season, usually between 09:30 and 12:00. We start with coffee/tea and Kit Kats. Everyone is welcome whether you have bees or not.

Julian Marter

Visit to Buckfast Abbey Bees

Our visit to Buckfast this year coincided with the wettest July in living memory. While southern Europe was on fire, Devon was, like most of the UK, awash. The turnout was lower than usual this year too. Just 12 brave souls made it down the M5 and A38 to Buckfast Abbey, but everybody who went enjoyed the experience. It rained all morning so we huddled round, drank coffee and ate biscuits, croissant and cake. The discussion was very low key, but extremely informative as usual.



When we broke for lunch, the weather abated and we were able to make it to the Forge Restaurant. In fact, it stayed dry long enough for us to get kitted out and make the short journey down to Brother Adam's home apiary. There are about 8 hives here, all on the original slabs placed by Brother Adam and the hut in which he kept all his records and did his plotting to breed the perfect bee, still stands at one end of the apiary. To see Clare handle her bees is an education in itself. I've now visited many times and I still gain something from the chat and demonstrations from Clare Densley and Martin Hann. Think about joining us next year.



**Don't stand so, don't stand so,
don't stand so close to bees.
Please don't stand so close to
bees.**

Beekeeping Taster Day

How we managed it I don't know, but we had almost the only day in July when it didn't rain. 21 people turned up for this annual event where we show absolute novices just a few of the things that we do as beekeepers. There are two informal power-point presentations in the morning with a break to taste different honeys, then we have a buffet lunch before donning bee-suits and heading out to meet the bees.

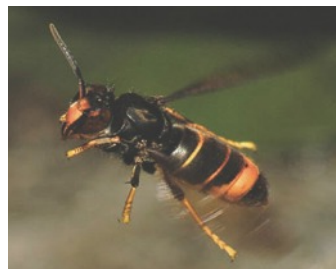
The honey tasting was interesting. It was a member's honey which was most popular with 8 votes, but Aldi's Essentials scored two votes, as did a concoction of sugar syrup, black treacle, icing sugar and ascorbic acid.

It was co-ordinated by Stewart Gould, but it was a terrific joint effort and the teamwork was what made it so successful. Alison Dykes' lunch and Alison Clewes' cake were masterpieces, and Gillian Islip gave an excellent insight into the background of beekeeping and Somerton Beekeepers. Jack Barr, Julian Marter and Fred Clarke also played their parts by showing off the bees to our visitors.

Asian hornet sightings

We've all got a bit complacent in recent years - 'It'll never happen here in Somerset', but I believe it's more case of when now, not if.

Below is a list of NBU accredited sightings of Asian hornets in England this year.



28th July 2023

a credible sighting of Asian hornets (*Vespa velutina*) in Hawkinge, just outside Folkestone.

27th July 2023

An Asian hornet nest has been discovered and treated in Plymouth. Removal is expected to take place shortly.

The National Bee Unit (NBU) have also received 5 other potential sightings of individual Asian hornets which they are monitoring together with support from the local Asian Hornet Teams.

24th July 2023

A nest was found in the Dover district of Kent. This was destroyed on 24th July.

22nd & 23rd July 2023

A credible sighting of an Asian hornet in Plymouth was received over the weekend. The NBU are investigating.

20th July 2023

a credible sighting in Gravesend, Kent. Shortly after NBU inspectors reached the site they located a small primary nest in a nearby residential garden.

17th July 2023

National Bee Unit (NBU) inspectors are currently carrying out enhanced surveillance in the Dover district in response to a confirmed sighting of Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*). A single hornet was captured and reported to the NBU by a local beekeeper. An NBU Inspector collected the sample which was sent to Fera who confirmed the specimen was *Vespa velutina*. Defra have issued a press notice to raise awareness and ask people to report sightings.

1st July 2023

a credible Asian hornet sighting from Kent, near Dover, with accompanying photographs. The hornet was found in some sugar water.

22nd June 2023

A small primary nest of Asian hornets was reported to the NBU near Dover in Kent.

28th May 2023

near Canterbury in Kent recognised as an Asian hornet that had been attracted to the colonies - knocked it down.

18th May 2023

a credible report of an Asian Hornet discovered from Ashford in Kent. The insect was caught.

17th April 2023

a credible report which included a clear photo of an Asian Hornet on the deck of a Ferry from Poole to Cherbourg taken on 10th April 2023. 13th April 2023 Confirmed Asian hornet sighting in Folkestone, Kent. Monitoring traps deployed in the area.

5th April 2023

a credible report of an Asian Hornet discovered inside a cauliflower in Northumberland, approximately 20 miles north of Newcastle upon Tyne.



Which way is up?

A very experienced beekeeper called me the other day to say that he had inadvertently used a rhombus bee escape **the wrong way up** resulting in the death of a good few bees. I won't embarrass him by mentioning any names, but just for the

record, the one in the photo is upside down.

It is always good to check that bee escapes are the right way up, as it's quite easy to put the crown board back on upside down.

Dates for your diary

New Beekeepers 5th practical session

Saturday August 5th

At the apiary - 10.00am

Baltonsborough Village Day

Village Hall and playing fields

Monday August 28th

12 noon - 5.00pm

Somerton Beekeepers Honey Show

Sat September 16th

Keinton Mandeville Village Hall

TA11 6ES

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