



Buzz

The Newsletter of Taunton & District Beekeepers

June 2023

Welcome to the latest edition of Buzz with news of the latest doings of Taunton Beekeepers! The weather has at least broken today with some much welcome rain, although with temperatures forecast to rise again, it has been only a brief reprieve!

Over the past month or so there have been unusually high levels of swarming with numerous reports from members of the public on social media, and stories of beekeepers running out of equipment. Swarms of bees can end up in roof spaces and chimneys where they are hard to retrieve, and also risk causing a public nuisance. For the beekeeper, it means the loss of most of their flying bees and therefore a large part of their honey crop. Uncontrolled swarming can also spread disease, which has implications for the health of colonies everywhere.

Here therefore is a timely reminder of the importance of swarm prevention and control. Colonies should be checked every 7 days for queen cells and if they are seen, steps taken to either delay or manage the swarm process. For those who are new to beekeeping, this can be a stressful time, so do ask for advice from someone more experienced if you are unsure.

It's important too to check regularly for signs of disease; if you are unsure what you are looking for, there are some very good images available on BeeBase:

www.nationalbeeunit.com/resources-for-beekeepers/media-gallery

Alternatively, contact your local bee inspector for advice; you can send photos of any signs of disease that you are concerned about. Click on the link below to find bee inspectors in your area.

www.nationalbeeunit.com/contact-us/

And finally, look out for details of our Improvers Disease Talk later in the Autumn.

Lyndsay Stone Editor

Chairman's Report

We are now well into the 2023 beekeeping year with hopefully no restrictions on movement of people and bees as has been the case for the past few years.

The Beginner's Course started in February with a total of 25 beginners and we are now into the practical side of beekeeping which has been well attended and all beginners are looking forward to having their own colonies to look after.

As Chairman of Taunton Beekeepers, I will be standing down at the next AGM in November, having completed four years as Chair, the majority of which was during the covid period.

Taunton Beekeepers are looking for a new Chairperson so if there is anyone who would like to take on the role, please make contact with either myself or Julie Husband for more information.

I would like to thank all committee members and members of Taunton Beekeepers for their help and support over the past four years.

Mike Dillon Chairman

Secretary's report

I can't believe we're nearly half way through the year! Here is what is happening over the next 3 months at Heatherton Park Apiary.

We are running a Taster Afternoon on **Saturday June 17th** for anyone interested in beekeeping. If you know anyone who would like more details, then please tell them to contact me.

The Beginners course continues with the practical sessions and on the same day at 4:30pm, there will be Bee Chat which is open to all members, new and established. You can come along and ask questions, bring something along or simply just have a catch up with other beekeepers. All very informal with tea, biscuits and maybe cake.

The next Bee Chat is **Saturday July 1st**.

On **July 15th at 2:30pm** we are holding our Presidents Afternoon. Michael Clark, our President, invites all members to come along to listen to a talk by Richard Bache on 'Severe Allergic Reactions to Bee Stings and What to Do.' There will be tea, sandwiches and cake afterwards.

Other dates for your diary:

August 16th at 7pm: clearing the supers and feeding

August 18th: removing the supers

August 19th: first varroa treatment, Apiguard, will be put in the hives.

Well, that's the summer nearly over!

Bee Buddies

The Bee Dating afternoon went well with lots of people offering to be Bee Buddies. So, if you are in need of a mentor then please do get in touch with me and we will see if we can match you up with someone in your area.

Julie Husband Secretary

Apiary Report

All the talk recently has been about queen cells, swarms and oil seed rape! The Apiary was very close to a large field of oil seed rape which our bees have made full use of! We now have more hives and nucs thanks to the abundance of forage. The hedge rows are also full of flowers which have been taken advantage of by the bees! Many of the hives are now double brood because of the number of bees, making them less crowded, easier to manipulate and hopefully less likely to swarm!

Hopefully all this activity results in a bumper harvest this year.

Andrew Perry Apiary Manager



The Taunton Bee and Honey Show

The Taunton Bee and Honey Show has always been a venue where beekeepers can come together and share all that's good about beekeeping and our community. This year will be no different!



Running on Friday and Saturday, August 4th and 5th, this year's show will feature some of the old favourites; the Honey Show, Flying Bees, Candle Rolling and Honey Tasting, but will also focus more on the educational aspects of the honey bee and the beekeeper.

The Honey Show, combining both Taunton and Somerset County Shows, will feature prominently and for those of you who would like to enter, a Show Schedule can be obtained from Andy Glendinning at andyglendinning@aol.com. Otherwise, look out for the messages from the Taunton Beekeepers mail address, one of which will include the Schedule. You really don't have to be an experienced beekeeper to enter; there are a variety of Classes for any and all abilities.

As previously mentioned, this year we will put more emphasis on the educational aspects of the honey bee and the beekeeper with a new stand or two to help get the messages across, and an area to meet and greet the public.

Importantly though, the Show can only run with your help, the Club's membership. If you can give any time to help volunteer on either or both days, please do so. A day pass to the wider Taunton Flower Show and lunch will be provided. Volunteering at the Show is fun too! Interested? Please contact Andy, at the above email.

So go on, dust off those prized jars of honey and wax products and head down to the Taunton Bee and Honey Show. You never know, you might soon be selling award-winning honey products! Or come and help spread the word about the wonderful Honey Bee and what it means to be a beekeeper.



Andy Glendinning Bee and Honey Show Secretary

Safety at the Apiary

Safety is not the prerogative of one person; it requires a team effort to ensure everyone is safe from harm



The First Aid Station has been moved to the end wall of the Workshop, to the left of the emergency exit door and comprises two **GREEN** first aid kits:

- An apiary only box mounted on the wall
- A travel away box stowed on the shelf

both of which have been equipped following a first aid needs assessment of apiary activities likely to cause injury:

Bee, insect stings and bites including anaphylactic shock	Eye injuries from soda crystals, insect or flying debris, thorn, twig during site clean up
Allergic reaction to dietary, latex and medicines	Heart attack or stroke emergency response plans
Burn injuries	Manual handling and dropped object injuries
Chemical injuries from treating hives	Slips, trips and falls
Cuts caused by broken glass, knives, nails, during end of season clean up, honey extraction, kitchen tasks etc	

Each kit contains:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suitably sized and marked medical kit/s• First Aid station signage• First Aid Guidance Booklet plus Treatment for Anaphylactic Shock, Diabetics and CPR• Antihistamine Cream and tablets• Antiseptic Cream• Assorted Waterproof Plasters• Bandages, assorted sizes• Burn Dressings• Cleansing Wipes• Clingfilm• Dressings large & medium• Eye Pad Dressings• Eye wash station - neutralizing solution for acids and alkalis, saline solution for minor eye injuries• Finger Dressing• Foil Blanket or large plastic bag (body size)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gloves, various sizes• Ibuprofen gel or equivalent• Ice packs• Magnifying Glass• Microporous Tape• Resuscitation Face Shield for use during Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)• Safety pins• Tick removal tool• Triangular bandages• Tweezers• Universal Shears (scissors)• St John's First Aid Booklet• Medical information sheets for creams and tablets• Inventory check list• Consumable record sheet• Accident report forms contained in the travel away kit only
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The **BLUE** sterile eye wash kit which is mounted above the first aid kit contains:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 bottles of sterile eye wash solution• 2 x eye pods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small mirror• 2 x sterile eye pad dressings
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Mounted on the wall to the left of the blue eye wash kit is a bottle of pH-Neutralising solution for eye accidents involving acids and alkalis, with instructions.

A blanket for additional patient warmth is stowed in a bag on the shelf, and a Fire Blanket is stowed at the end of the storage rack.

Behind the Apiary first aid kit is a pad of Accident Report Forms should the need arise.

Emergency exit doors are:

- Identified on the Fire Plan
- Fire Exit signs displayed on both sides
- Internal and external location lighting above door with mains and battery power supplies
- Both sides of the door must be kept clear at all times. Hazard tape identifies keep clear zones
- Make yourself aware of the emergency exit locations and routes to the Safe Assembly Area in the Memorial Woodland across the road.



Jonah Jones Health and Safety Rep

Social Media

Just over 16 months ago I volunteered to help with our social media outlets and website and in that time we have seen some great growth in our Facebook page impressions, likes and new followers.

Facebook is our only social media outlet. We now have 691 followers which is great for such a small club. Facebook is a great way to engage directly with its followers, sharing information on a daily and sometimes hourly schedule. Post likes are somewhat not so great though. Of that 691 followers, we have a very low 'like' rate. And this is where you can help!!!! Liking and sharing the posts from the Taunton District Beekeepers Facebook page helps increase our page algorithm refresh rate, this works in the background of every post on this social media platform. Clicks, likes, shares and followers are the social media currency.

What do you want to see on your feed from us? Suggestions are more than welcome, as is content that is relevant to the apiary, events, learning courses and all things bees.

The information on the social media pages of Facebook is sometimes short term and fluid and needs to interact with you, your family, friends and the rest of the world.

Follow, like, and share.

<https://www.facebook.com/TauntonDistrictBeekeepers>

Our website is hosted by Somerset Beekeepers Association and we have a small section for our own division. Here you can find diary dates and general information about the division. The website acts as a pointer and the information is more long term and static.

As we get more content, these pages will increase and grow. We are always welcome to page suggestions that you feel will be relevant to the wider world.

<https://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk/taunton.html>

James Lowe Social Media

Beekeeping in Ukraine

We enjoyed an interesting SBKA talk recently by Dmytro Kushnir, a co-founder of Honey Brothers Ukraine, who talked about beekeeping and the impact of war.

There are estimated to be about 400,000 beekeepers in Ukraine who produce about 6-8% of worldwide production of honey. The most common hives used are the Ukrainian hive, the Langstroth and the Dadant. Bee colonies are referred to as bee families and about 45-50% of bee farms are moved seasonally to take advantage of different forage.

Since the outbreak of war, honey production has dropped by about 15-30% with almost half of beekeepers fighting on the front line. Many bee farms have been abandoned or destroyed. A prohibition on sowing sunflowers on the frontline has meant a 30% drop in sunflower cultivation. Even liberated areas are dangerous with the remains of missiles and shells in the fields and meadows.

Despite this, Dmytro remained positive about the future and talked about how Honey Brothers are working to preserve Ukraine's beekeeping traditions by developing a range of Ukrainian honeys in the UK market; the Liverpool branch of Marks and Spencer's even stocked some during Eurovision!

Another interesting aspect of Ukraine's culture is the rising popularity of apitherapy. The scent of honey and the vibrations from the bees are believed to have healing properties for treating respiratory conditions. People can spend a few hours resting in a specially designed hut built over a set of hives, benefiting from the calming psychological effect.

Interestingly, Britain's first bee therapy retreat has just opened in the grounds of Monachyle Mhor Hotel in Crieff in Perthshire. However, at £80 for a 45 minute session, I think it might be cheaper to spend an hour in your apiary!

Lyndsay Stone

Up close and personal with Honey Bees - *a taster session in Microscopy at Taunton Beekeepers*

In response to requests for an annual Nosema testing initiative at TDBKA and more opportunities for members to work towards the BBKA Microscopy Certificate, Lynne Ingram (NDB & Master Beekeeper), Eleanor Burgess (former Seasonal Bee Inspector) and Rosemary Burgess (seasoned beekeeper & amateur microscopist) were tasked with organising a Microscopy Taster session for members at the Teaching Apiary.

10th May dawned to a Somerset deluge, thanks to a freak heavy rainstorm the day before, so participants and facilitators battled floods and road works to get to the apiary. Lynne drove to Cheddar to collect more microscopes kindly lent by Bridget Knutson for the session. It was with some relief, plenty of microscopes and matchboxes of dead bees in hands, that at 7.30pm the session kicked off.

Lynne introduced herself and mapped out the evening, which would include use of a

compound microscope to identify *Nosema* spores and examine pollen grains and a dissecting microscope to view a honey bee in close up.

Eleanor then gave a brief description of *Nosema*, a microsporidian, (spore-forming fungus) that enters the bee's gut through infected stores or cleaning out infected faeces and is passed on during feeding and communication (tropholaxis), weakening the bees and shortening their lives - the "Spring Dwindle". Understanding and identifying *Nosema* has become more urgent. The *N. apis* strain, which flourishes in winter and dies out in summer has been in the UK for some time; conversely the strain; *N. ceranae*, a recent arrival, flourishes during the warm months. Now our bees face the possibility of year-round infection by *Nosema*.

With that sobering information in mind we formed into pairs, and began making up a slide each by crushing our bees in a mortar, adding a little dye to stain the background, putting a drop of the "bee juice" on a slide, topping it with another and placing it under the microscope. A little focusing and we were looking at a myriad of odd-shaped objects - circular, oval, strange long things that we learned were pollen grains, dead bee parts, and, possibly, *Nosema*, which, we had been told, looked like a rice grain, with *N. ceranae* being slightly larger. Just one possible spore. No problem. Luckily Lynne had some slides made from infected bees for us to look at. We could identify the spores quite clearly here.

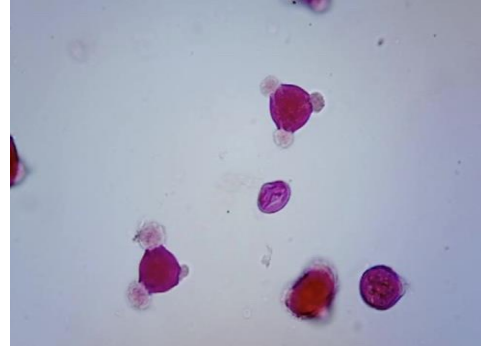


Next we examined a worker bee under our dissecting microscopes. The detail was incredible and excitement in the room grew as we saw the individual sections of the compound eyes, the simple eyes, the proboscis and feet in minute detail.

Time got the better of us on our table so I was only able to look at one or two pollen grains, but the ones I saw were so beautiful with the most amazing patterns visible. Suddenly it was 10pm and time to clear up with everyone buzzing. When Lynne asked who would like more microscopy sessions hands flew up.



Honey bee's wing



Pollen grain

Images credit: © Mike Wade

If you missed this session and would like to find out more about microscopy at the Teaching Apiary, please contact tauntonsecretary@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

Jenny Squire

Auction

This year's Spring auction was a great success with 197 lots and 28 sellers. As always the morning offered the opportunity for some browsing amongst the large array of equipment, with bidding proceeding a brisk pace from 2pm. Total sales amounted to £5,743 and the division raised £407.10 in commission, with donations to the club amounting to an incredible £850! The raffle also raised over £100, with refreshments raising around £90.

Thank you to all who supported this event whether by selling or buying equipment, or by helping to set up and clear away.



Adverts/Requests for help

Parking

Recently we have had more members coming along to our events, this obviously has an impact on parking. So please try and share transport if you can, get dropped off if you can, drive your smallest vehicle, if you have one and park neat and tidy if there is no one there to 'park' you.

Basic Assessment

If any member would like to do the BBKA's Basic Assessment then Vanessa will go through the criteria with you during Bee Chat. This will be aimed at beekeepers who have had at least one colony of bees for a minimum of 12 months, and then there will be an assessment in the summer. All those who pass will get a free SBKA cloth badge to put on their suit. Contact Vanessa at vmwoodford@hotmail.co.uk to let her know if you are interested.

Offer of land for hives

I have been contacted by Annabel and Chris who have recently moved to Churchstanton. They have ten acres in the Blackdown Hills and are offering up some land to a beekeeper for an out apiary. If anyone is interested then please contact them direct bellabouttle@gmail.com

BBKA Survey

Have you heard any beekeeping conversations this year about the high numbers of winter losses? The BBKA is curious to know if the 2022/3 winter really was worse than normal but need your help!

Could you please take a few minutes to complete this short, anonymous questionnaire. The questionnaire will remain open until Sunday June 18th

<https://forms.gle/rkCWaqb39fEnQzfM6>

Nucs for sale

The apiary has some nucs for sale at £180 each, ideal for beginners just starting out on their beekeeping career. For more information and to add your name to the waiting list, please contact Andrew at Andrew.perry99@btinternet.com

Extractor

hire

If you need to hire the apiary's extractor then please contact either Mike Dillon 07585 537030 or Andrew Perry 07527 887620 to arrange.

For sale

Silicone /rubber candle moulds for sale. Also made up candles.

For more information, please ring Jenny Gammon on 01823 270465

Repairs to bee veils and suits. Contact Jenny Gammon - 01823 270-465 or 07788407497

We hope you enjoyed reading our newsletter!

Deadline for June edition of Buzz: September 9th