

The Newsletter



Volume no 25 Issue 11 December 2018

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



Jackie Mosedale (President) opening the meeting, watched by Fred Clarke (chairman - centre, and Steve Horne (treasure - left)

Somerton BKA AGM

There was a smaller than usual turn out for our AGM this year, which was disappointing, but meant more mince pies for those who did turn up. Our President, Jackie Mosedale, opened the meeting and praised the committee for the sterling work that they do.

Catherine Fraser then reported on the state of the colonies at the apiary saying that we had started the year with 10 colonies but after consolidation, had ended the season with seven. We did however get 200 lbs of honey. During the season we had been inspected for EFB and declared free by Regional Bee

Inspector Simon Jones, but he was apparently, less than complimentary about the state of the hives: his main area of concern was frame spacing.

The Flow hive, with its 8 Langstroth frames continued to be a source of worry, as it is small compared with a National hive, there have been several swarms, yet the bees seem loathe to use the super.

Thanks to the generosity of Tesco, Ilminster, we haven't had to purchase any food this year. We receive all their wasted sugar and this year it has proved more than ample. The bees don't seem to object to the odd bit of contamination from doughnut jam either.

Steve Horne (Treasurer) reported that we have a healthy bank balance and proposed that, as a result, there wasn't any reason to increase the Somerton portion (£6.00) of the membership fee. The committee have debated where our donations for research should go, and it was suggested that as we are in an EFB hotbed, that would be the best route. Stewart Gould, in his role as vice chairman of Somerset BKA, confirmed that it is the intention of Somerset BKA to do likewise.

Membership stands at 146 full members, with a good number of associate members, primarily from the Beginners' Course, which along with a small amount of trading (jars, MAQS treatment, honey sales etc) had produced a fair income of close to £2000.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2018

We had the official opening of our apiary by David Charles. The building is being used and the grounds are beginning to look good. Some minor tasks still need to be completed. Further developments in terms of storage are also envisaged.

We have received many generous gifts this year and this has resulted in an increased level of beekeeping kit and an increased number of books in our library. The books were bequeathed to us by Ivan Chick who sadly passed away earlier this year. Many will remember his fascinating talk on "do it yourself beekeeping". Ivan was well respected in beekeeping circles for his knowledge, practical skills and inventiveness.

Membership has increased slightly, bucking the trend. It now stands at 147 full members but 186 including partner members. We are the biggest association in Somerset.

Due to the efforts of Stewart Gould and Joe King, the Beginners course is increasing in popularity, 40+ participants last year, and a possible 60+ this year, bringing much income to the association's account. Unfortunately, not all who finish the course become full members or even continue to keep bees. Any ideas on how to reverse this trend would be welcomed by your committee.

Due to the wise stewardship of our treasurer Steve Horne Our finances are very sound.

Part of our success is due to the time you have given volunteering to do tasks that would have, without your skills and efforts, required spending money on professional help.

Despite appalling weather our Honey Show was, without doubt, a great success. We had more entries than previous years (318) and more participants than ever, including individuals outside our own County. The volunteers who helped to run it were heroes, particularly those working outside in the wind, rain and cold. To name you all would tax my memory too much but because your efforts were so much appreciated I feel some names should be mentioned so David Rose, Rodney White, Keith Sturgess, Sally Lye, Sharon Humby, Andy Bonney, Richard Longworth, Joe King, Karen Cox, Brian Parsons, Pat Lehain, and Eric McLaughlin thank you, thank you, thank you.

However, all this success would not have been possible without the overall management of the show by David Rose and Alison Dykes.

In an attempt to involve our more experienced members to engage more in the running of our association, your committee has asked Karen Cox to lead a small group consisting of Sally Lye, Sharon Humby, Howard Horsfall and Keith Sturgess to suggest and outline a scheme that develops the beekeeping skills of our less experienced members further, and to think of ways of developing the Association further. we hope our senior members will get involved with both ideas and their delivery.

Two other changes: Catherine Fraser is stepping down from the post of Apiary Manager and taking up the role of the association's Asian Hornet Co-ordinator as part of Somerset's contribution to a national attempt to control this pest. Joe King is going to take over the duties of Apiary Manager but is relinquishing the post of Programme Manager.

Finally I would like to thank all of my/your committee for the hard work they have done in making this year a success, and for the continuing support they have given to your stumbling chairman.

Fred Clarke - chairman

Nomination of Officers

Although it was publicised in the last newsletter, and several emails, that the committee would welcome, with open arms, any newcomers prepared to join the committee, and even take on a post of responsibility, not a single person came forward. Consequently there is little change in the ranks of the committee. Keith Sturgess has moved from deputy county delegate to full delegate, as Andy Bonney's intentions weren't known. The chairman took the view that the position of County Delegate had to be decided at the AGM. Suzy Perkins has offered to return to the position of deputy delegate when possible. One or two people were approached regarding the position of programme manager, but felt unable to commit, and so Stewart Gould, who had offered to do it if nobody came forward, has taken on the programme when Joe's excellent bank of events is completed.

The full list of officers is printed on the back page of this issue.

Honey For Sale

Alison Dykes met Robert Borgs at Othery Sale, selling jams and pickles. He would like to buy honey from a local Beekeeper on a regular basis. If you are interested please contact him through the details below.

Robert Borgs - Stone Lodge, 1 Strippy Close, Evercreech ,BA4 6LH
01749 838666

Presentation of Awards

We had four people take the Basic Assessment this year and all four passed. Charles Sundquist excelled by receiving a distinction in his Basic Assessment, but he and Nick Clarke, who also passed, were unable to attend the AGM

Sharon Humby (left) and Sally Lye (right) have both passed their Basic Assessments and received their certificates from President Jackie Mosedale. Both Sally and Sharon have offered their services on the new extended learning programme, instigated by Fred Clarke.



Somerton BKA's Study group have been successful again. Although only two of the group took the module 2 BBKA exam, both Stewart Gould and Fred Clarke passed with credits for their efforts.



The other three members have joined in again to scale the giddy heights of module 3, next March.

Joe King has vowed to take modules 2 & 3 this year.

If anybody else would like to join in the Study Groups, they will be warmly welcomed. Remember that the modular exams can be taken in any order. You don't have to start with module 1 .

Bee of the Month



Well, it is the last of our 'Bees of the month'. A whole year, and we didn't mention (The honey bee) *apis mellifera*. This isn't the best photo in the world, but I was perched at the top of a step ladder, with my mobile phone held at arm's length. Honey bees visit many flowers during the warmer months, but like wasps, are occasionally known to enjoy the juice of some late fruits.

We have a grape vine which grows through the honeysuckle on a pergola, and on this sunny mid - November day, when it was a bit breezy, and not that warm, I was aware of a lot of buzzing close by, and to my surprise these ever resourceful little buzzers were taking advantage of a bunch of grapes which had been missed during the massive annual Ditcheat grape harvest. There were about 20 in total (bees, not grapes), all totally absorbed in collecting the sweet juice of these slightly over-ripe fruit.

Here's a question for you. If honey is in danger of fermenting, especially if the moisture content is high, what are the chances of fermentation, especially when the 'nectar' is collected from over-ripe (already fermenting) fruit? Bee wine - there could be a future in it.



Christmas Quiz 2018



1. Approximately, what is the Specific Gravity of floral honey?
2. How many wings has a drone honeybee?
3. What are mandibles used for?
4. How many stomachs has the honeybee?
5. Name the chairman of Somerset Beekeepers Association?
6. What is the colour of Asparagus pollen?
7. Generally, what are the temperatures at which honey will not ferment?
8. Where is the flabellum of the honeybee?
9. What was the name of the man who invented the WBC hive?
10. What is Royal Jelly?
11. Could honeybees survive on nothing but honey and pollen?
12. What simple sugars do honeybees create when turning nectar into honey?
13. In a honeybee honeycomb, is the point or the flat of the hexagon at the top?
14. Do aeroplanes use honeycombs?
15. For a worker honeybee, how many days after the egg is laid, does the cell get sealed?
16. What is the average length of life of a worker honeybee in summer?
17. What is the common name of hederia helix?
18. Can bees fly backwards in still air?
19. How many frames does it take to fully populate a modified Commercial brood box?
20. Putting insects to one side, what is the origin and meaning of the acronym WASP?



Happy Christmas, one and all - Roy White (answers on page 11



Ultimate Christmas gift ideas

Want to give the lady beekeeper in your family something different this year, why not try the Ultimate bee collection from BeeGood Cosmetics. It's got everything from Honey and wild water mint cleansing water to NectaPerfecta cleansing mask, and this 'Indulgent gift box of bee-autifiers' is a mere £150. Available from Waitrose.



If you're not sure that you've spent quite enough money, why don't you add some extremely over-priced honey labels from Zazzle. At just £12.25 for 5 sheets of 8 labels (only 31p each) they will fill the heart (of the supplier) with Christmas joy. Post and packing extra, of course.



Fed up with that straightforward conventional or J hive tool, then spend some real money and buy the tool developed by beekeepers for beekeepers, with more sense than money. The Stach hive tool costs slightly less than 4 conventional ones. £32.00 + p&p and you can have it personalised for a little more cash. Enjoy watching the lettering disappear when you soak it in soda and bleach solution for the first time.

If there is somebody in your family who is thinking of taking up beekeeping, then why not enrol them on the Somerton Division Beginners' Course. This is the only possible Christmas gift in this list which is 'cheaper than chips'. £25.00 is the total cost, which includes a copy of Haynes Bee Manual. Talking to Steve, our treasurer, we are going to have to increase that next year.

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

Apibioxal varroa treatment (Oxalic acid)

It is accepted practice, these days, to treat bees for varroa on a bright cold winter day. Licensed varroa treatments are the most expedient way of doing this. We use Api-bioxal (oxalic acid) in the winter, as it will kill varroa which are out and about in the hive. In the colder months there is very little, if any, brood, so few, if any, varroa in sealed cells. This method and timing avoids damaging brood, while ensuring a high 'knock down' percentage. If you would like to order through the division, we have secured a good price again, by buying in bulk, and can offer made up Apibioxal at **75p** per colony with no p&p involved at all. You can order for as many, or few as you like. Please let me know how much you need by Friday 7th Dec. We will dispense the treatments on Saturday Dec 15th between 10.00 and 12 noon. **Please collect what you order**, and bring a suitable sized bottle to allow for 50ml per colony.

We still have MAQS uncollected from our last bulk purchase, which we will be offering again in Spring. It is the members who end up paying for non collected items. One major supplier is advertising Api-bioxal in bulk, for 100 colonies at £85.00 plus p&p. We have secured a price at £10.00 less per 100 colonies, including p&p.

Stewart Gould - somertonbees@btinternet.com

Mike's Bee Supplies

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

Foundation

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Membership Renewal

Memberships subscriptions are now due for renewal, as the year's membership runs from January 1st - December 31st. If you were a new beekeeper in 2018, you will have had associate membership, but if you now have bees, it is wise to upgrade to full membership, because of the enormous advantages. You will have Bee Disease Insurance (BDI), so that in the event of a disease disaster, you could replace your bees. You will have £10, 000,000 public liability insurance and £10,000,000 product liability insurance. There are, of course, numerous other advantages. You will receive the BBKA News every month.

When filling your forms, **please submit a new Gift Aid form**, as your circumstances may have changed, and we need to ensure that our records are accurate.

Renewal Forms, and a Gift Aid form accompany this newsletter.

Answers to Roy White's Christmas Quiz

1. 1.4
2. 4
3. Shovelling pollen into the mouth, handling, biting and kneading beeswax, building comb, collecting and applying propolis, feeding brood, removing debris (including stuff that beekeepers have put into the hive like newspaper), grooming and fighting.
4. 2
5. Anne Pike
6. Orange (or orangey red)
7. Below 10 °C and above 27°C. But storing honey above 27 °C! grade for a long time might damage it.
8. On the tip of the proboscis.
9. William Broughton Carr
10. Brood food for the Queen larva, but you could have added "The overall composition of royal jelly is 67% water, 12.5% crude protein (including small amounts of many different amino acids), and 11% simple sugars, also including a relatively high amount (5%) of fatty acids." It all depends on how peculiar you are.
11. Don't forget the water.
12. Fructose and glucose (or dextrose).
13. The point.
14. Yes, made from metal, impregnated paper and other man-made materials. They are arranged to provide tailored stiffness and strength whilst achieving minimum weight, and they are are skinned.
15. 8-9.
16. 36 days.
17. Common Ivy.
18. Yes.
19. 11.
20. White Anglo Saxon Protestant. Originating from the N.E. USA, it is a derogatory description for an individual who has made his or her way via nepotism or unfair advantage.

Dates for your diary

Oxalic Acid Distribution Day

Saturday December 15th

10.00am - 12 noon

At the Apiary

Beginners' Beekeeping Course

Wednesdays Jan 16th, 23rd & 30th, then

Feb. 6th, 13th & 20th.

All sessions start at 7.30 pm

**Tor Rugby Club,
Lowerside Lane, Glastonbury
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