

# The Newsletter

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Volume no 26 Issue 11 December 2019

SBKA website [www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk](http://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk)



## All change at the top

For those who missed the AGM, we have a new chairman, secretary and treasurer. A new decade, a new era- see inside.

It's all happening at the apiary too. Big plans afoot with connection to a water supply.

## AGM Report

As is usual, the turnout for the AGM, was low, with only 30 of our 250 members in attendance.

There were some major issues addressed, but first came the election of officers. Fred Clarke had reached the end of his three year tenure as chairman, Steve Horne stepped down as treasurer, after 9 years, and Jackie Mosedale concluded that 12 years as secretary, is enough. These three positions were filled with unanimous votes for all, so the new committee reads as follows:-

President	Jackie Mosedale
Chairman	Eric McLaughlin
Vice chairman	Jack Barr
Secretary	Alison Clewes
Treasurer	Sarah Griffiths
Newsletter editor and programme	Stewart Gould
Honey Show Team	Alison Dykes, Fred Clarke, David Rose, Sally Lye, Sharon Humby
Librarian	Sarah Kent

The post of apiary manager remains vacant, as Joe King is retiring, and nobody else came forward. All efforts will be made to ensure we have a manager in place before the new season starts.

Caroline Dawson has also joined the committee. Jackie Mosedale, Fred Clarke, Steve Horne and Joe King will remain as members of the committee.

Fred Clarke said in his final address as chairman, that it had been a very positive year with members engaged in supporting the Division in a variety of ways. The apiary was now operating as a teaching facility as had always been the intention. Beginners classes had been well attended with a high percentage of attendees becoming members. It was pleasing to note that the number on women beekeepers has increased. The new venue for the Honey Show has worked well, and the committee will have new officers as existing members retire from their posts, but remain on the committee.

Steve Horne, in his final treasurer's report said that full accounts had been inspected and agreed by an independent examiner and had been circulated to members. The Division is in a healthy position. The courses run by the Division

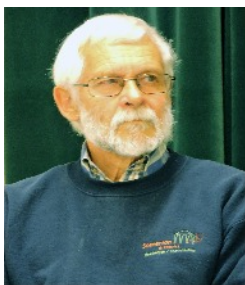
had raised a healthy surplus and a small income had been achieved through trading. Gift Aid has also enhanced income by approximately £900.

The Treasurer recommends no change in membership fee for the coming year. Members were invited to accept the accounts. Proposed by Joe King, seconded by Jeff Brewer and unanimously agreed.

## Retiring Officers

At this year's AGM two of the Association's stalwarts decided to stand down from their positions, after enormous contributions to the running of our association, over many years.

Jackie Mosedale, our President and Secretary, has decided her "one year" as Secretary is up. When asked originally to accept this position she said she would do it for "one year only". Well! twelve years later the time has come. Jackie has been a true servant to our association, dealing efficiently with secretarial matters which sometimes required great tact and diplomacy. Not enough can be said to thank her. Jackie, you have been a pillar of strength. Jackie's wisdom and knowledge will not be lost as she is remaining a member of the committee.



Steve Horne, our smiling machine, has also decided to step down after many years as the association Treasurer. Steve has managed many changes with the way in which the county requires accounts to be submitted and has also dealt with the new regulations on GDPR (privacy laws). He has always carried out his role with professionalism, not giving a hint as to how much time and energy he has put into it. What a star, always smiling but always on top of the task. Steve will also be remaining on the

committee, thus sharing his expertise.

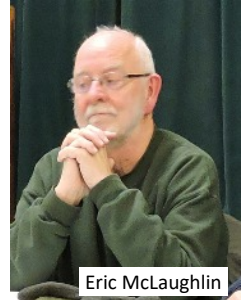
To express our thanks the association took the unusual step of presenting both Jackie and Steve with a gift of a small tree which we hope grows into a "pillar of strength" which they have always been.

## Fred Clarke

## The Old and the New



While our immediate past chairman, Fred Clarke, rightly paid tribute to two long serving offers of the division, Jackie Mosedale and Steve Horne, Eric McLaughlin, our new chairman, had this to say about Fred. 'His role as Chair of the Division should not be ignored. His chairman's report illustrated the real progress we have made over the past few years but neglected to point out how he guided us with his focus on the needs/wants of the membership with his usual tact and good humour'.



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## Winter oxalic acid treatment

Each year we make a bulk purchase of Api-bioxal, which is a treatment approved by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate, for treating varroa mite infestations in honey bees.



We have shopped around, and the least expensive option is from Bee Equipment Ltd. Prices have increased since last year. We will be able to supply Api-bioxal at £1.00 per colony. If you purchase from the main UK supplier of beekeeping equipment, it will cost you £1.35 + delivery per colony, provided you order at least 10 treatments.

If you would like to take advantage of this offer, you may order for any number of colonies. Simply email Stewart Gould at [somertonbees@btinternet.com](mailto:somertonbees@btinternet.com) saying how many colonies you have to treat. The deadline for doing so is **Wednesday December 11<sup>th</sup>**. Once we know the numbers required, we can place the order.

If you order Api-bioxal, please honour that commitment. Each year we are left with uncollected treatments. If we could guarantee that everybody would turn up to collect their order, the price could be even lower.

Api-bioxal is a treatment used in the middle of winter, when there is little or no brood present in the hive. At this point in the colonies life cycle, the majority of varroa mites are reliant on adult bees, and few if any will be in sealed brood cells. It is therefore possible to achieve a high knock down rate on the mites.

Most treatments used in warmer months, will not penetrate cell cappings, and any mites in sealed brood cells will not succumb to the treatment. One exception to this rule is MAQS, which we buy in bulk during the warmer months.

I will be away from 3<sup>rd</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> December inclusive, so please be patient when waiting for a response to your order.

Thank you

**Stewart Gould**

## Stuart Anderson

While in Canberra, I did meet up again with the Flow hive guru, and we spent a pleasant Hallowe'en evening with his family, at his father's house in Yaralumla, before he flew back to his home in New South Wales.

I was expecting to give you an update on the latest developments in the world of



Flow hives, but haven't received the promised email. If you think the weather here is appalling, spare a thought for those living in most parts of Queensland and New South Wales. Massive bush fires have accounted for huge swathes of the countryside. The relatively small fire, just 3 miles from Stuart's house, covers a meagre 620,000 hectares. Most fires are much bigger than that, with beehives suffering very badly, as can

be seen from this photograph, which was one of many posted on facebook.

**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](mailto:redrascal@tiscali.co.uk) Mobile 07812 738793 Telephone 01458 2721144



## Christmas Quiz 2019.



1. The honeybee has three bits to its body. What is the name of the middle bit?
2. What substances are necessary to cause honeys to ferment?
3. Roughly, at what speed do the honeybees' wings oscillate?
4. Name the Treasurer of Somerton Beekeepers (up to the 2019 AGM).
5. Why does oilseed rape honey granulate quickly?
6. To what family does the apple belong?
7. The antennae of the honeybee have two main segments. What are their names?
8. What was the nationality of Mr Porter of Porter Bee Escape fame?
9. What is the colour of the pollen of the Common Red Poppy Papaver rhoeas?
10. Why is washing soda so useful to beekeepers?
11. During what period of the day are dandelions likely to offer pollen and nectar to the honeybee, and for how many hours?
12. How old are the wax producers in a honeybee colony?
13. According to the Honey Regulations, what is honey?
14. How many legs has a honeybee?
15. What substance is added by the honeybee to convert sucrose in the nectar to glucose and fructose?
16. Who wrote "The Pollen Loads of the Honeybee"?
17. Approximately, what is the diameter of the holes in a mouse guard?
18. It is normal to check the varroa mite drop (on an open mesh floor varroa tray) around November/December. What is the threshold at which treatment is required?
19. In a bumble-bee colony, how many bumble-bees live through the winter?
20. For this year's weird question: what is the meaning of the word "bee" as in "spelling-bee"?



**Happy Christmas to you all!**  
**Roy White**



**Answers on page 9 - no cheating!**

## January Evening Meeting

Our speaker for our January evening meeting (Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>) will certainly be different. Jonathan Powell is a trustee of the Natural Beekeeping Trust, and concentrates his efforts on hollowing trees, so that bees can be re-housed in the resultant cavity. There could well be some interesting dialogue after the talk.



- Does this extreme carpentry harm the trees?
- How do you monitor colony health?
- How do you deal with incidence of notifiable diseases?

The February booking for the Parish Rooms in Somerton has been reserved for a 'workshop' on a subject yet to be finalised, so keep an eye on your email inbox, as there won't be another newsletter until early February.

Our March speaker is Bridget Strawbridge, whose name might be familiar to some. Bridget's subject and speciality is the study of Bumble and Solitary bees, which will make a pleasant change from honey bees.

More detail is available on the back page.



## 2019 Christmas Quiz Answers.

1. The thorax.
  2. Yeasts, water. Temperature is a controlling factor.
  3. 200-250 cycles per second.
  4. Steve Horne
  5. Granulation is controlled by the amount of glucose in the honey. Oilseed rape has lots of it.
  6. Rosaceae. The family all have flowers with 5 petals.
  7. Flagellum, Scape.
  8. American.
  9. Blue/Black.
  10. Washing soda emulsifies propolis. It is useful for soaking a beesuit before washing, cleaning hive tools (I leave mine in a paint tin full of the stuff when not in use) and scrubbing smokers.
  11. Dandelions like open sunny positions. The flowers are likely to be attractive to the bees from sunlight striking the flowers and they remain open for about 5 hours.
  12. 12 to 20 days
  13. "honey" means the natural sweet substance produced by *Apis mellifera* bees from the nectar of plants or from secretions of living parts of plants or excretions of plant-sucking insects on the living parts of plants which the bees collect, transform by combining with specific substances of their own, deposit, dehydrate, store and leave in honeycombs to ripen and mature.
  14. 6.
  15. Invertase
  16. Dorothy Hodges.
  17. 11mm or, to use Christian units, 3/8 inch
  18. Greater than 8 mites per day. (see NBU document "Managing Varroa").
  19. One, just the Queen.
  20. And the answer from the OED is: "In allusion to the social character of the insect. (Originally US) .... A gathering or meeting for some object, esp. Spelling-Bee, a party assembled to compete in the spelling of words".
- Unfortunately, there is also reference to a Lynching-Bee, so if you don't mind I'll run along now.

## Exciting times

It looks as though the question of how to get water to the 'Bee Space' at the apiary may have been resolved. Wessex Water wanted a measly £3500 for connecting to the mains in Hermitage Road, which left us with the problem of laying an underground pipe across a field and Downslade Lane. Digging the trench would have cost a lot of money, and the field in question is a sensitive wildflower meadow.

Undeterred, our new chairman, Eric McLaughlin, engaged in some lateral thinking and in talking to Mike Brake, who farms the land to the south of the apiary, discovered that there is water in that field. It appears that the company who ran the quarry, before it became a landfill site, paid Mike Brake (sometimes) for the use of that water.

It is entirely possible that we can finalise a deal to pay for clean metered water from that source. What's more, we won't have to cross sensitive land, and the total distance needed to be trenched will be less than 50 metres. If it comes to fruition, it's all going to be a lot less expensive than previously envisaged.

## Tesco Bargain price honey

It's been all over the press, but just in case you missed it, Tesco have removed certain honeys from their shelves during an investigation into whether it is actually honey at all. It has been suggested that it is largely glucose syrup and colouring, although Tesco strongly contest this accusation.

Many people have wondered for a long time, how Tesco can purchase honey from a third party, and sell it for only £1.35 per lb (454g).



Incidentally, this self same 'honey' has scored most points in our Beekeeping Taster Day taste test - on more than one occasion, beating honey from our own members and other major suppliers.

Other supermarkets and mass suppliers are also under suspicion and being investigated by Trading Standards . **There was never a better time to be producing real honey.**

## Membership Renewal

All memberships are due or renewal by December 31<sup>st</sup>. If you are an associate member, or were on the Beginners' Course this year, and now have bees, you really should consider taking out full membership. There are numerous advantages, not least the insurances for public and product liability, which total a mind boggling £10 million.

Membership and Grant Aid forms are in a separate file, which is going out with this newsletter. If you are late in renewing your membership, it could result in your insurance policies lapsing. Should that happen, and you rejoin, it will take 6 weeks for the policies to be reinstated.

## Year of Naked Beekeeping Calendar 2020

Hi All you lovely Somerton Beekeepers - just a bit of Christmas fun that will make you smile and feel you are making a charitable donation to a very good beekeeping cause, for people generally very much less well off than ourselves. Take a look at this link to George's blogs about his charitable beekeeping support in Zanzibar <https://mrkhamiszebe.wordpress.com/home/blog/> and if the title of 'Buff Tailed Beekeepers Naked Beekeeping Calendar' inspires you then visit this link to purchase one [Year of Naked Beekeeping Calendar 2020](#). You will find that I have a spot in August!

Tweaked your interest - give at Christmas.

**Sandy Davies**



**Dates for your diary**

**Tree beekeeping**

**Jonathan Powell**  
The Natural beekeeping Trust  
Somerton Parish Rooms  
TA11 7NB

**Bumble and Solitary bees**

**Bridget Strawbridge**  
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