

The Newsletter



Vol no 28 Issue 11 December 2021 & January 2022

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



A Very Merry Christmas to all

We hope your bees are all stocked to the gunwales with stores, protected from vermin, and secured against winter storms - and just waiting for the new season. We're promised a long winter, so buckle up.

This newsletter is also being sent to our 68 potential new beekeepers who are (hopefully) chomping at the bit & just begging for the information overload, that is the Beginners' course.

Don't forget to try Roy White's Christmas Quiz on page 8

Somerton Beekeepers Association

AGM Meeting 18th November 21 – Somerton Parish Rooms @19.00

Present: Eric McLaughlin, Alison Clewes, Jackie Mosedale, Sarah Griffiths, Joe King, Sarah Kent, Fred Clarke, Suzy Perkins, Jack Barr, Caroline Dawson, Steve Horne, Alison Dykes, Keith Sturgess, Ian Forster, Clive Ball, Ray Pattemore, Peter Derbyshire, Jeffrey Wilson, David Rose, Susan Osborne, Maggie Seward, Eddie Howe, Peter White, Jeff Brewer, Catherine Fraser.

1. **Welcome** – given by Eric McLaughlin
2. **Apologies:** Stewart Gould, Nigel Gregory, Sally Worby
3. **Presidents Address** – Jackie Mosedale provided the address covering the events and problems of the past year. Jackie encouraged new members to become active in the association and thanked those who have helped over the past year. Jackie also remembered those the association has lost over the past twelve months. Certificates were presented to those who have succeeded in passing various modules: Stewart Gould, Catherine Fraser, Richard Longworth, Ray Pattemore, John Speirs, Sally Worby and Jackie was presented with her own certificate by Eric.
4. **Minutes from 2020 AGM** – these were proposed, seconded and accepted as correct by Jackie Mosedale and Catherine Fraser.
5. **Matter Arising** – None raised
6. **A one minute silence** was held for two members of the association who had died in the past year
David Charles
Tom Done
7. **Apiary Manager's Report** – Due to the ongoing covid situation a team of three have been managing the hives at the apiary (Eric McLaughlin, Joe

King & Nigel Gregory). The Beginner's Course was carried out in a covid compliant manner, which had some logistical issues but went well. It has been a poor honey year for many, as reflected in the number of jars ordered for members; two pallets as oppose to the six of last year. The hives in the apiary now have approx. 40lb of stores, the queen excluders have been removed and woodpecker netting and mouse-guards added. Winter checking will continue. There were no questions.

8. Treasurer's Report – Sarah Griffiths provided the financial report for the year. The association has ended the year with a surplus of £1.3k. The accounts have been checked by a senior accountant and certified as correct and sent to the County Treasurer.

Electric & water connections have been paid for.

The account balance for the club stands at £17080.39

Eric raised the issue of a possibility of an investment of a moderate sum in a low risk investment scheme. There then followed a discussion on ethical investments. Fred Clarke made clear that he was very much opposed to the investment proposal.

A question was raised on the apiary insurance and how much the excess is (confirmed as £250).

There was a suggestion to use some of the balance to build a wash room and to add a septic tank. Joe King asked Eric to remind members how much western Power had charged for electrical connection. This was confirmed at approx. £2400 with £1200-£1500 for the trenching. Joe also added the installation of a septic tank would cause significant issue with the planning dept.

A question was raised as to whether we had obtained planning permission for electric and water. It was confirmed this was not needed.

Suzy Perkins asked if would be possible to have some guest demos that members could attend.

Jeff Brewer also objected to investment proposals and also suggested that there is no clear plan for association money to be spent and he would like to see a spending plan.

A suggestion was made to sponsor a young bee keeper and there should be some tree planting. Eric mentioned that several trees have been

planted and we could plant more if there was appropriate space. A neighbour to the apiary (Terry Russell), has said he would be happy for trees to be planted on his land and Jackie suggested a source of trees from a project in Langport.

9. Membership Secretary Report – Alison Dykes provided a report on the membership of the association. Currently there are 266 members.

10. Chairman's Report – Eric provided the chairman's report. Covid has restricted a lot of activities this year but the Honey Show had been a great success for both participants, vendors and visitors. The association had been represented at the Stoke St Gregory Environment fair and had signed up six for the coming Beginner's Course.

It is hoped this year's beginner's course will be held at Glastonbury Rugby Club rather than via Zoom. This year most of the association's committee meetings have also been held via Zoom.

The water has now been connected and the Gould Suite now has a wash hand basin.

A stock take has been completed so there is now a comprehensive record of the kit owned. There have been several working parties and this has resulted in the buildings being repainted, hedges cut and the strimming remains to be done. For the coming year it is hoped to produce some nuclei from the hives for members to buy.

Eric went on to wish everyone well for Christmas and best wishes for 2022.

11. Nominations – Alison Dykes stepped down from the honey show committee and Bernie Perkins stepped down as the Asian Hornet Leader but Suzy Perkins will take over the Asian Hornet Lead role. It was proposed by Eric to re-elect the committee members by block vote unless there were any new nominations or objections. None were raised.

The re-election was proposed by Joe King and seconded by Ian Forster; carried by unanimous vote.

12. AOB – no issues were raised

Date of next AGM – 17th November 22 @ Somerton Parish Rooms.

Membership Renewals

Membership runs from January 1st - December 31st each year and renewals can be made before that. Membership forms and Gift Aid forms have been sent to all members.

BBKA have decided to increase their charges to, all full members, by £2.00 per annum and Somerset have increased their take for the first time in at least 13 years. It may be more than that but that is as far back as the membership secretary can go in the records. It was pointed out that the total increase amounts to no more than 2 cups of coffee in most coffee shops.

Don't delay in renewing as if your insurances are lapsed because of non renewal, it will take 6 weeks for them to kick back in again, once you renew.



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Five hives survive volcanic eruption

Thousands of bees survive 50 days buried at the edge of La Palma volcano.

The hives had been buried under a layer of ash since the La Palma volcano began erupting in September. The bees in the hives had managed to stay alive for 50 days despite being buried. The hives were located only 600 metres away from the centre of the volcano which first erupted on September 19.



Elías González, president of the Agrupación de Defensa Sanitaria (ADS) Apicultores de La Palma told Efe that from the original six hives belonging to the beekeeper five had been discovered intact. The bees from the five intact hives were rescued alive. The final hive's occupants died but González believes that they may have died "not because of the volcano, but because they were already weak."

Information supplied by Alison Clewes

Courtesy of Daily Mail

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

Keepers Kitchen, Ibis Hotel, Woodlands Court Business Park, Bridgwater

That's the next romantic meal sorted then! Burger and chips, with honey - and onion rings, of course. Mmmm! nice.



“OUR KEEPERS HOUSE HONEY IS HARVESTED FROM LOCAL HIVES BY BLACK BEE HONEY AND FEATURES IN OUR SIGNATURE DISHES AND OUR HONEY-INSPIRED COCKTAILS”

Superbly situated just off Junction 23 of the M5 in an excellent location to explore the South West of England, especially Bristol, Devon and Dorset. We offer free on site coach parking and delicious food and drink morning, noon and night.

Keepers Bridgwater is an all-day dining restaurant and bar offering British, international classics and Keeper's favourite dishes with our signature house honey. Eat drink and unwind, morning, noon and night, for breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and drink



Work parties at the apiary

As Eric reported at the AGM, most of the 'housework has been done at the apiary, but we will be calling on volunteers to undertake some strimming when the weather allows.



CHRISTMAS QUIZ 2021

1. What is the common name of *Vespa crabro* ?
2. What is the colour of the pollen of the garden (Spanish or hybrid) bluebell *Scilla sp.*? Not the wild English variety.
3. What is it that makes some honeys granulate quicker than others?
4. Do worker honeybees have spermatheca?
5. What are the cross-sectional dimensions of a Commercial brood chamber?
6. Who is the Chairman of Somerset Beekeepers?
7. Does pollen provide energy for the honeybee?
8. Acetic (ethanoic) acid is commonly used as a fumigant for brood frames. What strength is used?
9. What is the name of the middle bit of the body of the honeybee?
10. Name any year when Emile Warré lived. What is his name associated with?
11. Plants of the pea and bean family have a rather unusual nectar production facility. What is it?
12. How many frames can a National brood chamber accommodate?
13. Name three key identifiers for European Foul Brood disease that the beekeeper should be aware of.
14. What is the Dyce process?
15. Does the honeybee have arteries?
16. What is meant by a stale Queen?
17. How is propolis carried to the hive by the worker honeybee?
18. For how long should the winter varroa count be taken?
19. Roughly, how old are the worker honeybees that feed the brood?
20. (Children, parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces and siblings are banned from answering this question. However, you can ask the goldfish.)
Poo bear loved honey and also enjoyed playing Poo sticks. With whom did Poo play Poo sticks?

Answers on page 11 - no cheating

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

May 2022 be the year of milk and honey!



Roy White.



Beginners Course 2022

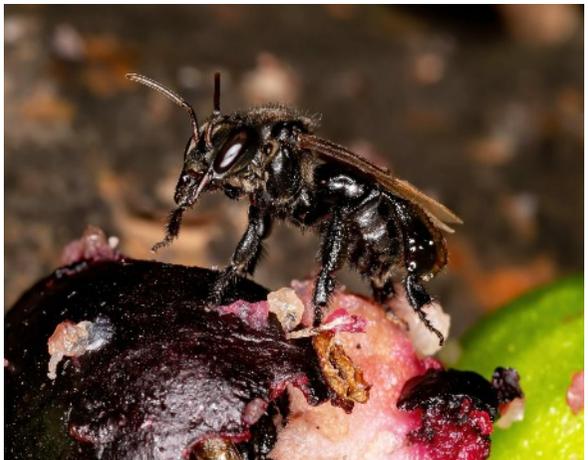
Last year we were unable to hold an 'in person' theory course because of COVID restrictions, and had to resort to Zoom, but thus far, it is looking good for January 2022, with Tor Rugby club, in Glastonbury, booked and **68 people having signed** up so far. The first session is on Wednesday January 19th, starting at 7.30pm (Omicron variant of COVID permitting). The course tutors this year will be Catherine Fraser, Joe King and Stewart Gould.

We've decide to put a cap of 70 participants on the course, and create a waiting list for any others. If people drop out, or fail to show, we'll let those on the waiting list fill the gaps.

The fee has been raised to £40.00 for the theory sessions and a further £30.00 for the practical sessions. Still good value, and about one fifth the cost of a local private enterprise which charges £347.00 for 3 Zoom sessions.

Vulture Bees

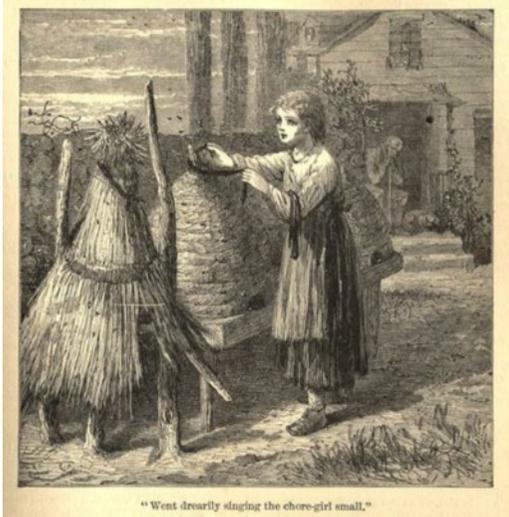
It might come as a surprise to many, but not all bees forage for nectar and pollen from flowers. Vulture bees, also known as carrion bees, are a small group of three closely related South American sting-less bee species in the genus *Trigona* which feed on rotting meat. Vulture bees produce a honey-like substance which is not derived from nectar, but rather from protein-rich secretions of the bees' hypopharyngeal glands. These secretions are likely derived from the bees' diet, carrion eaten outside the nest.[1] This unusual behaviour was only discovered in 1982, nearly two centuries after the bees were first classified.



Vulture bees, much like maggots, usually enter the carcass through the eyes. They will then root around inside gathering the meat suitable for their needs. The vulture bee salivates on the rotting flesh and then consumes it, storing the flesh in its crop. When it returns to the hive, this meat is regurgitated and processed by a worker bee, which then re-secretes the resulting proteins as a decay-resistant edible substance resembling honey.[1] These protein-rich secretions are then placed into pot-like containers within the hive until it is time to feed the immature bees. The secretions replace the role of pollen in the bees' diet, as vulture bees lack adaptations for carrying pollen and pollen stores are absent from their nests.

Telling the bees

In Celtic mythology, Honeybees were regarded as messengers between our world and the spirit realm and were associated with wisdom garnered from the otherworld. This folklore persisted through to Christian times, with folk tales in Scotland and England stating that bees would hum loudly at midnight on Christmas Day for the Saviour's birth. When the new Gregorian calendar was adopted in 1752, 11 days were removed and the fact that the bees could not be heard humming on the new Christmas Day was taken as a sign of God's displeasure at the changes!



For centuries, beekeepers across Europe have kept up this incredibly ancient tradition of honeybees being messengers through "telling the bees". This is where the beekeeper treated their bees as extended members of their own family and kept informed of any family news in the household. Beekeepers also needed to talk to the bees in calm voices and never use harsh words for fear of upsetting the bees. Marriages, new births and especially deaths were marked by decorating the hive and telling the bees what had happened.



CHRISTMAS QUIZ 2021 ANSWERS



1. The Hornet
2. Blue to slate.
3. Fast granulating honeys have much more glucose than others. The prime example in the UK is Rape.
4. Sort of. The workers have vestigial spermatheca which have no reproductive function.
5. In Christian units, 18 3/8 inches x 18 3/8 inches. Or 465 mm square.
6. Our one and only Stewart Gould.
7. No. Pollen provides protein.
8. Glacial grade; 80% acid, 20% water.
9. The thorax.
10. 1876-1951. The Top Bar Hive
11. They have stipules (extra floral nectaries) at the junctions of leaves and stem which provide nectar. If you look at the black bit in the middle of the stipule under a magnifying glass you will see the nectar.
12. 11. 12 can be squeezed into some, but it's unworkable.
13. a) Deformed/twisted larvae. b) Larvae have a "melted" consistency turning to a brown scale. c) Infected gut visible through the walls of the larva. d) Sunken brood cappings. e) Poor brood pattern.
- Know what healthy larvae look like. If in doubt get help!**
14. The Dyce process enables the consistent production of fine-grained set or soft set honey using a "seeding" technique. It was developed for use on an industrial scale but can be used in a simplified form by the amateur beekeeper in the kitchen.
15. No. The blood of the honeybee is held within the cavity of the abdomen, essentially bathing the organs within it.
16. She has passed the stage where she is able to mate, generally around 3 to 4 weeks.
17. Propolis is carried back to the hive on the hind legs of the foragers.
18. One to two weeks. A longer period is required than that used in the summer.
19. 3-10 days.
20. Christopher Robin, Tigger and Eeyore.



Dates for your diary

**2022 Beginners' Course
Tor Rugby Club
Lowerside Lane
Glastonbury BA6 9LD**

1st Session - Wed. Jan. 19th

2nd Session - Wed. Jan 26th

3rd Session - Wed. Feb. 2nd

4th Session - Wed. Feb 9th

5th Session - Wed. Feb. 16th

6th Session - Wed. 23rd.

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