



# Newsletter July 2023

Committee members:

Tina Harley (President), Lionel Horler (Chair), Ken Jeanes (Vice Chair), Mat Phillips (Treasurer), Anne Collyer (Secretary), Jane Jeanes (SBKA Delegate), Tony Johnstone (Events Secretary), Jeremy Lee (Apiary Manager), Guy Clothier, Dennis White and John Wood



Dennis collecting a swarm at Bayford

Welcome to our July Newsletter. It's been a busy month with yet more swarms to collect, honey to take off at the apiary plus apiary visits. It is also time to start preparing for honey shows and you will find details of the Bees and Honey section at the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show at the end of the newsletter and in the accompanying attachment to the covering email for this newsletter.

Thank you to Richard & Celia Brain, Jan Holley and Mat Phillips who have sent articles for the newsletter as well as our regular contributors – Lionel and Jeremy. If you would like to contribute or would like to see anything else in the newsletter then please let me know. All suggestions are very welcome!

As ever, if anyone needs more information or has a question to ask, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will put you in touch with someone who can help.

Anne Collyer, Divisional Secretary SESBKA

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## Beekeeping Insurance

Mat Phillips, Treasurer

After the local flooding in May, we thought that it might be useful to remind you about bee insurance.

As a member of the Beekeepers Association (BKA) you have public liability insurance, which covers injury to others (or damage to their property), up to £10m whilst undertaking beekeeping activities. However, the BKA no longer provides 'All Risks Insurance'. This was recently discontinued, so if you have a lot of equipment you would like to insure you need to arrange this yourself. The BKA recommends contacting the company Aston Lark, but this advice may be out of date - our own SESBKA apiary is insured by the NFU. This type of cover is likely to start at £140 per annum. Further information is provided under BBKA documents at <https://bbkanews.com/issues> and you will need your membership number to login.

As an active member it is probable that you will have taken out bee disease insurance (BDI) according to the number of hives you have (£2 for 1-3, £3.20 for 4-5, £6.70 for 6-10, £9.75 for 11-15 and £11.50 for 16-20 hives). As a branch

we collect this money and transfer it to BDI on your behalf, so you are covered as individual members so long as you have paid for the year. This policy offers insurance only against the loss of beekeeping equipment to beekeepers in England and Wales who have had their bees destroyed or treated by the Bee Inspector as a result of being infected by a notifiable disease, either European Foul Brood (EFB) and American Foul Brood (AFB).

### **Making a claim against your BDI policy.**

If you suspect your bees are infected by a notifiable disease, contact your local bee inspector who will inspect your bees and confirm the presence or absence of the symptoms of a notifiable disease. Details of your local inspector can be found by entering your postcode in the search facility on the [National Bee Unit's website](https://www.nationalbeeunit.com). Further information is provided at <https://www.beediseasesinsurance.co.uk/about-1/learn-more>

## Lionel's July Bee Notes

For further information please contact Lionel: email [lhorer934@talktalk.net](mailto:lhorer934@talktalk.net)

Swarm after swarm, I have spent hours collecting and housing swarms. I hope the worst is over. There have been many reports this season of apparently queenless colonies, colonies with young queens swarming, new queens emerging and maybe getting mated and then not producing eggs for up to four or five weeks or more. I have tried to think why this might occur. Perhaps due to this hot weather, last year and this, the queens go on their mating flights but because of the high temperatures, return to the nest after perhaps only mating with one or two drones, and then do the same the next day and then give up. She eventually starts laying but with only a part filled spermatheca she can only fertilize a small number of eggs so she will soon run out of egg laying capacity and a new queen will be needed to head the colony. This is the way my mind wanders when I try to fathom the mysteries of bee keeping.

I did not get many volunteers to take part in the EFB/swarm survey so I still have three packets of testing gear, if anyone could take one it would be good.

The nucs from Hook Valley are being distributed so if you asked for one, please get in touch. There may be one or two available to other members once the beginners have had theirs. There is a charge of just £60 per nuc for members.

We have had some good apiary meetings since the last newsletter and the next is the bee safari on July 15th. We will visit three apiaries and be guided through the colonies by Geoff Blay who will show us how to find the queen and how to lift heavy supers without straining your back. This might be a bit late for me! See you there.



*June's Apiary visit to Adam Morka*

## Top Hive Adventure

*Richard Brain*

I wanted to continue keeping bees but without the heavy lifting involved when dealing with frames full of honey. My idea was to use conventional frames (which I already had) rather than the triangular shaped ones normally found in top bar hives. Lionel kindly gave me a nucleus of bees which unfortunately failed and so never proceeded to the new hive. However, a large swarm appeared and took up residence in the nuc box! Having left them for two weeks I was able to choose a suitable day weather wise and attempt to transfer them. As the bees were on deep brood frames, I had to shake them into the new hive and then cut off about two and a half inches from the bottom of each frame. Having completed that job, I shut the hive and hoped for the best!

After three weeks I again chose a suitable day, opened the hive and found they had built up into a very strong hive of bees. I gave them extra brood frames to expand and shut the hive again. Fortunately, they are just about the best tempered bees I have ever encountered.

The one modification that needs to be made is to change the bee gap and this will be done on the next inspection



# 2023 Programme Update

Tony Johnstone, Events Secretary [tmj67@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tmj67@hotmail.co.uk) Tel: 07973341557

Please find below the July programme update. **Please note** that the August apiary meeting has a change of location.

July is our Safari month and the day's full itinerary and directions are attached

## **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July Commencing @ 10.00am. The SESBKA Annual Safari**

Geoff Blay has kindly agreed to facilitate our event which is planned to start at our own apiary at **Hook Valley** followed by a visit to James Butt's apiary in **Milborne Wick** where we can enjoy our picnic lunches. Simon a local resident former gamekeeper and conservationist has promised to give us a talk on his work. Finally, to the **Lattiford Estate**, home of both John Wood and Brian Magor. Brenda Wood has kindly offered to serve tea and cakes. I would be grateful if you could let me know if you are planning to attend, half or all day, to assist Brenda with catering.

**Please see attached itinerary and directions on page 4.**

## **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> August @ 2.30pm An Apiary Visit to Pippa & Kevin Shillington's Apiary**

**Quarr Farm-** Full directions to follow

Pippa and Kevin are long standing beekeepers who have a selection of different hives- Top Bar, Warres, & Skep as well as Nationals. Their theme will be "Alternative Ways of Beekeeping" which will be really interesting and informative.

## **Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> August. 12.00pm to 6.00pm (Set-up 11.00am) Fun-In-The-Field, Fairfields, Castle Cary**

A fun day for all the family, organised by local organisations and charities, to raise funds for the benefit of local charities, including ourselves.

This is the third very successful event where again we can take our gazebo, and fulfil our obligation to promote beekeeping, and also, sell our honey.

**Two teams of volunteers needed please.** One to set up and one to pack-up. Please contact me.

## **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September @ 7.00pm "Our Honey Show" Refresher Day**

**At The Market House Castle Cary**

**A Practical Beeswax Session with Bridget Knutson.**

For beginners and less experienced beekeepers entering the honey show may be intimidating, so our aim is to offer support to everybody. We want as many entries as possible and fill up the Market House. The Division will provide beeswax so that you can make your own cosmetics, polishes and flowers. We all had fun making these during the two sessions with Bridget so now let's do the real thing!

We will also talk about preparing honey for honey shows.

## **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October**

**At The Market House Castle Cary The SESBKA Honey Show**

With set-up on Friday 13<sup>th</sup>

**Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November @ 7.00pm** At The Market House Castle Cary The SESBKA Annual General Meeting

# Southeast Somerset Beekeepers Association

## 2023 Annual Safari Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July

### Itinerary & Directions

Many thanks to Geoff Blay giving up his time to offer us the benefit of his experience. He plans to demonstrate beekeeping techniques, queen marking and clipping as well as colony inspections.

**Please bring bee suits- Lionel will have suits available for those without.**

**Please bring your own refreshments and picnic lunch**

#### **FIRST VISIT @ 10.00am**

##### **SESBKA Apiary, Hook Valley, Wincanton.**

What 3 Words location- **grand.sending.scarecrow**

**Located on the A371, 1/3 miles on the left from the Holbrook roundabout**

**Or ½ mile on the right from the Bratton Seymour crossroads.**

Please arrive early and park in the main carpark and walk to the apiary. The gate will be manned should there be late arrivals. Jeremy Lee will give us a short talk explaining how we have developed and managed the apiary during the last year, plans for the future and what support he would like from members.

#### **SECOND VISIT.**

##### **James Butt's Apiary in Milborne Wick.**

What 3 Words location- **stem.joints.registers**

On leaving Hook Valley turn right onto the A371 then A357 to Lattiford. Turn right on to B3145 into Charlton Horethorne. Bear left just past the church SP Milborne Port. In 1/3mile bear right, no SP. Keep straight on through village and follow signs.

This is a highly interesting and innovative apiary. Following our visit James' friend Simon, a former gamekeeper and conservationist, has kindly offered to accommodate us for our lunchtime picnic and will give us a talk on his work.

#### **THIRD VISIT.**

##### **The Lattiford Estate, Lattiford and the Apiaries of John Wood and Brian Magor.**

What 3 Words location- **blackmail.pile.value.**

Travel back to Lattiford via Charlton Horethorne on the B3145 and A357 towards Wincanton. Turn left opposite the Shell Garage for 1/3 mile and left into the estate. Carparking will be signposted.

Following our inspection Brenda Wood has kindly offered to provide us with tea and cakes during which we can have a general discussion on the whole day.

### Top Tip from Jan Holley

Dennis White, our bee guru/friend was visiting this week and we were shopping supplies etc and enjoying a catch up. I mentioned I had a problem re my rubber gauntlets as they had a hole and I didn't know how to repair it. (Impossible to replace as new ones have for some reason gone up half a size) The solution is a bicycle repair kit, perfect - job done! I'd never have thought of that one, thank you Dennis. We were chatting about cut comb and I was wondering if beginners knew about it as an inspiration to continue if their first seems unlikely to yield much. I hasten to add that will probably be us this year! Just a thought! Stay cool, Jan

# News from the Apiary

*Jeremy Lee, Apiary Manager*

It's certainly turning out to be a funny year. I have never seen such a vibrant floral display once spring finally got going. The Hawthorne was extraordinary and all the hedgerows were full of life. My roses have never been 'bolder' and indeed last week the floral display from the Rambling Rector rose that grows in my Yew tree made it look like it a snowy alpine peak!!

The bees have also reacted to nature's way of catching up after such a long, cold wet winter and have done likewise. The splits we made up a month ago are bursting at their seams and hopefully will all have new homes by the end of this week. In turn, some of the colonies that we split also decided to swarm and problems have arisen with newly mated virgins having nowhere to lay. There was such an abundance of pollen and nectar that in the time the colonies were briefly bloodless the bees have backfilled everything with honey and nectar. We decided to put an extra brood box on Brian's peppermint green honey machine which the little darlings completely filled with honey and capped the whole lot thus firmly trapping her ladyship in the bottom box. Luckily Ken came to the rescue and we gingerly spun some of the brood frames out to give some laying space.

The plus side is that the lovely warm dry weather provided the perfect mating weather for new queens and we have had roughly 90% success rate in virgins returning and laying successfully. Rather 'hot' fun was had when we inspected some of the nuc boxes with newcomers and spun some honey off - 60 jars of which have been sold to our landlords. I say hot fun - it was roasting and I thought poor Lionel looked about ready to drop in his bee suit and magnificent whiskers. Ken also worried us when decided to go AWOL on his way home.

The job of trying to standardise the various hives onto standard nationals now begins as we have (gladly) inherited some differing formats, 14 by 12's, Langstroth, WBC, standard and Hoffman frames. It has now become more apparent than ever that having all the bees on the same brood frames is far more powerful a tool as you can easily 'Rob from Peter the give to Paul' in terms of transferring eggs and brood from stronger to weaker/failing hives. In terms of this, I would be very grateful for volunteers to make up some frames and foundation and indeed clean up some of the older boxes with fresh foundation - which we will supply.

*If you can offer any help at the apiary at any time then please contact Jeremy at [jgwlee@me.com](mailto:jgwlee@me.com) or via the WhatsApp group*

## Honey Yogurt Cheesecake

*A BBC Good Food Recipe*



Ingredients:  
100g ginger biscuits  
85g toasted, flaked almonds  
85g butter, melted  
250ml Greek yogurt  
750g mascarpone  
2 eggs  
zest 1 lemon and 1 orange  
250ml honey



Method:

1. Heat oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3. Crush the biscuits and most of the almonds inside a plastic food bag using a rolling pin. Mix with the butter, then press into the bottom of a deep, oval, 23cm dish (or something similar in size – a roasting tin, baking dish or cake tin will work). Bake for 10 mins until crisp.
2. Stir or mash together the yogurt and mascarpone, then whisk in the eggs, one at a time. Stir in the lemon and orange zests, then stir in most of the honey, reserving about 3 tbsp. Spread over the biscuit base, cover loosely with foil and cook for 1 hr. Remove the foil and cook for 15 mins more until lightly golden and the top is firm with just the slightest wobble in the middle. Leave to cool. Can be kept in the fridge for up to 2 days.
3. To serve, scatter with almonds, drizzle over the remaining honey.



The Gillingham & Shaftesbury Show Organisers are pleased to say that after quite a period of absence the return of Bees and Honey to the Showground in 2022 proved popular with both enthusiasts and the general public. The honey show in 2022 attracted sufficient entries of a high enough quality to allow the national judge to award a 'blue ribband' which entitles qualifying entries to be entered into the National Honey Show in London in the autumn, and they hope that 2023 can repeat this success. The section also made great steps in educating the public to the vast array of products that bees can provide as well as their importance to the community.

Entries can be made directly via their website [www.gillinghamandshaftesburyshow.co.uk](http://www.gillinghamandshaftesburyshow.co.uk) or via the paper form included in the schedule, sent to the Show Office with accompanying payment.

*Editor's Note: the schedule is attached separately- please refer to covering email.*

## BBKA Update

From: Diane Drinkwater BBKA Chair

We have received the following information from the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA):

Please be aware <https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/> was updated 28<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

On Thursday 22nd June a small primary nest of Asian hornets was reported to the NBU. A National Bee Unit Inspector investigated the report and collected samples which have been sent for analysis by scientists. Traps have been set for hornets returning to the nest site, and follow up activities will take place to raise awareness.

This is the earliest date in the season that a nest has ever been found in Great Britain. Nests have previously been reported in the autumn, when insects are more visible as the population of the nest increases to its maximum.



Please report sightings of *Vespa velutina* using the 'Asian hornet Watch' app for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#), or the online reporting form.

[https://risc.brc.ac.uk/alert.php?species=asian\\_hornet](https://risc.brc.ac.uk/alert.php?species=asian_hornet)

Photo credit: Desmond Lee

The full article is available here: <https://www.nationalbeeunit.com/about-us/beekeeping-news/asian-hornet-nest-destruction-near-dover-kent/>