

# The Newsletter

**Celebrating the official opening of  
Our apiary**

**Somerton**  
& District Beekeepers' Association



**Volume no 25 Issue 5 June 2018**

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



## **Swarm season**

After a cold and slow start the swarming season kicked off with a vengeance, but it has been patchy. Some areas have had lots, but in the Somerton area there have been relatively few.

It is not unknown, for various reasons, for a swarm to come out of the hive, settle somewhere and then go back into the hive. The most likely scenario is

that a queen has failed to fly with the swarm, because the beekeeper has clipped her wings, but on 2 occasions in the last couple of weeks, I have heard of swarms doing this. What's more, I observed another 2, which I know for sure, did not have clipped queens. Talking to Lynne Ingram (a Master Beekeeper) we couldn't come up with a likely reason. Answers on a postcard please.

## Behind the Scenes

Mr Kipling is said to make exceedingly good cakes but this person does even better. She provides meals for many individuals at our Honey Show and refreshments at our meetings. She works tirelessly behind the scenes as a committee member and is also the County Membership Secretary. She has helped many of our members with their bee problems, even supplying them with bees when losses have occurred. This person is, without doubt, one of the quieter and hardest working members of our association. Nothing seems to phase her and her smile is contagious. Many of our members are very grateful for the help she has given them over the years.

So, thank you Alison Dykes for your commitment to ensuring our association runs as successfully as it does. This also includes trying to address, by example, the dress sense of most of our committee!

**Fred Clarke**  
chairman



## Meg Seymour's Bee Safari Sunday June 17th

Last year Meg Seymour ran a very successful Bee Safari for us in the south west of our Divisional Area. It was a great day out and but had to be in the working week , we selected the General Election Polling Day and it proved to be a wonderful antidote to the frenetic activity of politics.

What is a Bee Safari? The idea is that a number of members make their hives available for Meg to inspect and to talk about what she finds Typically she finds a wealth of material to talk about and her suggestions can be very helpful to the beekeeper themselves and all



the other beekeepers that attend. We move around a circuit of, let's say, five apiaries during the course of the day. Last year the Safari had to be held in the working week but this year it will be held on a Sunday to make it more accessible to all of us. It is possible to come for all or part of the day, and the suggestion is that participants bring a packed lunch although liquid, tea/coffee, refreshments will be available during the day.

Would you and your bees like to participate? Please contact me as soon as possible to volunteer your bees. Obviously it is helpful if the apiaries are fairly close together to avoid excessive travelling. The hope is that this year the Safari will be centred on the Glastonbury/Street axis.

I look forward to hearing from you.

**Joe King**

Tel 01749 890357

## **Making the most of £6.00 a year.**

Each year we all pay our annual subscription to the B.B.K.A. Most of this money then passes on to either the national or county level and is used for important functions such as providing insurance cover for us in the event of an accident and very good value it is.

However a princely £6.00 per member does stay with us at Divisional level to enable us to run the Division and provide you with a local programme of events and services. Fortunately we are able to provide a wide range of services mainly because we have a considerable pool of expertise and enthusiasm to call on from members, who all give their time for free.

What are we able to provide? Firstly each month we provide an entertaining newsletter, which keeps us up to date with the programme, it carries topical issues, items of interest, some useful adverts and gives you the opportunity to advertise any items of equipment that you would like to dispose of. The editor is always happy to consider articles that you would like to put forward for inclusion.

We run an extensive library of beekeeping titles both current and historical for you to use. Just contact our librarian, Sarah Kent, to arrange access.

Throughout the autumn, winter, and early spring months we provide a free monthly evening lecture by nationally recognised speakers on beekeeping topics. These are usually well attended. A good example this spring was Ged Marshall's talk on swarm control with nearly sixty members present.

Our Honey Show team provide us with an excellent day out, complete with its market, in September at Long Sutton Village Hall. There are no entry fees. They also provide helpful training sessions in the run up to the Show to help you with some useful tips on how to do well with your exhibits.

During the main summer season we provide a monthly beekeeping event such as a visit to Buckfast Abbey and Meg Seymour's " Bee Safari". Because European Foul Brood has been present locally in the last few years we tend to organise fewer members' Apiary Visits at the moment, but these very popular and often delicious events will be back in full force once the disease risk has become less acute.

If you fancy extending your beekeeping knowledge we have an active study group that meets each month working on the BBKA exam modules, and congratulations to Stewart Gould and Fred Clarke on recently passing Module 2 not just with a pass but with a "credit" each. Well done.

Each year our queen rearing guru, Roy White, runs a successful queen rearing course for us. Our new apiary storage space allows us to buy in equipment items such as honey jars and lids in bulk thereby getting them at a rate that individual members can't do. The jars are then sold on to members at this reduced rate. We provide the more expensive equipment such as extracting equipment and settling tanks for you to hire at a nominal charge, and so the list of what we do runs on.

Occasionally we have experienced members tell us that we do a lot for "Beginners" but less for them. It is of course the income from the Beginners' Course that allows us to do so much. Although our Beginners' course is considerably cheaper than many others it does give us the income to provide so much for all our members new and experienced.

If you have new programme suggestions that you would like to see taken up by the Division we are always pleased to hear from you, and if you know of any organisation that gives better value for a £6.00 subscription do let us know too.

***Joe King***

Programme Secretary.

Tel 01749 890357

A new beekeeper locally is hoping to keep bees in a Warré hive. If any of our members have bees in a Warré hive at the moment I would be very grateful if they could contact me to give a few tips to the new beekeeper.

Many thanks,

***Joe King***

01749 890357



## Buckfast Abbey

In Brother Adam's day it was very difficult to arrange a visit to the bees at Buckfast Abbey, for several reasons. On one occasion a bus load of Somerton members arrived to be told that they had come on the wrong day. Brother Adam had confused the dates, and they were all told to go away.

Brother Adam has long since shed his mortal coil and the bees are now looked after by Clare Densley. It is no longer a queen rearing establishment, and they don't sell Buckfast queens either. Any queen bearing the name is the result of selective breeding in line with Brother Adam's ideas, but as he kept his breeding hives in isolation, he relied on a very small gene bank.

Clare runs the apiaries at Buckfast as an educational resource, where she holds surgeries for those with problems, a bee club for new beekeepers and invites beekeepers to visit so that she can show her ideas on how it should be done, but it is very low key. We have visited Buckfast on 2 previous occasions and they have been well attended, and much appreciated. Joe has arranged another trip on Sunday July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Timings and the amount of the small charge which Clare will ask have not been decided yet, but we will let you know as soon as possible. It was £5.00 each last time. We will make our own way there and car sharing is a good idea. If you are interested, please contact Joe King on 01749 890357

**Mike's Bee Supplies**

Please call before you visit  
T: 01278 445158

E: [mikes-bees@windytor.myzen.co.uk](mailto:mikes-bees@windytor.myzen.co.uk)  
[www.mikes-beesupplies.co.uk](http://www.mikes-beesupplies.co.uk)

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## Bee of the month

It may be the time for swarming, but it is also the time when the final blue tits leave their cosy nest boxes for the wilder world. This leaves an opportunity for one of Britain's newest bee species - the tree bumble bee. It arrived about ten years ago from continental Europe and has spread like wildfire, now covering most of England.



Unlike many species, it attempts two generations per year, and this is where recently vacated bird boxes fit. What could be better than a small box lined with moss - furnished accommodation. The first queens emerge in March and workers are on the wing in May.

Notorious for its strong defence traits, this is not a bee to interfere with.

**Apiinvert.** A syrup ready to feed bees. Unlike sugar solution it requires no mixing, more readily accepted by the bees, less work required for the bees to invert (not wasting energy), more close to a natural food.

**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 answer 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.

**Apiinvert.** 1 - 4 boxes @ 16 Kg £23 each, 5 + boxes £22 each

**Apifonda.** 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

## Upcoming Events

The Buckfast Abbey visit and Meg Seymour's Bee Safari have already been mentioned but Joe King has not been idle. He has some more tricks up his sleeve. On Thursday July 26th at 7.30pm we have some previous winners of the major prizes at our Honey Show, showing how to win prizes. That will be at Somerton Parish Rooms. Top tips from the experts. So grab some top tips from the experts.

On Saturday July 28<sup>th</sup>, at the divisional apiary, there will be a candle making workshop. The time is still to be confirmed.

On Thursday September 13th at 7.30pm Marin Anastasov will be talking at the Parish Rooms about Comb Change and wax recovery.

Going into October we have Skep beekeeping with Chris Park and on November 15th 7.30pm, it is the Somerton BKA Divisional AGM.

## Bath & West Show

Somerton Division were well represented on the Somerset stand at the Bath & West Show again. In fact, without them there wouldn't really be a Somerset stand. It was notable that several divisions didn't field a single volunteer.

Although the general number of visitors to the Show seems to be down, interest in beekeeping was up.



Jackie Mosedale and Sally Lye, seen here, were standing by Buckingham Palace, which drew a lot of attention. Heaven knows who the chap in the background is.



**Dates for your diary**

**Beginners' Practical Course  
third Session**

**Saturday June 9<sup>th</sup> - 10.00 am**  
**Divisional Apiary**  
Downslade Lane, Upton

**Bee Safari**

With Meg Seymour  
Seasonal Bee Inspector  
Glastonbury/Street area.  
Sunday June 17<sup>th</sup>

**Preparing entries for the Honey Show**  
**Somerton Parish Rooms**  
**TA11 7NB**

Thursday July 26<sup>th</sup>  
7.30 pm

**Candle making Workshop**

Saturday July 28<sup>th</sup>  
At the Apiary  
Time to be confirmed

**Buckfast Abbey**

A visit to the World famous apiary  
Sunday July 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Time to be confirmed

**Wax Recovery and Exchange**  
**Marin Anastasov**

Thursday September 13<sup>th</sup> - 7.30pm  
Somerton Parish Rooms

**Somerton Divisional Honey Show**

**Saturday September 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
**1.00 - 5.0 pm**  
**Long Sutton Village Hall**  
**Martock Road**  
**Long Sutton**  
**TA10 9NT**

**Somerton BKA AGM**  
**Thursday November 15<sup>th</sup>**

**President**

Jackie Mosedale  
01458 241146

**Chairman**

Fred Clarke  
01278 722830

**Vice Chairman**

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jandemclaughlin@gmail.com  
01823 698204

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01458 241146  
*jackiemosedale@gmail.com*

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Sarah Kent  
01749 670423

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Fred Clarke

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**Deputy Delegates**

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Sally Lye  
Sarah North  
Keith Sturgess

**Apiary Manager**

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01935 824711

**Extraction Equipment Loan**

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01458 241831