

The Newsletter



Volume no 28 Issue 5 June 2021

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



It's not all about honeybees

Not the best picture I've ever taken, but apart from swarms, swarms, swarms the unexpected burst of hot weather over the May Bank Holiday brought an astronomic hatch of Red Mason Bees which had been held back by the preceding cold and wet weather during the rest of the month.

Apart from solitary bees, there was a sudden upsurge in swarming and many colonies which were kept in check by the dire Spring, suddenly burst into life. A lot of those which had swarmed earlier ended up with unmated queens. The bees at the apiary fell victim to this and the team have had to employ some slightly unusual tactics to get things back on the straight and narrow.

Practical beekeeping sessions



The sessions got off to a troubled start this year with temperatures on our first date at only 14°C. We did, however, manage to open 4 hives for the 32 attendees.

The second session on June 5th is also beset by problems as a lot of the hives decided to make swarm preparations meaning that splits had to be carried out, leaving most hives in no condition to be used to demonstrate to new beekeepers. The team have switched to a practical session involving frame making, artificial swarms, and hive building. Hopefully this weird and wonderful season will

take a turn for the better and we can resume normal service at the session on June 19th.

Apologies too for the incorrect dates given in last month's newsletter. No dates have, as yet been fixed after June 19th but we promise to give as full a practical course as the COVID situation and the weather permit.

For Sale

Serrated Uncapping Knife £15, Uncapping Forks £4, Standard Hive tool £4, J Hive tool, flat with frame lifter £4, National brood and super foundation .

Contact Eddie Howe **01458 272114 or 07812 738793**

For sale

2 Langstroth hives complete with roof, crown-board, 3 supers, queen excluder, brood box and floor. Frames not included. £125 each .

Contact Stewart Gould on **01749 860755 or 07739 345271**

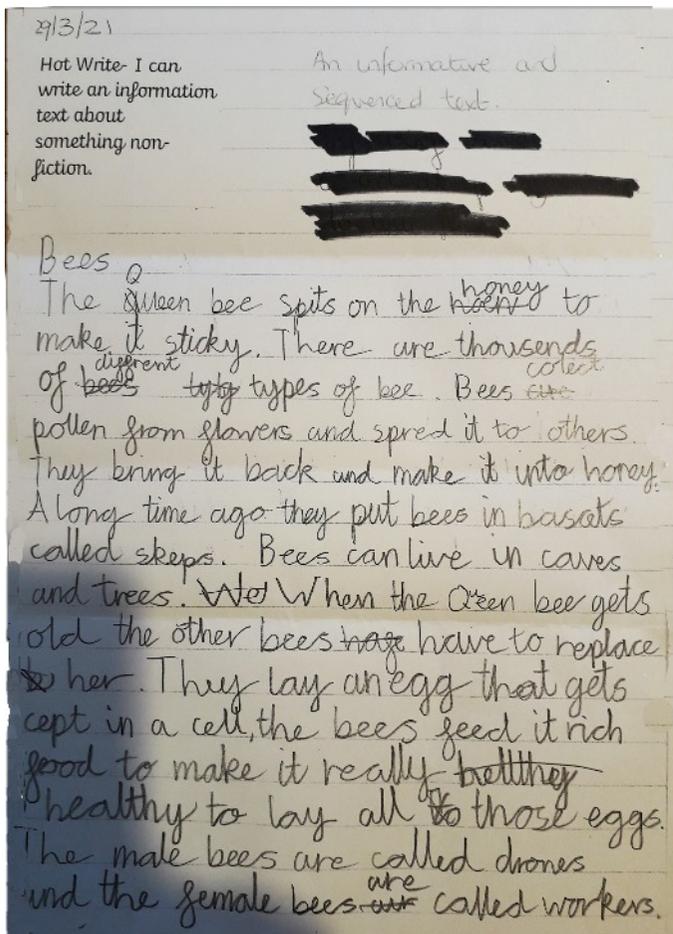
Bees and their place in creative writing for six year olds.

Before Covid came along and changed our world, we often used to get invitations from local schools to go into the school with an observation hive, and give a talk on bees and beekeeping.

All this stopped when COVID came along. I was therefore intrigued to receive a request from a local school to have a zoom type meeting with them on the internet, as part of their creative writing project to stimulate the children's

interest and give them a new and interesting topic to write on.

I duly met the class remotely, most of them were six or seven years old, and we talked generally about bees, honey, and hives for ten minutes before they set about their essays. I received a phone call from a school governor that evening saying that she had just received a call from a parent saying that their child had come home from school excitedly talking about bees and this had continued until bedtime!



The results were a great success, and I have permission to share an example of their work below. The only condition is that it remains anonymised.

Joe King

Mikes Bee Supplies

Click & Collect
www.mikes-bee-supplies.com
 E: mikes-bees@outlook.com
 T: 01278 445158

Foundation

Hives

Suits

Jars

And more!

Bakers Fondant
12.5kg

We take Cash or Card (no cheques)







Find us at
 72 Wembdon Hill
 Wembdon
 Bridgwater
 Somerset.
 TA6 7PZ

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.

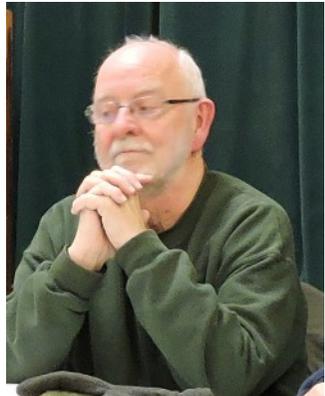
Foundation. National brood and super, 14 x 12 brood available

Eddie Howe email:- redrascal444@gmail.com Mobile 07812 738793

Tel. 01458 272114

Thoughts from the Chair

It has been an unusual spring with a cold April and a wet May. It seems that the spring has been two or three weeks later than normal. This is likely to have impacted on our bees with some swarming delayed and the likely survival rate of wild swarms impacted. The mating of virgin queens will also be at risk because of weather conditions. Some may not have been able to leave the hive in time to mate, some may not have mated properly and some may have been lost on their mating flight.



Because of the weather, inspections at the apiary have not been as regular as we, and good practice, would have wished. Some swarms have undoubtedly been lost. However, we have been able to make up some nuclei so all is not lost.

The beginners who have started the practical course will soon be looking to source bees and this may be an opportunity for members to make up nuclei to meet the demand.

Two of our members will be taking the BBKA basic assessment in June and we wish them well. I would encourage all of our members to consider sitting the basic. It makes one look at practice and thinking, sharpening the way we deal with the bees. It is a practical assessment taking about an hour and can be held at the beekeeper's apiary or our divisional one at Upton.

Eric McLaughlin

Drunken Australian bees

Intoxicated bees are falling from the skies around Parliament House in Canberra. A number of the boozy insects have been spotted staggering around after drinking themselves stupid on fermented nectar. As Australian Parliament's head beekeeper Cormac Farrell explained, the phenomenon is likely a result of sunny days and rising temperatures. Drunken bees are kept out of the hive to stop the honey from fermenting.

Katie Tobin - Melbourne correspondent

What's in your shed?



Every garden centre in the UK has an array of chemicals designed to help us keep our gardens tidy and blooming with the minimum effort – ‘bug’ sprays, weed killers, slug pellets and so on. You have seen them all on the shelves for sale and maybe have them in your garden shed as well. So it came as a surprise to me to learn recently that these products have been banned in France for use by non-professionals since January 1st 2019. This means that not only are they no longer legally sold, but the individual gardener is not even allowed to use or have in his, or her, possession any of these products – whenever they were purchased. A system for safely disposing of them was set up once the ban was introduced. However, any gardener can use products that are permitted in organic agriculture. One example is glyphosate, one of the best-known ingredients of weedkiller – to be found in Roundup and Weedol. This has been in the news in America because of its carcinogenic properties. No wonder some are questioning its impact, when you read that from 1974 to 2014, its use has gone up 100 fold – and not just in America. It is estimated that, on average, 0.5kg of glyphosate is sprayed per hectare worldwide. The ban in France on all these products was brought in for the sake of the general public's health – amateurs handling chemicals irresponsibly and being a danger to themselves. Glyphosate products are still permitted for agriculture in France until the end of 2022, when the EU hopes to eliminate them in all member countries. So far, we have only mentioned the harm that pesticides can do to human health.

As beekeepers, we are more aware than most of the impact on insect populations. A groundbreaking study published in October 2017 found that flying insects in 63 protected areas in Germany had declined by 75 percent in just 25 years. The situation in the UK is similar. Most researchers say the likely primary

drivers of most insect population declines so far are habitat loss/degradation and pesticide use — not climate change. We beekeepers focus on the honey bee, but we are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the wider insect population for the health of our ecosystems. The consequences of a planet without insects would most definitely be a catastrophe for human health in the long term! So what are we going to do here in the UK now that we have left the EU?

- Mirror the existing EU system and all its regulations and standards
- Slash regulations and weaken our current standards
- Go further than the EU and raise standards

The first option is undoubtedly just a minimum. After all, we still need/want to trade agricultural products with the EU. Higher environmental standards better – France seems to think so! Ultimately, it will be the UK government that decides, but we can try to influence that decision. We can also do our bit: we can stop using pesticides and weed killers in our gardens and try to persuade our neighbours to do the same. We don't need government permission to leave harmful products on the shelf. After all, for most of us, gardens are a hobby – our livelihoods do not depend on what we grow. But we can still produce food! Bon appétit!

Hazel Sutcliffe - Cheshire BKA courtesy of Ebees

Compulsory reporting of varroa mites

It wasn't well publicised but now most beekeepers have heard that it is now compulsory to report varroa in your hives. This is for all beekeepers not just

My Apiaries

+ Add new apiary

Current apiaries

Apiary Id.	Name & Address	Location	Apiary density within 1000m	Known risk	Asian Hornet monitoring	Status	Last NBU inspection	Options
73576	Folly (Home)	Somerset ST627362	150	None within 3km in last 3 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Installed 05/07/2018 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monitoring traps: Yes	VSA: No ESA: No Shared apiary: No Varroa present: Yes Current apiary: Yes (Make apiary non-current.) No. of Colonies: 0	08/08/2008	Edit apiary View history

those who feel like it or have registered their hives on Beebase. At present there is no way to comply with the law other than registering with Beebase. Despite being mentioned in the latest BBKA News and this newsletter last month, there is still confusion.

The picture on the previous page is my record showing that I have varroa in my hives, but who hasn't? See below for explanation.

Amendments to the Bee Diseases and Pests Control (England) Order 2006, the Bees Diseases and Pest Control (Scotland) Order 2007 and the Bee Diseases and Pests Control (Wales) Order 2006 come into force on the 21st of April 2021 requiring all beekeepers and/or officials in GB to report the presence of Varroa in any of the hives that they manage. This amendment will allow Great Britain to comply with the Animal Health Law which is necessary for future working relationships with the European Union.

To make this simple, a tick box will be introduced to BeeBase, the voluntary register for beekeepers managed by the National Bee Unit. This will be the easiest way to report Varroa but an alternative mechanism will be provided for those who do not wish to register on the BeeBase system. Details of this alternative system will be provided after 21st April.

Although Varroa is known to be widespread, it continues to be one of the most serious pests faced by beekeepers. Reporting Varroa will contribute to the overall pest and disease surveillance work of the National Bee Unit and the Scottish Bee Health Inspectorate. We are grateful for your assistance with this new simple measure.

Stewart Gould

Nucleus colonies and swarms

New beekeepers have been a bit thwarted this year as swarms were late getting started and as reported by Eric McLaughlin in his 'Thoughts from the Chair', they often left behind virgin queens that had trouble mating. However, there are some nucleus colonies available and a couple of swarms waiting in the wings, to be allocated to those who have given their details to Joe King.

If you would like to take advantage of these opportunities, contact Joe on 01749 890357, or by email at jk.pilton@btinternet.com. Remember that

swarms are relatively free, in as much as you will definitely be asked to return the hive/box they came in, and you may be asked to replace the frames and foundation that they are on.

I always tell people not to make up the frames, as new beekeepers seem not to have grasped the way that they should be pinned together. EH Thorne have good videos on how to do it but I disagree with a couple of things. I would use a smaller hammer for a start. To view the video [click here](#)

Bees work together to open Fanta bottle



A video of two bees working together to open a bottle of Fanta is going viral on the internet. In the video, two bees are seen working in concert to open a bottle to get at the sweet Fanta inside. According to video licensor “Viral Hog”, the moment was captured in São Paulo, Brazil, on 17 May and was shared to YouTube on Sunday. A woman capturing the moment is heard saying in Portuguese: “The bees teamed up to steal my soda”. “And they will do it,” she says, before the bees finally lift the cap off the bottle of Fanta, “Look, so smooth....Darn it!”

Twitter users were astonished by the clip, with 3.4 million viewing a video shared by “Buitengebieden” on Tuesday.

To view the video [click here](#)

Katie Tobin - Melbourne Correspondent

Dates for your diary

Online Zoom talks

Various upcoming online talks. Watch your emails.

Second Beginners Practical Session

At our apiary

Saturday June 5th - 10.00am

Somerton BKA

Annual Honey Show

Keinton Mandeville Village Hall

Chistles Ln, TA11 6FJ

Saturday September 18th

1.00 - 5.00pm

President

Jackie Mosedale

01458 241146

Chairman

Eric McLaughlin

jandemclaughlin@gmail.com

07910 764069

Vice Chairman

Jack Barr

01458 252850

jrbarrxv@btinternet.com

Secretary

Alison Clewes

pansvypots@icloud.com

Treasurer

Sarah Griffiths

s_e_lund@hotmail.com

Membership Secretary

Alison Dykes

Librarian

Sarah Kent

01749 670423

Honey Show sub committee

David Rose, Alison Dykes, Fred Clarke

Newsletter Editor

Stewart Gould

01749 860755

somertonbees@btinternet.com

Events Programme

Stewart Gould

01749 860755

County Delegate

Keith Sturgess

Deputy Delegates

Sally Lye

Suzy Perkins

Apiary Manager

Joe King

01749 890357

Extraction Equipment Loan

John Speirs

01458 241831