

The Newsletter



Vol no 29 Issue 5 June 2022

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



You're never too young

While Dad (Richard Bache NDB) was opening a hive to demonstrate splitting colonies, his 7 year old daughter Bryony decided that she was more interested in watching the bees at the entrance of the hive. Always the best place to start, in my opinion.

For more details of what the grown ups got up to, see Joe King's report on the visit to Michele Wilson's apiary.

Somerton Beekeepers May committee meeting

With chairman Eric back from his sojourn in Spain, the meeting was back to its usual format, although several committee members were unable to attend. The meeting was, however, quorate, and for the first time, in a good while, was held at the apiary.

Stewart Gould reported that the Beginners' sessions were going well, with some new demonstrators stepping up to the plate, which is refreshing. The early May session on swarming failed to find a single swarm cell in any of the ten hives. We have, in previous years, had swarms on demand, so to speak. Many of the new beekeepers have got colonies now, and so the sessions have more meaning for them.

Eric has researched the possibilities of holding a stock of frame parts and foundation for National hives and it was agreed to keep a stock of 500 shallow frames (SN1) and 500 brood frames with Hoffman spacers (DN4). There will also be a matching stock of wired foundation available to members. Members will be able to purchase by prior arrangement with Eric on 07910 764069. The stock will be arriving in early June.

County business was concerned with the Bath & West Show where Somerset BKA will again have a stand. Several Somerton members have volunteered to act as stewards for half a day in return for the freedom of the show for the other half. Brunel microscopes Ltd have donated a LEM SP35 high powered microscope for demonstrating pollen analysis, and this will be sold by a sealed auction. The proceeds will go to Somerset Beekeepers Association.

Our apiary is being included in this year's 'Somerset Farm To Food Trail' and will be open to visitors on Tuesday 19th July.

John Webb was lauded for the extremely generous price at which he sold the division 4 colonies of bees. One colony was purchased by the county and used to fulfil the New Leaf Award.

Steve Horne reported that of the three colonies rescued from West Hatch, one was dwindling, but the other two are doing well, and will soon be moved to the apiary, for onward dispersal to a member or members.

Our first member's home apiary meeting since before covid.

One of the great pleasures of our annual programme has always been the series of monthly Apiary Meetings at members' home apiaries during the summer months. Covid has made these impossible for the last two years and it was a delight to have our first of this year's programme in early May.

Michelle Wilson and her husband kindly invited us to their lovely orchard apiary at Hambridge. Thirteen of us gathered and we were fortunate enough to have Richard Bache as our expert demonstrator. Richard has recently been awarded the National Diploma in Beekeeping. This is the beekeeping equivalent of climbing Everest, and only 94 beekeepers have ever reached such giddy heights, so all our congratulations to Richard, who was assisted on this occasion by his daughter Bryony.

Being May, the main topic of concern was swarming and swarm management. As Richard went through the hives we were able to see two different management techniques in action, the artificial swarm and the Demaree method. The weather was delightful and the bees in good spirits. We could see the oil seed rape on the hillsides around the village, so no wonder the bees were working well.

After an hour or so we adjourned to the patio and Michelle provided us with a lovely tea. It was a great pleasure to sit in the sun and talk bees. Eventually it was time to leave, but we can look forward to our June Apiary visit which will kindly be hosted by Jeffrey Wilson and his wife Pauline at their apiary at Wearne, on Sunday June 12th. Full details will be sent by email shortly.

A big thank you to Michelle and her husband for leading off this year's programme, and making us so welcome.

Joe King.



Mikes Bee Supplies

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

We take Cash or Card (no cheques)



Foundation

Bakers Fondant 12.5kg

Jars

Hives

Suits

And more!

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

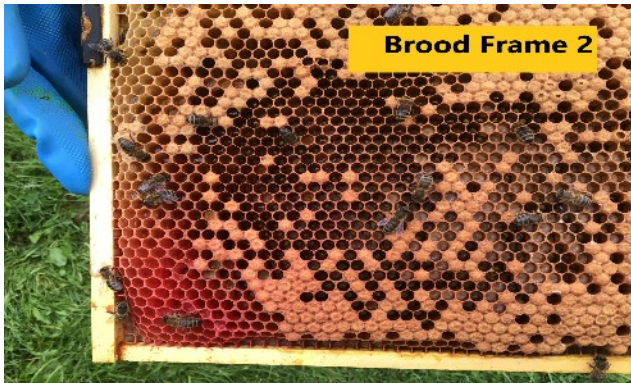
Tel. 01458 272114

A poser for you

Roy White has sent in these two photographs and poses the following questions.

What is going on with frame 1? Why has the wax disappeared?

What might be the relationship between frame 1 and frame 2? (bottom left frame 2 gives obscure clue) The answer to the mystery might cause our beekeepers to change habits a bit.



Send your answers to Roy White at wennets@hotmail.com.

No prizes, but Roy will give the answer next month

Mind the Gap

We've got away with it for a few years now, but it's always wise to be prepared. Newer beekeepers may not have come across the June Gap, but this can be a time of complete forage dearth. It is not unknown for colonies to starve during the month of June, especially if the beekeeper has taken a crop and not left enough provisions for the bees.

Spring blossom has finished, and the carpets of dandelion are a distant memory. Brambles won't be in bloom for a while yet and lime trees, although prolific producers of nectar in certain years, can't be relied on for consistency. If they are in a giving mood, then mid to late June is their time, but they don't perform every year.

Be prepared to feed your bees if necessary. A thick syrup will give them all they need, but there is a danger of giving them too much, and they could place it in the supers where it may get mixed with nectar and mistakenly harvested as honey. It is a balancing act, and the best course is not to take too much away as your Spring crop. Leave something for the bees.

The Basic

After you have been keeping bees for a whole season, you can take the first of the BBKA assessments. 'The Basic Assessment' is equivalent to the old cycling proficiency test. Although the syllabus which is available from here <https://www.bbka.org.uk/basic-assessment>, looks daunting, there is nothing in it that you don't already know, and the vast majority of people who take it pass at their first attempt. It is a practical assessment, more in the form of a conversation than anything else, although you will have to light a smoker and talk your way through a colony of bees, while the assessor poses a few questions.

Now is the time to apply for 'the Basic'. Contact Bridget Knutson at bridget_knutson@yahoo.co.uk or by phone on 0193 742187 and ask for an application form. You will have to pay BBKA £25.00 but if you pass, Somerset BKA will refund your fee - and you'll get a badge to sew onto your beesuit. Who could want for more?

Commemorative Australian \$2 AUS dollar



You probably saw in the latest BBKA News that the Australian Government have minted a \$2 dollar coin to celebrate 100 years of commercial beekeeping in Australia. Well! I've asked our Melbourne correspondent (My daughter in law), who's been a little quiet lately, top see if she can get her hands on one for me. I'll keep you posted.

With the current exchange rate at \$1 equalling 57p, it is going to cost £1.14 right? Not if you buy one on Ebay, it won't. It's being touted at £23.77 with p&p at £20.42 on top, or £47.19 to you. BARGAIN!

Full colonies of bees for sale

We (Somerton Beekeepers) recently acquired 3 colonies of bees from a family whose beekeeper had, sadly died, and another three from a beekeeper who was downsizing. They have been assessed and three have been taken to the apiary.

The upshot of this is that we now have six full healthy and flourishing colonies which are to be sold for £200 each. This is well below the average price and £30.00 less than a certain national supplier is selling nucleus colonies for.

There is a very good chance that you will get honey from them in lat July or August.

If you're interested contact Eric McLaughlin at jandemclaughlin@gmail.com

Somerton & District Honey Show

Saturday 17th September 2022

Keinton Mandeville Village Hall



Just to remind you, in case you have forgotten, our annual Honey Show date is getting nearer and nearer.

The committee hope you are busy planning your entries. Entry forms and show schedules will be available in the very near future. For those who want to get cracking on their entries there is little change to last year's schedule.

The photographic section last year was, according to the judge, of a very good standard. With that in mind we have been reminded by a very experienced and capable photographer that now is the time to take flower shots as there will not be such an abundance nearer the Honey Show date.

Our request for volunteers in last month's newsletter has not met with much success. So we can only imagine you have forgotten to submit your names. Please let the committee know if you are willing to help as lots of hands make light work and our show "the best in the west".

David Rose

Alison Dykes

Fred Clarke (pauline.fred@outlook.com)

Dates for your diary

**Beginners Practical Sessions
At our apiary
Third session**

Saturday July 2nd
10.00am

**Visit to Jeffrey Wilson's
Wearne Apiary**

Sunday June 12th at 2.00pm

Somerton BKA Honey Show

Saturday September 17th
Keinton Mandeville Village Hall

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

pansvpots@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

Joe King
01749 890357

County Delegate

Keith Sturgess

Deputy Delegates

Sally Lye
Suzy Perkins

Apiary Manager

Joe King
01749 890357

Extraction Equipment Loan

John Speirs
01458 241831