

The Newsletter



Vol no 30 Issue 5 June 2023

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



Image courtesy of Trisha Marlow

S'warm out there

The first two weeks in May were not warm but they were wet and there had been few signs of swarming, but then the weather changed and so did the intentions of many honeybee colonies. I have never known anything like it in my fifteen years of beekeeping, and it seems that those with more experience think exactly the same.

The phone hardly stopped ringing and I was getting calls from Bristol, Yeovil, Dorchester and all over the place. With most I redirected them to the BBKA or Somerset BKA websites, but I did pick up a few myself. Our list of those wanting swarms was soon exhausted, and I even turned down the offer of one swarm from a member.

We all have our own ideas as to whether letting your bees swarm is bad beekeeping, careless, anti-social or a wonderful natural phenomenon to be celebrated. I can, however, assure you that the five which I heard about in the fabric of buildings, were not treated as wonderful natural phenomena by the owners of the buildings concerned. Removing them is inevitably difficult, potentially hazardous and nearly always very expensive. The cheapest price I have seen is £40 plus mileage to survey and then a starting price of £400. There have been several cases this year which will entail considerable structural repair.

Thankfully things have quieted down a bit but swarms will persist into June, so please carry out regular inspections. Remember, a queen cell (swarm cell) will be sealed 8 days after the egg is laid **BUT** if the bees choose a larva which has just hatched from the egg, it will only be 5 days until that cell is sealed.



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

We take
Cash or Card
(no cheques)

Foundation

Jars

Bakers Fondant
12.5kg

Suits

Hives

And more!

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

Somerton Beekeepers' Honey Show 2023

I know we keep saying it but it really isn't long until our Honey Show on September 16th.

On the next page is a poster for the Honey Show. There is also an Acrobat .pdf file of the poster with this newsletter which you can print off and stick in your window or on the nearest Telegraph Pole. Either way, I would laminate it if you can to protect it from the weather. I'll be doing the same next month and August so you'll have ample opportunity.



Somerton Beekeepers



present a spectacular

HONEY SHOW

AND

ARTISAN MARKET



SATURDAY

SEPTEMBER 16TH

NOON – 5PM

at

Keinton Mandeville Village Hall

TA11 6ES

Come and see the bees!

Something for everyone:

Cider, Cheese, Cakes, Pastries, Pies,

Cards, Plants, Jams, Preserves,

Cosmetics, Candles, Gifts

and of course HONEY!



FREE
admission

Thoughts from the chair

With the dry warmer weather arriving we must not forget our bees are going to need a source of water.

The last week whilst trying to prepare entries for the Bath and West show has seen me being called out to deal with a different swarm almost every day. I feel obliged to attend every call and do what ever I can to present a responsible face of beekeeping to non-beekeepers.

My thoughts turned to people that have bees. Where and why are they going wrong?

Colony record cards are an enormously powerful tool to understanding what is going on in the hive if properly completed. Regular colony inspections with the aid of the record card can help, also a plan for how you deal with the possibility of your colony's swarming. On one callout nearby were two hives that certainly had not been inspected this year.

Can we stop swarming instinct? No, but can we control it YES.

An effective way to control swarming is to split the colony by making a nucleus, or doing an artificial swarm headed by the old queen.

Making new colony's will have a small effect on reducing the size of your honey crop, however, this will be negligible over the season compared to losing many bees and lots of honey if they swarm.

The upside you get is another valuable colony of bees that could be passed on for pecuniary advantage.

It is Bath and West show time already. I wish all those that have entered good luck.

Jack Barr
Chairman

Supplies available from the apiary

There is a stock of frames, foundation and jars at the apiary which are available for purchase every Tuesday morning and on Saturdays when there is a New Beekeepers' practical session. The stock of jars is rapidly decreasing and won't be topped up until late July. Check with Eric McLaughlin if you wish to visit.

All frames and foundation are for National hives

DN4 - Deep National Hoffman frames - £1.35 each

10 frames - £13.50

11 frames - £14.85

Standard brood foundation - £1.30 per sheet

SN1 Shallow National frames - £1.00 each

10 frames - £10.00

11 frames - £11.00

Super foundation - 80p per sheet

SN1 frames are straight sided and will need plastic/metal spacers

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

Buying Bees

When buying colonies of bees you should ensure that what you are buying is a viable colony with a youngish, laying queen and that the colony is flourishing.

If you are new to beekeeping and need some reassurance then take an experienced beekeeper along with you to have a look through the hive. If you are buying the hive as well, then ensure that the boxes and ancillary equipment is sound.

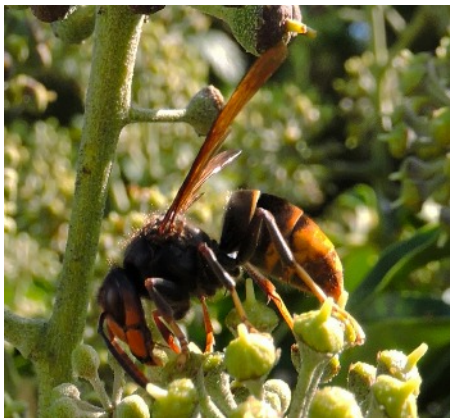
Sadly there have been several occasions this year where bees offered for sale weren't really in a suitable condition to hand over. One colony was in a brood box with only 8 frames and the rest of the space was taken up with wild comb. Another colony hadn't been inspected at all this season, and so the seller didn't know what condition they were in, but still asked a 'normal' price for them, and a third was selling two colonies, both of which had swarmed and were queenless at the time of the proposed sale. Again, a 'normal' price was being asked.

On a slightly different tack, there are also rogue websites out there which are selling non existent colonies. These were highlighted on the Somerset BKA facebook page about a month ago and I'm reproducing it here. Sorry if it's a little difficult to read.

Fraudulent Beekeeping Sales Sites 02/24/2023				
Index	Screen Name	"Sock Puppet"	Secondary Sock Puppet	ID Serial
1	Accessible Beekeeping Farm (3379)	Steve Harper		100083552823379
2	D&C Honeybee Apiaries (5385)	Beverly Langer	Marcos Ortega	100083532365385
3	Smooth Honey Apiaries	Steve Harper	Kristine Myres	??
4	Sunrise Beekeeping Homestead	Steve Harper		100083266536232
5	Woodhaven Acres Beekeeping	Nancy Stephenson	Nancy Malak, Heather Moore, Jade Christine	100064193286163
6	Beekeeping Backyard Farm (4714)	Marcos Ortega	Beverly Langer	100086435894714
7	Beekeeping Homestead (7099)	Marcos Ortega	Beverly Langer	100086283857099
8	Bee Pollination Farm	Heather Lori	Luisa Delgaty	100088793292580
Low or Dormant Activity				
9	B&J Beekeeping Farm	Mike Hanchco		100741869396337
10	Beekeeping farm	Raphaël Raphaël		100086589174705
11	Natural Beekeeping Backyard	Mary Ama	Nadine Lice	100085285661190
12	Promise's Backyard Farm.	Raphael Raphael		100083032887376
13	Sunset Beekeeping Backyard Farm	dormant, no recs		100083366351073
Offline Pages (note cloned names still resolve to new pages)				
1a	Beekeeping Backyard Farm (3379)	Stephanie Cohen William	Henry G. Buckley	100083552823379
2a	Beekeeping Homestead (5385)	Stephanie Cohen William	Henry G. Buckley	100083532365385
3a	Pecker Hill Beekeeping Farm	Geoffrey Robinson	Russell Galvan	100081627922764
Search your local group for "Sock Puppets" promoting these Scam sites. "Sock Puppets" have membership in hundreds of groups.				

ASIAN HORNETS SPOTTED IN DORSET , HAMPSHIRE AND KENT

I expect by now most of you will have heard the news of three confirmed Asian Hornet Queen sightings already this year. One on a Poole Cherbourg ferry, one in Folkstone Kent and one in Northumberland in a box of cauliflowers from France. At this time of year these will be mated queens. If we miss any AH queens, we will be at risk of nests being established in the UK.



For this reason, I would urge members to be vigilant. I fear we may really have a problem this year, hence as the Somerton Asian Hornet coordinator, I am looking for a number of willing volunteers to form Somerton's Asian Hornet action team.

The Asian Hornet season has got off to a frighteningly rapid start in Jersey this year, so we really need to be on the ball, and up our game in this department. Please contact me ASAP if you're willing to become part of the Somerton AHAT team for more information.

Suzy Perkins

apicrepe.tengore@gmail.com

07914069078

I have kept this article in from last month as there has been another confirmed sighting a bit closer to home - Basingstoke, so please be on the lookout. Asian hornets are smaller than European hornets, primarily black, and with a wide orange band around the rear of the abdomen. The last thing you'll notice are the yellow legs.

There have been other reports, one in Taunton, but this was not confirmed and was most probably a European hornet. Most erroneous reports state the huge size of the 'beast' which is a pretty good indication that it isn't an Asian hornet.

BeeBase Update

The National Bee Unit has been making big changes

behind the scenes and has launched its new and

improved BeeBase website.



The new website comes with a modern layout and is designed with user experience and functionality in mind, with improved ease of access to the many resources, articles, maps, and to your own beekeeping pages. The site provides a good user experience whether on the phone or the laptop.

Log-in to view and update your personal details, view or make changes to your apiaries, view your historic records and results and access e-learning. BeeBase will also email you automatically with your diagnostic results and with any alerts relevant to you, like notifications of disease found within 3km of your apiaries, if you have opted into email alerts.

There is no need to re-register, your log-in details have stayed the same and your account is ready for you to use.

There are many new features planned and the site development will continue over the coming months.

Please continue to support by keeping your records up to date, helping the NBU to effectively monitor and control the spread of serious honey bee diseases and pests.

Visit www.nationalbeeunit.com/ and pass on your comments

May in the Divisional Apiary

It's always a marvellous moment when May arrives each year. The Apiary springs into major activity. Each Tuesday morning we meet to complete the tasks of the day. Not only do we enjoy a cup of coffee and friendly badinage but we welcome any of you who fancy coming along and joining us.

Each week we inspect the colonies, and those that show signs of preparation for swarming are divided by artificially swarming them. Although the general picture nationally is that there has been an abundance of swarming this year, everything has seemed quiet at the apiary. Not only are their hives to be inspected but there are numerous other tasks such as mowing the grass and all the other maintenance.

Don't forget that as a service to our members we carry a certain amount of equipment in stock for you to buy from the apiary. At present we have jars, frames and foundation. Obviously it is sold on a first come first served basis, but if you suddenly find that you are a little short it is always worth checking with us. Eric McLaughlin is the mastermind behind the scheme, so do come along to Eric's Tuesday Emporium.

Although things seem quiet at the apiary there does seem to be a surprising number of swarms about. I usually have two hives in my garden. One of these I have artificially swarmed taking the number of colonies to three. Such has been the influx of swarms from other sources that at the moment my total in the garden is ten colonies, mainly swarms, often small, in nucleus boxes. Mrs King is not amused especially as one or two of them like to chase her around the garden, the dog also seems to spend a surprising amount of time under the kitchen table.

Hopefully the virgin queens in these swarms will get out and mate successfully, and I will be able to build them up to useful colonies which can then be available to those who need them. Such has been the number of swarms nationally that stories of beekeepers running out of equipment have been on the national news. Fame indeed!

Joe King
01749 890357

Visit to Buckfast Abbey Bees

We still have some spaces on the visit to Buckfast Abbey Bees on Saturday July 15th. It is really interesting to listen to the thinking behind the beekeeping at Buckfast and see one of the country's foremost bee personalities handling her bees. Martin Hann is pretty knowledgeable too. If you want to come along then please let me know as soon as possible. The maximum size of the party is 20 people, so get in quick.



The visit is free of charge but we make a donation of £7.00 each as a gesture of goodwill and to boost Martin and Clare's coffee & cake fund. We also try to share cars wherever possible to keep the costs to a minimum. Contact me at somertonbees@btinternet.com if you want to come.

Stewart Gould

Unsafe Extractor

In July 2022 I ordered a honey extractor from a seller on ebay. The advertised description was "VEVOR 2/4 Frame Electric Honey Extractor Food Grade 120W Motor 3 Steel Legs" at a cost of £245. It was duly delivered, but on testing I detected a voltage on the metal vessel. I discovered the metal frame was not earthed, as required by this class of equipment. I noted the absence of a CE mark or certificate of conformance (now UKCA as from 1st January). The seller was totally unwilling to accept a return, despite me pointing out that it was illegal to offer it for sale in this state. Fortunately, as a chartered electrical engineer qualified for portable appliance testing, I was able to correct the wiring error, and accepted a substantial refund for my trouble. I strongly advise anyone who already has similar equipment to get it safety checked ('PAT tested') because a motor or controller fault could have a fatal outcome.



Dr. JM Howell. Courtesy of Ipswich & East Suffolk BKA

Dates for your diary

New Beekeepers 3r^d practical session

Saturday June 10th

At the apiary - 10.00am

The Green Scythe Fair

Sunday June 11th

Thorney Lakes TA10 0DW

Another chance to represent Somerton
Beekeepers and sell some honey.

Visit to Buckfast Abbey Bees

Saturday July 15th

10.00am at Buckfast Abbey

Baltonsborough Village Day

Village Hall and playing fields

Monday August 28th

12 noon - 5.00pm

Somerton Beekeepers Honey Show

Sat September 16th

Keinton Mandeville Village Hall
TA11 6ES

President

Jackie Mosedale
01458 241146

Chairman

Jack Barr
01458 252850

jbarrxv@btinternet.com

Vice Chair

Gillian Islip
gillianislip@gmail.com
01458 241562

Secretary

Alison Clewes
pansypots@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

Suzy Perkins

Apiary Manager

Joe King
01749 890357

Extraction Equipment Loan

John Speirs
01458 241831