

The Newsletter



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SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



First practical session

When picking the dates for Beginners' practical sessions, it's difficult to guess if the weather is going to be kind, especially for the first session. Add to that the complication of a freelance photographer wanting some joyous spring type pictures and you have a potential recipe for disaster. It may have been way too cold to open the hives on the weekend of April 13th/14th, but place enough hidden flash heads and you can convince the British public that not only was the sun shining, but that it was warm and the bees were flying.

This picture of Joe King and seven of our new beekeepers appeared in the Times and the Guardian on Monday 15th April. It wasn't posed - honestly.

New President of Somerset Beekeepers' Association

The Presidency of the Somerset BKA is largely an honorary office but is a reflection of the esteem in which the incumbent is held by the association. Ken Tredgett has been President for the past three years, and has done an excellent job of promoting beekeeping in the name of Somerset BKA.

At the Somerset BKA AGM, our very own Jackie Mosedale was appointed as the new President. Given all that she has done for Somerton and Somerset BKAs, it is a fitting tribute, and I am sure that she will be an excellent ambassador of beekeeping in the three years of her office.



BOOK REVIEW

Sarah Kent, our Librarian, suggested that it might be informative for others if, after reading a text pertaining to the art and science of beekeeping, the reader wrote a short review of the book. I thought this a good and useful idea so here goes.....

John McMullan's book entitled "*Having Healthy Honey Bees (An Integrated Approach)*" is a tome of 110 pages.

I liked this book, it is a small pocket sized encyclopaedia. It's written in a simple and clear style, except for the necessary scientific words, and its photographic illustrations are good. The format of the book is, in my view, very informative and ideal for exam purposes and for new beekeepers alike.

I found this book very interesting, easy to read, informative and would recommend it to all budding beekeepers. It can be found in our division library. It certainly had a buzz about it.

Fred Clarke

Online questionnaire

Karen Cox and her team have been mulling over what to give the members by way of continuation learning after the Basic Assessment, and all other aspects of what can be done for the members.

There is a hard core of our membership who complain that we do a lot for the new beekeepers and then leave people in the lurch. Hardly a fair claim considering the study groups, lectures and occasions like the Bee Safari, but everybody is welcome to their opinion.

Karen's team gave all members the chance, through the online questionnaire, to tell the committee exactly what they would like from Somerton Beekeepers' Association. It seems that the vast majority are satisfied with what is already provided, because only 35 of our 200 members have taken the opportunity to answer the questionnaire - so far.

Mike's Bee Supplies

Just phone before you call
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The graphic is a honeycomb-shaped advertisement for 'Mike's Bee Supplies'. It features a blue header with the company name and a smiling bee logo. The main body consists of several yellow hexagons containing text about products like 'Foundation', 'Jars', 'Hives', and 'Suits'. Contact information, including a phone number, email address, and website, is provided in a yellow hexagon. Payment methods (PayPal, VISA, MasterCard, American Express, Debit Card) are listed in another hexagon. The address is also included. Small bee icons are scattered throughout the design.

Nucleus colonies & Swarms

Our first practical session was so unsuitable weather-wise, that not many of our new beekeepers have actually yet delved into a hive. They are however, all keen to get started and nucleus colonies are required by a good few of them. Last month we published details of some of the



National Companies who are selling 'nucs', but I know that a few of our members are also producing them, so please let me know if you have any for sale. Two new beekeepers have already bought locally created 'nucs'.

Bait hives

Swarming has started in some areas, but is a little slow getting off the ground in this region. I have only heard of one definite swarm so far. Scout bees have been reported in several locations, but that can be a long drawn out process, or a very quick one, and just because bees are showing an interest in a bait hive, it doesn't automatically mean that a swarm is on its way. Apart from anything else, you can only attract a swarm, if there is a swarm to attract. Your bait hive isn't going to initiate the instinct.

The Ged Marshall formula for bait hives is also advocated by Joe King. A box with a volume of around 40 litres is required, and I calculate a brood box to be around 45 litres. Sandwich an old empty brood frame, with no foundation, between two old drawn brood frames and position them centrally in an otherwise empty brood box. The brood box should be on a solid floor with an entrance 4cm x 1cm. Place a crown board and roof on top, then position this 'bait hive at least 6 feet off the ground, with the entrance facing between NNE and SSE. It is also important that it is not in full sun.

Bees will, however, go where they wish, and a pile of old brood boxes behind the toilet at our apiary proved very appealing last year.

Stewart Gould

Library update - Spring 2019

Book List:

There is now a complete and up-to-date list of all the Somerton Divisional Library books. If you would like a copy to browse through the Librarian will email you one on request, or a paper copy can be posted (see the Librarian's contact details below).

Acquisitions:

During the past twelve months or so, we have been fortunate in gaining a significant number of new books through two bequests. The most important of these bequests was from the estate of the late Ivor Chick. His bee book collection was quite large and included some interesting titles and some old books, going back to the Victorian era. A number of other books came to us from the estate of the late Thomas Kinsman. His collection was given to Somerset BKA for distribution to the various county Divisions who put in a request. A 'wish-list' was submitted from Somerton Division and our allocation duly arrived: it didn't bear a lot of resemblance to our list – but beggars can't be choosers!

Through our Divisional Committee the Library has bought a small selection of books. These are mainly new titles; the aim being to keep up with current beekeeping ideas and knowledge. The Committee is willing to provide modest funding for this type of purchase so if you spot a new publication you think would be of benefit to the Division's members, do let your Librarian know.

Bringing the books to the members:

The Library is here to be used!

We will aim to get a selection of books to Divisional events where possible and members are encouraged to get hold of the book list and 'place an order'.

Lastly, the Library is now housed at Upper Milton (BA5 3AH) between Wells and Priddy, so if you're passing and would like to look through the books on the shelves over a cup of coffee you would be welcome to call in (please phone beforehand).

Sarah Kent

Tel: 01749 670423 / 07986965320

Email: translation@lawsonkent.co.uk

Asian hornet update

Don't forget that on Sunday April 28th at 2.30 pm, Lynne Ingram, the Somerset BKA Asian hornet co-ordinator, will be coming to the apiary to update us on all things to do with this imminently potential threat to our bees.



Tragedy of Notre Dame

Despite the horrendous destruction of the 13th century Cathedral of Notre Dame recently, it was good to hear that many ancient relics were saved from the inferno which engulfed the building. Also saved were the colonies of bees living on a part of the roof structure.

French urban apiculture company Beeopic, which maintains the hives, has confirmed the insects' survival on its Instagram page, accompanied by the message:

#Miracle "Notre Dame's bees are still alive!" the post buzzed. Earlier, the company expressed cautious optimism about the bees' fate. "An ounce of hope! The pictures taken by several different **drones** show that the three hives are still in place ... and obviously intact!" a translation of the post said



The value of bees

Bees and other pollinators, such as butterflies, bats and hummingbirds, are increasingly under threat from human activities.

Pollinators allow many plants, including many food crops, to reproduce. Not only do pollinators contribute directly to food security, but they are key to conserving bio-diversity - a cornerstone of the Sustainable Development Goals. They also serve as sentinels for emergent environmental risks, signalling the health of local ecosystems.

Invasive insects, pesticides, land-use change and mono-cropping practices may reduce available nutrients and pose threats to bee colonies.

To raise awareness of the importance of pollinators, the threats they face and their contribution to sustainable development, the UN designated 20 May as [World Bee Day](#). Follow the hyperlink to see more.

Why this date?

May 20th coincides with the birthday of Anton Janša, who in the 18th century pioneered modern beekeeping techniques in his native Slovenia and praised the bees for their ability to work so hard, while needing so little attention.

#WorldBeeDay #SavetheBees

Out Apiary opportunity

Rodney White, a long standing member has moved from Martock to Axminster, taking his bees with him. Rodney will be sadly missed as a member, as the Farmers' market section of our honey show relied on him (and others) to erect all the tents. He is, however, clinging on with an associate membership, so we won't be losing him completely.

He sends the following message from way down in Devon 'The person who owns one of the sites where my bees were kept, is willing to have someone else keep their bees there if it would help anyone out. So if you know anyone who would like an out apiary on the outskirts of Martock, please feel free to pass on my contact details.

The site is on an old traditional farm close to their orchard of around 15 trees. I normally drive my car to the farm and then walk down to the bees avoiding the sheep and then step over the fence to the bees'.

Let me know if anyone wants to keep their bees there.

Rodney can be contacted by email at:- rodneywhite271@btinternet.com

International Winter Losses survey

You have undoubtedly been contacted by BBKA to complete their winter losses survey, and being the good member that you are, have completed the 4 minute task, so that a broader picture of losses can be painted.

We have also had a request from COLOSS (Prevention of honey bee COLony LOSSes) which is an international, non-profit association headquartered in Bern, Switzerland that is focused on improving the well-being of bees at a global level. They are endeavouring to do a more scientific survey on losses internationally.

Their losses survey can be found at:- <https://www.bee-survey.com/index.php/368949>

Farmers' Market

For a good few years now, the Farmers' Market has been an integral part of our Honey Show. So much so, that some people come just because of the Farmers' Market. David & Karen Rose have organized every aspect of that section of our show, since its inception. This has entailed a lot of hard work, cajoling stall-holders and finding gazebos for them to set up in. We



should all be extremely grateful to David and Karen for all their endeavours over the years. Without their input, the Honey Show would be just that - a Honey Show.

David & Karen would, understandably, like to take a backward step now and hand this very successful aspect of our show over to somebody new. Please don't let this popular section of the show fade away.

Somebody out there is able to undertake this project, so please get in touch with Fred Clarke on 01278 722830 and make this happen.

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.

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

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. 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 Mobile 07812
738793 Telephone 01458 2721144

Absence of names from Somerset BKA Yearbook

Several members have remarked that their names have not been included in the latest version of the Somerset BKA Yearbook. There could be one of two reasons for this. Membership secretaries try to submit the most up-to-dater information, but there s a cut off point, especially where newer members are concerned, and they may find that they may not be included until the following year.

More importantly, we now have to follow a strict code with regard to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). We cannot by law, include your name in the Yearbook unless you have given permission to do so. There was a specific section on the membership form related to this.

I agree to my personal details being held and processed as detailed in the SBKA Data Privacy Policy above.

If you didn't sign this section, your details cannot be published.

Gift Aid Declarations

Wherever possible, we collect Gift Aid on your subscriptions, but need a valid Gift Aid Declaration from you to be able to do so. Gift Aid can only be claimed on subscriptions from members who are tax payers. It is therefore extremely important that you inform us if your circumstances change, and you no longer pay income tax.

Speakers for Somerton BKA Winter meetings

Three speakers have already been lined up for next winter's season of talks, and they are varied. We have Brigit Strawbridge talking on Bumblebees and Solitary Bees, and Brian Durk who does a lot of work with Bees Abroad, talking on Bees and Elephants, and last but not least we have Jonathan Powell - known as the tree beekeeper. Jonathan keeps bees in purposely hollowed out trees.

If you have any subject you would like to be covered, or have a particular speaker you would like us to invite, then let Stewart Gould know and he will do his best to address your interests.

Stewart Gould 01749 860755 or somertonbees@btinternet.com

Crawling Bees

Not the best of photographs admittedly, but it is taken from mobile phone footage, downloaded from an email, then a screen-shot taken from the video. This colony was purchased from a major supplier last season, and had over wintered well, then suddenly about a week ago hundreds of bees were seen crawling around on the ground in front of the hive. They were shivering, but all were alive. Inside the hive it was a different story. There were a few hundred more bees on the floor of the hive, but these were dead.



The queen was found as was alive, if not well, inside the hive. Several people voiced opinions as to what it could be, but at the Somerset BKA Spring Lecture, I happened to be sitting behind the Regional Bee Inspector for the South West, Simon Jones. He looked long and hard at the video on my phone, then said that in his opinion it was Chronic bee paralysis virus. The bees were exhibiting the typical trembling associated with both main paralysis viruses, yet there don't seem to be any hairless specimens.

The other thought expressed by those who saw the footage, was that it could be acute bee paralysis virus, but Simon declared that if that were the case, all the bees would be dead, as it is fast acting.

This was a hive that had built up well during the early spring, and strong colonies often seem to suffer the most, because of the confinement of large numbers of bees in cooler months of Spring.

It just goes to show that diseases which we tend to give little attention, can be catastrophic.

Stewart Gould

Dates for your diary

Asian homet update

Sunday April 28th - 2.30 pm

At our apiary in Upton

With Lynne Ingram
Somerset AHAT co-ordinator

Meg's Bee Safari

Tuesday May 14th

Or Wednesday May 15th

To be confirmed

With Megan Seymour SBI
Venues to be confirmed

**Second Beginners' practical sessions
10.00am**

Sat. May 18th & Sunday May 19th

At our apiary

Swarm Control

World Bee Day

Monday 20th May

Visit to Buckfast Abbey apiary

Sunday June 23rd - 10.00 am

Guided by Clare Densley

Skep making master class

Saturday July 20th - 10.00am

At our apiary

Overseen by Diana Robertson

Somerton BKA Honey Show

Saturday September 21st

Keinton Mandeville Village Hall

TA11 6EB
(New venue)

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