



YEOVIL BEE NEWS

July 2017

Welcome to the newsletter of the Yeovil & District Division, Somerset Beekeepers' Association. See also our website: www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

**Next Meeting –July Apiary Meeting:
Malcolm Blake demonstrates
"The Flow Hive in Operation"
2:30pm Saturday 22th July
at Crispin Bond's Apiary**

Crispin has a "Flow Hive" in operation. For those who have heard of this yet, they are a new type of honey super which allows you to extract the honey while still on the hive without bothering the bees. They were developed in Australia and "National" sizes are now available. Malcolm will demonstrate how it operates and, if the nectar favours us, produce some honey.

If there is any time to spare, Malcolm would also demonstrate marking the queen.

Malcolm Blake needs no introduction to most of our members as he ran the beginners course both theory and practical for many years as well as being chairman of the Division and County. He is one of our most experienced beekeepers.

Sharon and Malcolm have kindly invited us to their house afterwards for cream teas. Not to be missed!

Directions

Directions to Crispin Bond's apiary at New Farm Restaurant, Over Stratton, South Petherton, Somerset, TA13 5LQ :

Travelling East along the A303 from the direction of Yeovil, take the 2nd exit on the "Hayes End" roundabout signposted to Lopen & Ilminster town centre. This will take you past an Esso Garage on your left, take the the next road on your left (after about 300 yds), signposted to Over Stratton. New Farm restaurant is on the right after 900 yds. There is a car park to the rear.

Travelling West along the A303 towards London, take the 4th exit on the "Hayes End" roundabout signposted to Lopen & Ilminster town centre. This will take you past an Esso Garage on your left, take the the next road on your left (after about 300 yds), signposted to Over Stratton. New Farm restaurant is on the right after 900 yds. There is a car park to the rear.

The apiary is in the paddock beyond the Car Park

Yeovil Show, Saturday & Sunday, 15th & 16th July

You should all know by now that the Yeovil Show will be the culmination of a lot of work by your committee. We have worked hard to mount comprehensive displays in our "Honey Tent" and will hold an active beekeeping display in our new display mesh-screen. We are also holding our Honey Show in the Honey Tent which I hope you have all entered!

Unless you are stewarding, you will have to pay to enter to see the displays. But if you are exhibiting in the Honey Show, you can enter the Show site on Friday to stage your entry and can collect it on Sunday after 5:00 with free entry on both days.

June Apiary Meeting with Bernard Diaper at Andrew Cooke's Apiary

Saturday 17th June Andrew Cooke opened his apiary to us and we had a good turn out, it was a particularly warm and sunny day. Andrew has a beautiful home and apiary just outside Chetnole with only fields around.

Bernard Diaper, our speaker for the afternoon, showed us a clever way to keep varroa away by trapping the queen over a course of weeks.

The method is fairly simple, catch the queen, place her on a frame in a brood frame trap, over the course of weeks keep changing the frame in the trap keeping the queen within the trap so she only lays on the frame in the trap. The idea is that when the cells are sealed the varroa is in the cells so in removing the brood frame you also remove the varroa.

May I take this opportunity to thank Andrew and Lorna for the tasty cakes and refreshing drinks, it was a great afternoon.

Andy & Lorraine Dobson

One Swarm or

This appeared on a tree in my garden. It looked as if some of them did come from one of my garden colonies but many seemed to come from the opposite direction.

With 4 clumps of bees, how many swarms are there?

More on the next pages.....



Chairman Carnegie

Hello Busy Beekeepers,

I hope by now that all your OSR is safely gathered in and your supers are nice and clean. I missed the boat by a long way and have been busy dealing with the solid combs by feeding them to starving colonies, and to some colonies by putting the super above an empty super and two crown boards so that, as they go, up they turn into robbers and take all the rape down to the brood box. Next year we must do better.

The Yeovil show nears far too quickly and I am praying for good weather. I have bought a large number of pegs and have plenty of rope in case it is windy. I have tidied up the observation hives and have selected a colony or two for demonstration. We are desperately short of noticeboards so should any of you pass a skip with any inside please take them! I know from my experience at the Bath and West very few people actually read them but they look good as window dressing. Remember we need lots of honey to sell and from the sixth or seventh July the tent will be up and we can make a much better plan in the lead up to the show. I have been loaned a 32 inch television and I am contemplating what kinds of things that would be eye-catching and captivate the public. I have been told that very few people even look at that. Well it's our first time in the Yeovil show so we are bound to make mistakes. I think it was Edison who was woken up in the middle of the night to be his factory was burning down. As he stood there in his dressing gown he said, "Thank goodness for that, all my mistakes are now gone!"

How the mighty can be fallen! I was due to spend the afternoon at the garden centre and thought it would be a really good time to take an observation hive. There I was in the apiary going through a hive that I knew had a clipped and marked Queen. Ha! It's really extraordinary how searching and searching and you can't find the wretched Queen. I seem to have no trouble finding her at other times to mark or clip. Phil Hocking joined me for a while and chatted and the afternoon flew by.

When I moaned to one beekeeper that I seem to have very little time and stretched too thin he replied that it didn't matter what you did so long as you put your bees first! Very good idea and I have spent much time in the kitchen extracting honey going off to the hives and looking through them. It is very odd but several of you have said to me that the bees seem to do much better if you leave them alone. It does seem to me if your queens are young and your hives big enough you won't get as much swarming. I was very pleased to find a number of my colonies had superseded last autumn and are romping away now. Does anyone else believe that these queens seem to be superior. Certainly my deep nationals are coming into their own now.

The only person unhappy with me is my wife because the extractor is in the kitchen for most of the coming week! Given I do the cooking that's a bit rich!

John Carnegie

Chairman

Neonicotinoid Pesticides Study

The following link takes you to an article in the Guardian about the latest report on an international investigation into the effects of Neonicotinoids on wild bees and honey bees. An interesting report:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jun/29/pesticides-damage-survival-of-bee-colonies-landmark-study-shows>

Coming soon ...

Event	When	Where	Details
The Yeovil Show with our Honey Show	Sat & Sun 15th & 16th July	Yeovil Showground	The Yeovil Divisional Honey Show in our Honey Tent
Apiary Meeting	Saturday 2:30 22nd July	Crispin Bond's Apiary	Malcolm Blake demonstrates the Flow Hive
Apiary Meeting	Saturday 2:30 17th August	Sarah Theo-Jones Apiary	TBD

One Swarm or Two

After about an hour, the bees settled onto these two clusters. So I collected them into two separate boxes as they look like two separate swarms.

But were they?

I took the boxes to an out-apiary and let them settle down. I opened them after a short delay to put extra frames in and give them some feed to find that the smaller of the two swarms' box was empty! They were, after all, only one swarm which had decided to settle in two separate clumps but had united with the larger swarm (which must have had the queen) after they had been gathered.

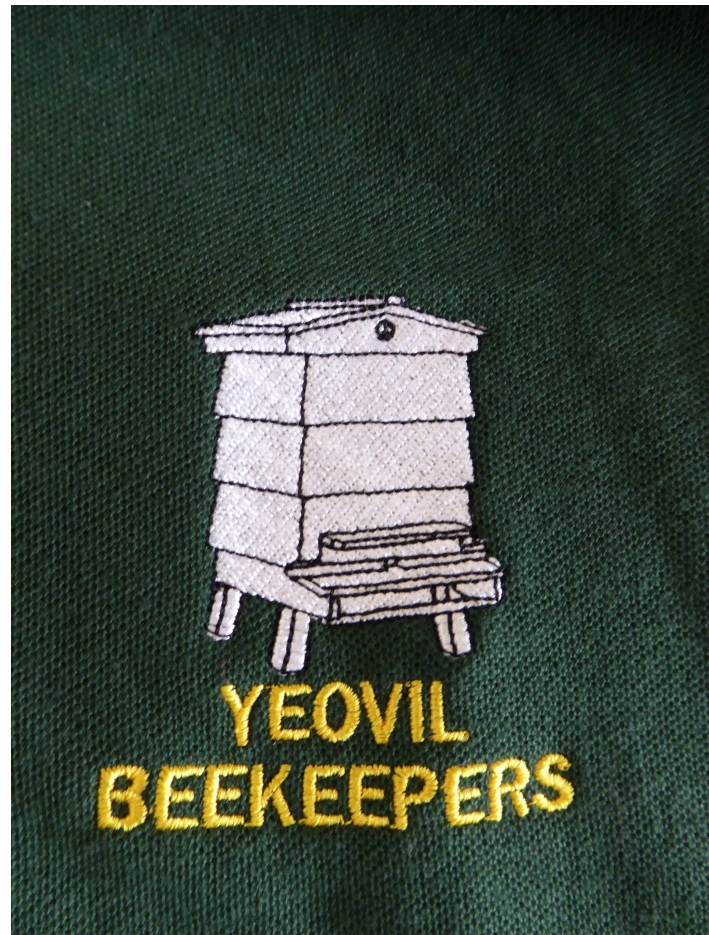


Yeovil Beekeepers Polo Shirts

We have some green poloshirts with the Yeovil Beekeepers logo. They are good quality with a stitched logo captured in the photo here.

If you would like one for £15, just get in touch with Billl Paterson on 0778 969 3203 or by email on

patterson_32@sky.com.



Honey bees like living close to the hedge – it's official!

We are getting a bit closer to knowing which flowers honey bees like best, with the Garden's Science Team's [latest results just published in the open access journal Scientific Reports](#).

We want to find out which plants honey bees prefer to help inform future choices when it comes to managing habitats and planting pollinator-friendly flowers. Understanding honey bee behaviour is crucial. Seventy-five per cent of food crops are dependent on animal pollination but, globally, we are facing a pollinator crisis due to a perfect storm of habitat loss, intensive agriculture, climate change, pests and disease. A big problem for honey bees is lack of suitable habitat for foraging brought about by the loss of hedgerows, woodland and meadows rich in plant species.

Spring is a crucial time for honey bees. Over winter, they will use up all their stores of honey. As winter progresses, they will start to produce brood and, as soon as the sun comes out in early spring, they need to gather nectar and pollen to replenish their stores. The protein from the pollen is used as food for the brood so it is vital that they have a wide variety of flowers available.

The Garden's Science team set out to investigate which plants the honey bees used most during the spring. The results are very clear: there were 437 different genera of plants in flower in April and May in the Garden. But the honey bees only used 47 – or 11% – of these.

So, despite everything that was on offer, the honey bees only used a few plants and used them a lot. The Garden offers them a magnificent menu of more than 8,000 types of plants but the results show that they rely on hedgerow and woodland species such as willow, hawthorn, oak and dandelion for most of their diet. This is supplemented with a small number of garden plants including cotoneaster, hellebores and spring-flowering bulbs.

The research is part of the Garden's '[Saving Pollinators](#)' programme. It is achieved by [DNA metabarcoding](#) honey collected by the honey bees in the [Garden's hives](#) each month. The Garden has eight beehives, which, during the summer, contain a quarter of a million bees.

By identifying plant DNA from pollen in the honey we can reveal which plants the honey bees have been visiting. This is only possible because the Garden has already DNA barcoded all of the native flowering plants of Wales as part of the [Barcode Wales](#) project.

There are pollen grains in the honey and the DNA is extracted from these, DNA barcode markers are amplified in the Garden's labs and the DNA is sequenced at the Aberystwyth University Genomics Centre. The DNA sequences from the honey are then identified by comparing them to the Barcode Wales DNA reference library to find out which plants the honey bees have visited. The Garden's wildlife [conservation volunteers](#) monitor what is in bloom at the time and this is compared with the plants found in the honey to see which plants the honey bees use compared to those that are available.

The main conclusion is that, during the spring, honey bees mostly use native hedgerow and woodland plants which means we must conserve these habitats. The results also show that honey bees are supplementing this main diet with smaller amounts from parks and gardens – proving what we do in our own backyard is crucial. A lack of suitable flowers means honey bees won't have the healthy and diverse diet they need to withstand the other pressures they face, such as pests, disease and insecticides.

The plants the honey bees used most abundantly are nearly all native plants (and their relatives) mostly found in hedgerows and woodlands.

Top 10 spring flowers foraged by honey bees for nectar and pollen

1. Willow (*Salix* species)
2. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
3. Cotoneaster (e.g *Cotoneaster horizontalis*)
4. Apple and cherry trees (*Malus* and *Prunus* species)
5. Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*)
6. Sycamore and other *Acer* species
7. Hellebores (*Helleborus* species)
8. Dandelions (*Taraxacum officinale*)
9. Holly (*Ilex* species)
10. Oak (*Quercus* species)

At a lower level, they also used the following garden plants:

Top 10 garden plants

1. Peonies (*Paeonia* species)
2. Camassia bulbs (*Camassia* species)
3. Grape hyacinth (*Muscari* species)
4. Viburnum (*Viburnum* species)
5. Wallflowers (*Erysimum* species)
6. Ornamental alliums (*Allium* species)
7. Skimmia (*Skimmia japonica*)
8. Anemone (e.g. *Anemone blanda*)
9. Roses (species with open flowers like *Rosa canina*)
10. Flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*)

This picture will change, though. These results only relate to spring. Laura Jones is continuing the project [as part of her PhD](#). She is investigating which plants honey bees use during the other seasons and how it varies from year to year. She is also inviting beekeepers to give samples of honey to find out the plants used by honey bees throughout Wales.

What can we do to help honey bees in our gardens during the spring?

The answer is: plant a willow, a hawthorn and some apple and cherry trees. Don't pull up the dandelions in your garden and add in some of the supplementary flowers like the spring-flowering bulbs (camassia, muscari and alliums) and shrubs (viburnum, skimmia and open-flowered roses) to best support honey bees. If you are planting or managing hedgerows, make sure they cohe top honey bee favourites and make sure you allow them to flower.

This article was published by the National Botanic Gardens of Wales

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Please contact any officer with your comments or suggestions.

Please send any suggestions, articles or comments or ideas to share with our other members directly to the editor at nic_bard@hotmail.com.

Yeovil 2017 Programme

2017

- 15th/16th July '17** – Yeovil Show - honey show a **must**
- 22nd July '17** – Apiary demonstration at Crispin Bond's apiary
- 19th Aug '17** – Apiary demonstration at Sarah Theo-Jones' apiary
- 19th Sept '17** – Anne Rowberry at TBD
- 17th Oct '17** – AGM at TBD
- 30th Oct '17** – Joint Meeting with SW at Over Stratton Village Hall
- 2nd Dec '17** – Skittles social evening, The Phelips Arms, Montacute (TBC)

2018

- 16th Jan '18** – Ken Basterfield (TBC) at TBD
- 18th or 19th Feb '18** – Lecture at TBD
- 20st Mar '18** – David Maslen at TBD

TBD - venue not yet decided!

April to August outside apiary meetings start at 2.30pm