



YEOVIL BEE NEWS

May 2018

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

**Next Meeting – Apiary Meeting
"Swarming and Swarm Control"
lead by Stuart Gould
2:30pm Saturday 19th May
at Marvin Collins' Apiary**

Swarming dominates our regular inspections of our colonies. Prevention, or at least "controlling" the swarming is a much discussed subject. Stuart has some techniques to make it easy (or at least not as difficult as you might have thought!). This is his introduction to you:

I have had bees for 10 years now and normally run about 6 - 7 production colonies. Swarming and swarm collection mean that number fluctuates during the season, and like many other beekeepers, I have lost a couple of colonies over the winter - something I will bring into the conversation. Harvest varies considerably, as we have no oilseed rape in the area and the local farmer has been on a concentrated dandelion eradication path. We are therefore dependant on decreasing fruit blossom in orchards, hedgerow plants, particularly bramble, lime trees and gardens.

All of the above does not stop swarming tendencies and that is what I would like to talk about. Swarm prevention is not feasible in reality, but controlling the swarming urge and using it to your advantage is not as difficult as it first appears.

Directions

See next page for detailed directions:

Directions to the May Apiary Meeting

Please note that on a Google Map the road now re-named 'Montacute Road' used to be New Road, which does run into Yeovil Road, once in Montacute.

All members coming to the meeting should head for the Yeovil to Montacute Road. If travelling from Yeovil (the west), there are considerable road works, due to Western Corridor improvements! Travel through the new Lufton estate (being built) & travel towards Montacute. Before you reach Montacute, on your right hand side you will see a Lodge Cottage on a sharp bend. Turn in here & I shall be there from 2 pm to direct parking, which will be inside the field gate, either on hard standing, or grass. If approaching from the east, through Montacute, drive out of Montacute and look to your left, after about 3/4 mile. You will see a lodge cottage near the gates into Montacute House Parkland. Look out for a white figure! It will either be me, or Steve Attrill.

My 'out apiary' is situated in the middle of a Thatchers Cider Apple Orchard ! My bees are 'doing their bit' in aid of the Somerset cider industry! If the blossom is still out, it is an absolute joy to walk through.

If any members are unable to walk the relatively short distance to the apiary, I am able to drive my car nearer the site. I can provide three folding chairs for anyone needing to sit for a while. There are no toilet facilities, but some 'private' areas behind hedges & bushes!! There will be limited refreshments available, but I shall offer cold drinks and light bites. I would suggest that, particularly if warm, members do bring their own water supply. Having suffered from dehydration, I know only too well how dangerous this can be.

There are no alternative arrangements, in the event of inclement weather, unfortunately.

For those of you with Sat Nav:- The Lodge Cottage is known as 'Odcombe Lodge' Montacute Rd. Post Code BA22 8TN. This can be confusing as it comes up as Lower Odcombe. Please do not turn into Lower Odcombe, which is on the opposite side of the road.

For information on the day, contact Marvin on 07801 694 962.

Marvin

April Meeting: Pat Lehain at John C's Apiary

Pat Lehain led a "look at the frames" inspection of one of John's colonies. He thoroughly described his approach to inspecting, from lighting the smoker, handling the bees, the state of the frames and his approach to swarm management (you can't control it!). A very interesting discussion with plenty of information exchanged. And a big thank you to John's colony who were amazingly well behaved, inspite of being opened for about one hour!

A big thank you to John (and his bees) for hosting the meeting and to the wonderful selection of cakes at the apres-bees. Delicious!

Nic

(More on the meeting in the Chairman's Message).



Coming soon ...

Event	When	Where	Details
Divisional Apiary Meeting	Saturday 19th May	Marvin Collin's Apiary	Stuart Gould leads on "Swarming & Swarm Control"
World Beekeeping Day	20th May	Worldwide	
Bath & West Show	30th May to 2nd June	Bath & West Showground,	A mega agricultural show with a wonderful Honey Tent
Divisional Apiary Meeting	Saturday 16th June	Andrew Cooke's Apiary	Roger Patterson leads the apiary meeting
The Yeovil Show & Divisional Honey Show	Sat & Sun 14th/15th July	The Honey Tent in the Yeovil Show Ground	Our divisional honey show and display & demonstration of honey bees
Divisional Apiary Meeting	Saturday 21st July	Malcolm & Sharon's Apiary	Ivor Davis leads the apiary meeting

From Your Chairman

I finished Coffin Road and a ripping yarn too, and too close to the bone with reference to the big players in the insecticide world, and the lengths they might go to, to stamp on those trying to tell the truth.

Wilding by Isabella Tree is another cracking read all about what happens when you leave the countryside to its own devices and give up farming. To have 440 species of moth, butterflies to dream of, nightingales singing and every species of owl nesting on your land is just a teeny little taste of the contents. I could not put it down and read it in two days.

Have you checked for Queen cells? Someone rang me and had Double Nationals with lots of them. Then there was a fast track with Nucleus whizzing off to Chilton Cantelo, Snelgrove boards coming out of the cupboard and split boards too for Demarree technique. All very exciting but all the Beginners will wince with the words, "Swarm lost, no honey and no money!"

People will say is has been a slow start for the bees but don't they that every year? I am looking forward a bumper year and lots of fun. In fact beekeeping is fun and I am looking forward to teaching beginners, grafting my own queens and the arrival of a new queen in the post from whom we intend to use the young larvae in our Queen rearing programme.

We has a super meeting with Patrick Lehain at my Bindwell apiary. Although I was not with him we employed the new idea that someone should take the Beginners with more basic approach and that fell to me being the host. We actually went through what was a vicious double brood the previous Autumn but had failed in the winter and had superseded. The frames were horrid with no wires in some which made some frames very fragile them not being attached at the bottom. We tried to find the Queen but failed, until in one most embarrassing moment, a frame disintegrated and the wax fell on to the floor. All thoughts of squashed Queens floated through my mind, but to our amazement there was the queen looking up at us, right side up like toast falling butter side up. Everyone remarked how big she was but how hard she had been to find earlier.

After this we retired to the Queen Camel Memorial for a sumptuous tea as everyone seemed to make something very delicious including my sister in law who made bee cup cakes with rather lifelike wings. Nice to eat too!

Happy Beekeeping! **John Carnegie, Chairman**

Divisional Logo T-shirts

As introduced last year, we have organised some high quality green polo shirts with the WBC logo.

This is stylishly modelled by yours truly and the stitched logo is shown in detail.

These shirts are very reasonably priced at only £16. You need to select your size and get in touch with Billl Patterson on 07789693203 or by email on patterson_32@sky.com.



Swarms

I have sent out a separate email requesting swarm collectors and requestors (those looking for a swarm) to contact me (Nic Bard) with their contact details. This information will be shared with the swarm collectors only.

Co-ordinating the swarm collection is always an overwhelming task for an individual so we are hoping that this register will help simplify it enormously - as long as the weather does allow the bees to build up and produce some swarms of course!

The Yeovil Show: 14th & 15th July

We are again planning to have a "honey" tent in the Yeovil Show where we will show off everything bees as well as some live bee displays. The Show is on Saturday 14th July and Sunday 15th. If you can help :

- On the days before the show to assist with staging the tents and displays
- On the days after the show to assist with taking the displays down and tidying the site
- on one or both of the days by talking to our interested visitors about bees
- or help with selling honey bee products
- or assist with stewarding,

please get in touch with John or Nic as we will be co-ordinating the efforts.

We will be holding regular co-ordination meetings leading up to the show so please come along and see what we are planning and see how you can help (the next one is Monday 14th May). I will be sending out meeting invitations regularly so come along to any that you can make, but if you cannot make the meetings, do let us know if you can help over the Show weekend as this will assist with the planning.

There will be lots of information in next month's newsletter to help you prepare your show exhibits. I have attached a copy of the Show Schedule and the Rules to this email. Please look through the schedule and select your preferred entries. If you will have difficulty getting your exhibits to the show on the day, just get in touch with me and we will find a way! Your exhibits are important to us!!

2018 Divisional Honey Show

We are planning to stage another Grand Honey Show at the Yeovil Show again this year. Plans are underway and the Bernard Diaper has been invited to perform the judging. See just above for details of the show itself and attached is a preliminary copy of the show entry schedule and rules. Have a look through it and decide what you would like to enter. I am sure there are several classes that you all can enter. So you can start preparing your entries nice and early. We are a fairly "informal" show so no entries will be criticised! You are all encouraged to enter something and start some discussions!

If you have a problem with getting your entry to the show or collecting it afterwards, have a word with one of the committee members and they will provide what assistance they can. ALL your entries are needed to make the show a success.

Asian Hornet Information

Rather than repeat all the information about the Asian Hornet - the pest which we are desperately trying to prevent from getting a foothold in the UK - the SBKA website home page has lots of details to help identify and report sightings. You can access the information here:

<https://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk/>

DO keep your eyes open for this pest and if possible, put out a lure to capture any that come your way!

And here is a novel way to eliminate the hornets without risking yourself on the firing line!

<https://rumble.com/v4o2jh-hornet-fighting-drone.html>

You will also notice that the home page of the SBKA site has links to all the latest BBKA and NBU news as well as a twitter feed. An excellent place to keep yourself up-to-date with all the latest beekeeping news! Access the link and try it now!

Homemade Steam Wax Extractor

We attended the recent Apiary meeting in Queen Camel on Saturday 21 Apr where the guest speaker (Mr Pat Lehain) mentioned using a wallpaper stripper as a wax extractor. Inspired by the glorious weather (which lasted until the early evening at least) and concluded in thunder, lightning and all sorts of bee chaos.

Anyway, inspired by Pat's advice, we decided to investigate and actually there are already quite a few working models 'on line'



and we quickly ignored the stainless steel models from the usual bee suppliers as vastly expensive. Digging around the net for some stainless steel (not aluminium as beeswax and this doesn't 'mix') we found that we didn't want a 2.4m length and again the costs were high. The kitchen sink was the obvious answer as it was bowl shaped and had a hole – ideal. Better still we found a really cheap simple stainless steel sink at B&Q for circa £25 that was both 50cm across and could be easily modified (my wife and fellow beekeeper always chastises me for this word). I plugged the side drain hole (overflow hole) and the tap-hole with a large stainless steel bolt, two washers and nut.

A quick bit of woodworking around the base and some legs attached (allowing a slot for a wax collecting device (bucket or bowl) and the sink was ready. Noting the advice online, we decided to cover the sink with a stainless steel mesh (spare floor) to capture all the non-wax debris. A standard National brood box (of length 46cm square) nicely fitted the top of the sink and now all we needed was a heavy roof (to stay put) and a steamer.

The steamer came from Screwfix (there are other High Street outlets to choose from...) for another circa £25 along with a 2 year guarantee. I then used the smaller steamer outlet and built a wooden frame around the steamer part such that it was both secure and closed any gaps to my appalling woodworking skills (I was never a 'chippy'). We filled the brood box with old surplus frames (x12) and put the steamer on utilising rain water. A quick warm up of the device took 10 minutes and then steam could be seen (and dripping wax) out of the bottom drain hole of the sink and into the container. 30 minutes later the wax stopped and we inspected the results. Success! Noting that additionally the steam nicely sterilises both the frames and the inside of the brood box.

The mesh floor nicely held all the detritus and all the wax had dripped through into the sink and contained. The device obviously uses electricity but offers several advantages over a solar extractor (size, time, efficiency and beside what sunshine ?), and also doesn't attract the garden bees!

We utilised the device in our kitchen and apart from some slight escaping steam (removed courtesy of the oven extractor), there was actually very little water condensate in the wax container and overall it was a very clean method of reclaiming old frame wax. I'd recommend device to anyone who wants to clean his or her frames efficiently and clearly a super could equally be utilised on the device. This will save considerable time and effort for us, as we try to recycle our wax brood frames every 2-3 years (subject to the amount of propolis and state of the wax after the season). The wax will now be boiled up in some rainwater and filtered to polish it off for our candle making exploits. Few hours effort and circa £50 we consider worthwhile. The wood was offcuts from another DIY job recently completed.

Steve & Marie Attrill



Divisional officers

President	Nic Bard	01460 221698	Treasurer & membership secretary	Sharon Blake	01460 242124
Chairman	John Carnegie	01935 851234	Librarian	Jacqui Taylor	01963 220329
Vice-Chairman	Marvin Collins	01935 426153	Newsletter editor	Nic Bard Nic_bard@hotmail.com	07877 284545
Secretary	Steve & Marie Attrill	01935 475964	Mentor Liaison Officer	Vacant	
Divisional Web-Master	Neil Cook	neil.cook@noware.co.uk	County Delegates	Malcolm Blake Steve Atrill Andy Dobson	

The Yeovil division secretary email address is : yeovilbee@gmail.com.

Please contact any officer with your beekeeping or organisation comments and suggestions.

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

Full details of our calendar, meetings, news and past newsletters are in the SBKA web-site and can be reached here:

<https://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk/yeovil.html>

Yeovil 2017/18 Programme

2018

- 19th May** - Stuart Gould leads apiary visit at Marvin Collins' apiary on swarming and swarm control.
- 16th June** - Roger Patterson leads apiary visit at Andrew Cooke's
- 14th/15th July** - The Yeovil Show and our Honey Show!
- 21st July** - Ivor Davis leads apiary visit at Malcolm and Sharon's
- 18th August** - Visit to Quantock Divisional Apiary
- 18th September** - Richard Ball talks about Beekeeping in Malta
- 16th October** - Jim Vivian-Griffiths talks about "Dancing Bees"
- 29th October** - Joint meeting with SW Division
- 20th November** - Divisional AGM
- 1st December** - Division Christmas Social skittles evening

2019

- 15th January** - Paddy Wallace from Quince Honey farm gives a talk
- 18th or 19th Feb** - Lecture Day speaker
- 19th March** - Pam Hunter gives a talk

April to August outside apiary meetings start at 2.30pm

Winter indoor meetings start at 7:30pm unless otherwise stated

All indoor meetings next season will be in the Ilchester Pavilion

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