

The Newsletter



Volume no 26 Issue 10 November 2019

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



Somerton Divisional Trophy Winner

There was one enormous omission from last month's newsletter. The winner of the Somerton Divisional Trophy was totally ignored. Sincere apologies to David Rose who scored most points in the Somerton senior honey classes. A worthy winner, and somebody, without whom, our Honey Show would not happen.

There has been much mentioned in the press and social media, recently, regarding contaminated and illegally augmented or altered honey. It is, of course, entirely possible for your honey to become contaminated without you having any knowledge of how it happened, or what the contaminants are. If it were mine, I would want to be alerted as I want to keep my reputation, and I certainly don't want to harm any consumers. To that end, I make no false statements about my honey, and label it in line with the Honey Regs. 2015. This means that I can be traced should there be a problem.

Honey is often bought as a gift for a friend, or relative, when on holiday, or to show off the produce of the area that you live in. Some suppliers don't demonstrate quite the amount of due diligence that I hope most of Somerton's members do. Others make wild claims as to the origin and contents of their honey jars.

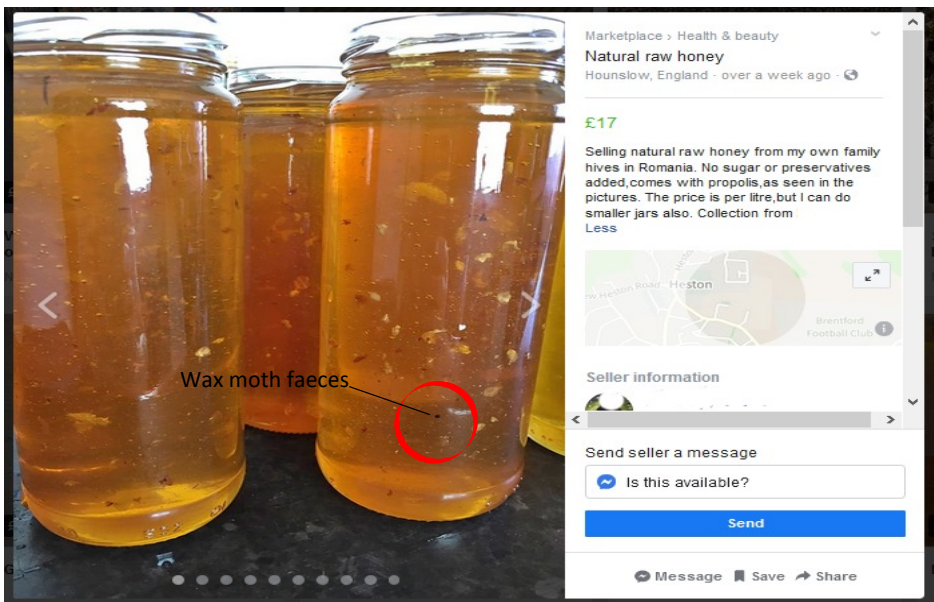
The honey below is being sold on Facebook marketplace as 'raw, fresh, organic, buckwheat honey', for £15 a container, but there is no indication of weight, or any label at all. Raw is not a legal description of honey in this country, and means absolutely nothing. As for the organic claim, I sincerely doubt that this producer has a Soil Association certificate of compliance. I can tell you that the person selling this honey, claims to be based in Chigwell, Essex – that well-known home of mono-culture, organic buckwheat honey, but that's all. And there are literally hundreds of similar advertisements on **facebook** marketplace. Have a look.



Should I give this honey to Mrs Scroggins next door, and she becomes ill, what shall I tell the public health inspector, who is bound to come calling? The seller of this honey is almost anonymous. There is a name in the advert and a supposed location, but anybody can create a **facebook** account in any name,

giving any location. There are no checks, and Mark Zuckerberg (owner of **facebook**) now wants to introduce 'end to end' encryption, so that even the police cannot access the relevant information.

Recovering from the seller in Chigwell's piece of creative marketing, I delved a little further and found this beauty. 'Natural raw honey from my own family hives in Romania. No sugar or preservatives added. Comes with propolis, as seen in the pictures'. Have a closer look at these two pictures. I have the benefit of a clearer image, but I can see loads and loads of wax, a few bits of propolis, but also several bits of bee anatomy, and best of all, wax moth faeces. Mmmm! Just what you want in your honey.



A large proportion of this honey claims to be pure, raw and organic, from Eastern Europe, Algeria and Morocco. How on earth is it getting into the country? Surely Trading Standards should be investigating these illegal, and totally immoral sources of honey.

Having seemingly blamed foreigners for all ills relating to the supply of questionable honey, I have to say that one advert. was removed before I could get a copy of the photo advertising it, but a Cornish beekeeper was selling honey in unlabelled, recycled, 2 litre plastic milk bottles (semi-skimmed, of course).

Somerton Beekeepers' Association - AGM 2019

Although it might not feel like it, this is probably the most important meeting of the year. It is at our AGM, that members can raise issues which concern them, provided the subject has been brought to the attention of our secretary, Jackie Mosedale, at least 14 days before the meeting. This must be done in writing, and contact details for Jackie are on the back page of the newsletter.

Officers off the committee are also elected at our AGM , and any nominations for any of the posts should also be sent to Jackie. Only those present at the meeting can vote for officer, so if there is somebody you would like to see on the committee, you should attend.

The meeting will be held at Somerton Parish Rooms, TA11 7NB on Thursday November 14th, at 7.00pm.

Mike's Bee Supplies

Just phone before you call
T: 01278 445158
E: mikes-bees@outlook.com
www.mikes-beesupplies.co.uk

Foundation

Jars

Hives

Suits

And more!

We take Cash or Card (no cheques)

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

Payment logos: PayPal, VISA, Mastercard, American Express, Debit

The advertisement features a honeycomb pattern with various text elements. The top left corner has the business name 'Mike's Bee Supplies' in a blue and yellow hexagonal layout. The top right corner contains contact information: 'Just phone before you call', phone number 'T: 01278 445158', email 'E: mikes-bees@outlook.com', and website 'www.mikes-beesupplies.co.uk'. The middle section lists product categories: 'Foundation', 'Jars', 'Hives', 'Suits', and 'And more!'. The bottom left corner states 'We take Cash or Card (no cheques)' and shows payment logos for PayPal, VISA, Mastercard, American Express, and Debit. The bottom right corner provides the address: 'Find us at 72 Wembdon Hill, Wembdon, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 7PZ'. Small bee icons are scattered throughout the design.

A big thank you

Our bees at the Apiary go into the winter in good spirits thanks to all those members, who were part of the Apiary Management Teams in 2019. Each week throughout the spring, summer and autumn one of the Teams inspects the bees and does the appropriate manipulations to keep the Apiary productive and in good heart. Each Team is led by an experienced Team Leader and the Teams are a marvellous opportunity to discuss the problems of the day and select the best management plan. It is a great way for less experienced beekeepers to get more experience with other beekeepers.

The Teams are now winding down for the winter but we would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to all of you involved. There are too many to list you individually, but THANK YOU and we will regroup in the Spring. Those of you who weren't involved in 2019 might like to consider joining us in 2020.

Joe King

Charges for loaning association equipment

In response to an enquiry made by an Association member "Where does the Association display its fees for loaning Association equipment?" the committee decided that a list of charges would be displayed in the "Bee Space".

You will notice the charges have increased because they have not been reviewed since 2003. John Speirs, who administers the loan of equipment, agrees with the increasing of loan costs. The new charges are listed below:

Wax melting tray	£2.00 per day
Steam wax extractor	£5.00
6 frame tangential extractor	£5.00 first day, £1.00 each subsequent day
Bee Suits	£10.00 each, for an agreed period
9 frame radial extractor	£5.00 first day, £2.00 each subsequent day
Settling tank with strainer	£2.00 per day
Poles and nets for use in public displays	£10.00 for one event

Honey Show 2020 - Judges' Comments

I know, I know, it's much too early to think about it. However, to encourage members to enter next year I thought you might like to read some of the comments our judges made about your entries.

Honey was well prepared this year.

Wax was very nice

Photography this year was wonderful

Chunk honey winner: one of the best entries I've ever seen

Naturally granulated: winner's honey was superb

Frame for extraction: winner worthy of being exhibited at a larger show

Jams: all very nice and well set

Crafts: lovely subject, amount of work is mind-boggling with such detail.

Incredible

Honey Crunch biscuits: exhibits nicely presented.

Well done everyone.

Fred Clarke (Chairman)

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

Somerset BKA Annual Lunch



The Somerset Beekeepers' Annual Luncheon offers a relaxed opportunity to share the triumphs and the failures of the recent season with fellow beekeepers and to enjoy a good lunch in a convivial location.

Sun 17th Nov 12:00pm - 3:00pm

Long Sutton Golf Club, Long Load, Langport TA10 9JU

The two-course lunch is a carvery (a vegetarian option is available) and pudding for a cost of £14.00. Tea or coffee can be purchased separately after the meal if you wish.

The Club can only cater for a maximum of 50 so, to avoid disappointment, please book early!

Send your booking (and the number who would like the vegetarian option), together with a cheque made payable to Somerset Beekeepers' Association, by November 11th at the very latest to:

Suzu Perkins, Tengore House, Tengore Lane, Langport, Somerset, TA10 9JL

Tel: 01458 250095 Email: apicrepe.tengore@talktalk.net

Bees and Elephants - Bees Abroad

Brian Durk gave us a short outline of the work being carried out by Bees Abroad, in Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Nigeria, Liberia and Ghana. It seems that bees are an invaluable aid to farmers, with their deterrent abilities, especially when it comes to marauding elephants. The eyes are an obviously vulnerable part of the elephant's anatomy, but the skin on their ears, and soft underbellies, is also prone to attack.

Wire strung between hives shake the hives when elephants walk into them, and the African bees are extremely defensive. They attack the elephants, who learn very quickly. Once stung, they will never go near a beehive again, and the wires can be removed. More amazingly, so can the bees. After being stung, even an empty hive is a deterrent.

African bees are notorious for their defensive nature, with an Italian beekeeper having recently perished as a result of their stings, but it seems that they are also prone to absconding if disturbed too often.

Other speakers

As our AGM is held in November, we don't have an evening meeting with a speaker, and the same is true of December, but simply because members are gearing up for Christmas.

January is a different story, and indeed our speaker's subject will certainly be different. Jonathan Powell is a trustee of the Natural Beekeeping Trust, and concentrates his efforts on hollowing trees, so that bees can be re-housed in the resultant cavity. There might even be some interesting dialogue after the talk.



Apiary Manager Required.

Due to unforeseen circumstances Somerton BKA's divisional apiary at Upton requires a new Apiary Manager to take over ASAP. Enquiries, please contact Fred Clarke on 01278 722830 or Eric McLaughlin on 07910 764069

We need your vote.

At the AGM the committee will be inviting you to vote on the issue of connecting main services to the Apiary building at Upton. In the first instance we are thinking of a water supply and in the future when funds allow, the installation of an electricity supply.

There is no intention, at present, to connect to the sewer system.

Roving Reporter



This copy of the newsletter is being sent to you from New Zealand, but I will be going back to Canberra in Australia before returning to the UK. Most of you will remember that Stuart Anderson, co-inventor of the Flow hive, visited us in Long Sutton, two years ago. While in Canberra I'm meeting up with him again, and hoping to learn about the new developments which are, apparently, in the process of being finalised. BBKA News have asked me to update them on modifications and developments, which should be published some time in 2020, but Somerton division will hear it all first.

Unbelievably, the weather in Melbourne was so cold last week, that although there was apple and other blossom everywhere, there wasn't a bee to be seen, although up north in Lismore, New South Wales, where Stuart lives, temperatures were in the low 20s.

Stewart Gould

Equipment Sale

It was quite amazing. A few of us turned up early - to be ahead of the game, and by 9.45am the car park was almost full and there were people carrying stuff around all over the place. There were plenty of bargains to be had, the association had a stall in the main building, Gerald Fisher set up shop in the Fraser Wing and Jerry Spence had a well stocked stall in the car park.

The most common remark was 'I spent a lot more than I meant to', but they all seemed quite happy to have done so. By 11.30 it was coming to a rapid close, as people seemed to have bought what they wanted, and the three stalls had done a cracking trade.

The Association certainly raised some much needed funding. We have money, but with the prospect of installing a permanent electricity supply, comes expense. Our generator does a good job, but hauling it round to the back of the building every time to connect it up, coupled with its incredible thirst, means that connecting to the mains seems quite an attractive prospect.

BBKA Modular Exams

For the past few years, several members have tortured themselves by swatting for 'the modules' It's at this time of year that a decision has to be made about taking an exam in March 2020. The Study Group are moving on to Module 5 this time around, but if anybody is interested in covering any of the modules, then Fred Clarke would like to hear from you.

Study Groups tend to concentrate on one module and use the BBKA correspondence course system, whereby a real expert marks and comments on the groups agreed answers to set test papers. The results of that marking are sometimes debatable, but when was there ever one right answer to a bee-keeping question.

The abiding criticism of the BBKA exams is that they don't make you a better beekeeper. I'm not entirely sure that's true, but I can assure you that studying for, and taking exams, certainly broadens your knowledge. Putting that knowledge into practice is what makes a better beekeeper.

For Sale

2 English (Ashforth style) plastic feeders for feeding sugar syrup. These allow feeding quite large quantities of syrup in one go.

2 National deep brood boxes. These are designed to take the larger 14 x 12 frames. They come complete with the appropriate frames, some with foundation in. These are excellent for larger colonies that can be rather cramped in the standard National brood box.

The owner is retiring from beekeeping and would like them to go to a good home. A modest price to be negotiated.

In the first instance contact **Joe King on 01749 890357**.



Getting ready for manuka

The weather in south island New Zealand has been unseasonably cool, with temperatures as low as 2.5C in one place that we stayed. Consequently, the manuka blossom has shown no signs of coming into flower. There are stacks of hives everywhere, just waiting to be shipped to the wooded hills, which are totally covered in this invasive tree. It is actually a native of Australia, but like an incredible amount of plant and animal life here, was introduced - and it has taken over, covering most hillsides, including that very large one in the background of the photograph.

In north island it is considerably warmer, and the manuka is showing signs of flowering, but it is all about 2 weeks behind schedule, leaving the poor honey producers a little bit worried.

I saw a lot of hives when I was here 3 years ago, but having visited much more of the country this time, I am just amazed at the sheer scale of the honey industry in New Zealand. Talking to one shopkeeper, who was selling general honey rather than manuka, I was told that a lot of the 'manuka' honey sold in New Zealand, isn't genuine. Who would have thought it?

Dates for your diary

**Somerton BKA
Annual General Meeting**

Thursday November 14th
7.00pm
Somerton Parish Rooms,
TA11 7NB

President & Secretary

Jackie Mosedale
01458 241146

Chairman

Fred Clarke
Pauline.fred@outlook.com
01278 722830

Vice Chairman

Eric McLaughlin
jandemclaughlin@gmail.com
07910 764069

Treasurer

Steve Horne
01278 662335
Steve.horne1@btinternet.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

Stewart Gould
01749 860755

County Delegate

Keith Sturgess

Deputy Delegates

Sally Lye
Suzy Perkins

Apiary Manager

Joe King
01749 890357

Extraction Equipment Loan

John Speirs
01458 241831