

The Newsletter



Volume no 26 Issue 9 October 2019

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

Honey Show Special



Back row L to R: Ray Pattemore, David Rose, Geoff Blay

Middle L to R: Karen Rose, Stewart Gould, Wendy Caldwell, Susan Osborne, Catherine Fraser.

Front: Pauline Clarke (with silver plate), Nancy Burdett, Douglas Burdett.

All the Winners

Who won what, and all the photographs from the show are on the following pages.



Steve Horne presenting Susan Osborne with the Novice Shield. Susan also won the Special Novice Award



Douglas Burdett receiving the Novice Trophy (runner up in Novice Classes) on behalf of his father Richard Burdett



Catherine Fraser being presented the Challenge Cup for most points in the Somerton Honey Classes. She also won the composite class and the National Honey Show Blue Ribbon for best exhibit in show.



Ray Pattemore receiving the runners up prize in the Somerton Honey Classes. He also won the Perkins goblet (drinks classes) and the Allcomers' Honey Class-es



Wendy Caldwell receiving the Alan Bromley award for best Somerton member's exhibit in the show



Our newest member Geoff Blay, receiving the Langford Perpetual cup for the best light honey



Pauline Clarke receiving the Pearce Cookery plate for most points in the cookery classes



Stewart Gould receiving the John Lindars Memorial trophy for the photography classes



Karen Rose being awarded the prize for most points in the Allcomers' non honey classes



Nancy Burdett receiving the Children's award for the best exhibit in the Children's Classes

HONEY SHOW 2019

What a success! The Honey Show committee asked for 300 entries and our members responded by creating 315 entries. When displayed they were a sight to behold.

I am always amazed to see evidence of the talent our members' possess. Some of the art work in wax and through the lens was stunning. So much so the judges asked the owners for permission to use their work in future BBKA publications. They also decided to award a "Blue Ribbon" which is only given when exhibits are considered to be of an exceptional standard. This award went to Catherine Fraser. In addition, they also awarded the "Best Novice in the Show" to Susan Osborne and considered the best exhibit in the show to be the work of Wendy Caldwell. These 3 awards show the high standards that we achieve.

Some say the sun shines on the righteous; it must be true because we had fabulous weather in which to stage our show. This, plus our new venue, seemed to be a match made in heaven.

Thank you all: everyone who made an entry, volunteers, judges, catering staff, car park attendants (Barton St David scouts) and stall holders for all playing your part in making our show, once again, "the best in the west".

Fred Clarke, Chairman



Three of our trusty stewards, who are beyond reproach: Wendy Caldwell, Caroline Ireland-Jones and Susan Osborne



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David Charles judging the Novice Section for Susan Osborne, Gillian Islip, Stephen Bond and Jim Dawson



Judge Bernard Diaper looking for granulation and foreign bodies in the light honey classes, assisted by steward Mark Caldwell



Judge Hazel Blackburn and steward Jeff Brewer examining more run honey



Some of the beautiful frames ready for extraction



Steve Horne, Guest of Honour and Treasurer, still had to do his day job of selling honey



And finally: making sure that it all goes to plan, Chairman Fred & his wife, Pauline Clarke

From Bus Stops to Bee Stops



The Dutch city of Utrecht has installed 316 'bee stops' throughout the city. The Netherlands is home to 358 different bee species but more than half of them are already endangered and have been placed on the Dutch Red List of threatened species. In response to the growing problem, officials in Utrecht, the country's fourth-largest city, are investing in urban beekeeping in a rather ingenious way.

The roofs are filled with wildflowers to attract bees. Up to 316 bus stops have recently been transformed into little bee sanctuaries. These bee sanctuaries or rather 'bee stops' are essentially standard bus stops with grass and wildflowers planted on the roofs to encourage pollination. Not only do bee stops support the city's bio-diversity by attracting honey bees and bumblebees, they also help capture fine dust and store rainwater.

The green roofs also trap dust and collect rainwater. Bee stops are tended to by workers who drive around the city in electric vehicles. But the scheme requires little maintenance because the roofs are mainly composed of sedum plants, which are a favourite among pollinators and require very little water to survive. To improve facilities for the human visitors, the bus stops have also been fitted with energy-efficient LED lights and bamboo benches.

Thanks to Jackie Mosedale and Lonely Planet

GRAND SALE OF SURPLUS EQUIPMENT

Saturday 12th October from 10am at the apiary End by 2pm or sold out

When the members questionnaire was returned 76% wanted an Autumn sale. We have listened to the membership.

Items for sale will include;

Brood boxes - Crown boards - English feeders - Mesh floors - Poly nucs - Queen excluders - Roofs - Smokers - Hive tools and various other items.

In addition members will be able to sell their own Clean surplus equipment (**no used frames or used wax**) in a CAR BOOT SALE. We expect a donation of 10% of sales to the division.

If you plan to sell equipment we need to know in advance to organise suitable parking arrangements, so please contact our Vice Chair Eric McLaughlin by phone or e-mail. Details on back page.

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



The Wonders of Mobile Phones

It's amazing what can be done with a mobile phone these days. This photo of bees drinking from an outdoor cat's water bowl, was taken with a hand held Samsung Galaxy J6 (low budget) phone, but (for the tech savvy) it has a 13mp camera. That means it has better resolution than most standard cameras. The real secret, however, is a free downloadable app. called **CozyMag**. This will allow you to zoom in on small things, like bees, without disturbing them.

Cropping the image is possible on most phones, but by simply loading it on to your computer, you could use Windows own photo editing software. Most versions of Windows have the capability This photo was cropped and the exposure adjusted in just that way.

Maybe bee photography would be a good subject for an evening talk. We'll have to work out a way of projecting onto a screen what the camera is seeing.

Beekeepers Question time

Although not as well attended as it could have been, this interactive evening was thought by all who turned up, to be worthwhile. A veritable gold mine of beekeeping knowledge was available in the shape of Megan Seymour (SBI, NDB, MB), Roy White (Queen rearer extraordinaire), Alex Morrice (Extremely experienced beekeeper), Bridget Knutson (MB) and David Charles (MB and past president of BBKA) .

The questions were thought provoking, and some of the responses contradictory, but it shed an interesting light on differing views.

Bees and Elephants

Thursday October 10th - 7.30 pm, Somerton Parish Rooms TA11 7NB

Brian Durk is a founder member of Bees Abroad, which is a charity set up to help disadvantaged people, in sub Saharan Africa, earn a living through selling the products of their beekeeping.

As was mentioned in last month's newsletter, extra income is derived by using hives to deter elephants from straying from wildlife reserves, on to agricultural land.

Loan of divisional resources

The Division has a number of gazebos, tables, chairs etc which were purchased for use at Division events. Members have been able to borrow these items for their own use without any charge.

However, this has inevitably increased wear and tear, and the risk of damage. The committee has considered its responsibility for members' safety, and having applied due diligence in considering if loaning equipment to members can continue, a decision has been taken that these items will only be used for events where the Division is being represented, such as educational events, apiary training days etc and the loan for other uses will be discontinued.

This does not include extraction equipment, which is still freely available.

Fondant Recipe

Feeding bees during the cooler months used to be considered 'bad beekeeping', but as winters have got warmer, bees are expending energy when flying out to look for food on fine days. On their return to the hive they replace that energy by devouring their stores. Fondant is the stuff to use in winter. Products like Candipollene (a pollen supplement) are intended for boosting egg laying in Spring, and not the ideal food for the cooler months.

Buying fondant is fine, provided you find a source of pure fondant, and beekeeping supply companies have it in abundance, but it's not cheap. Other sources of fondant are risky, as they nearly all contain chemicals dangerous to bees. Why not make your own? It's relatively simple and much cheaper. Start hefting your hives soon, so that you know how much weight they are losing, but remember that hives gain weight in wet weather, as the wood soaks up moisture.

Ingredients:

1kg granulated sugar
300ml water

Other materials:

Large plastic or wooden spoon to stir and ladle out.
Cooking thermometer
Large saucepan
Semi-transparent take away containers.

Place the sugar in a saucepan and pour on 300ml of boiling water. Heat the mixture until it boils, then keep on a rolling boil & monitor the temperature.

The temperature is critical, in order to set to the required consistency. Your mixture will only reach the required temperature when the correct amount of moisture has boiled off.

As soon as it reaches 230°F, remove it from the heat. Most recipes say 234°F, but I end up with a rock if I do that. Place on a tiled surface, or something cool and stir as it cools. Some recipes mention stirring once the mixture reaches 150°F, but I find that crystals are already forming by then. Stir thoroughly but not too vigorously, and the mixture will start to go cloudy, then milky and thicken. As soon as it starts to thicken, stop stirring and pour the mixture into

the containers. **It is vital to fit lids, or you will lose more moisture than required.**

Notes:

You can use multiples of these quantities.

1 kg sugar will fill 2 takeaway containers

Semi-transparent take away containers mean that you don't have to lift them to see what has been eaten. Just raise the roof and look – less cold drafts.

Fitting lids will prevent further evaporation of moisture while cooling and stop it attracting moisture when cool.

If you can depress the surface of the cooled fondant with your thumb, you've got it right.

The stirring helps to keep the crystals apart while setting, meaning a softer set.

Overheat the mixture, and it will set like a rock. Break it up, add more water and try again.

Contaminated Honey - a point of view

There were widespread reports of contaminated honey being exhibited at Apimondia, the World Bee Conference, in Montreal recently, with many entries being removed from shelves. The intentional adulteration of honey is a criminal offence in most countries, whereas the unintentional contamination of honey resulting from bees ingesting pesticides, antibiotics or other chemicals, is more an indication of the world we live in. At Apimondia, there was accidental contamination, but most honeys had been altered on purpose. Some claimed to be from one country, when the pollen content proved differently, others contained corn syrup and various other 'enhancements'.

All samples of own brand honey removed from British supermarket shelves for testing recently, were contaminated, and a leading national brand contained a colouring agent. The word fraud was used as a generalisation in the Apimondia case, but in the British tests it seems conclusive. It should be pointed out that no British supermarkets have their own honey packaging facilities, and so the contamination happened earlier in the production chain, but it is worrying to think that all samples were dodgy.

We have known for a long time that much, much more Manuka honey is sold around the World than is produced, and some claims mention a figure of 5 times as much, but we never dreamt for one moment that commercial fraud was happening on our own doorsteps.

It's possible for hobby beekeepers to contaminate their honey, accidentally, with sugar if feeding is not properly regulated, but the vast majority of us can rest assured that our honey is pure and unadulterated, even if we don't have control over where our bees forage, and the average beekeeper could not know that their honey contains these stray chemicals. Perhaps we should all take heed, but promote the authenticity and genuine nature of our products. If you ever wondered if you are charging too much for your honey, you only have to stress the unadulterated nature of your honey which has been subject to nothing more severe than having been filtered through a 200 micron cloth.

Stewart Gould

Don't tell DEFRA! (APHA)

Under a proposed new law, from 1st January 2020 it will be illegal, in Texas, for anyone to catch and re-house a swarm of bees unless they have:

- completed an approved 160-hour course in beekeeping and swarm removal
- carry public liability insurance of £500,000 and employer's liability insurance of £250,000
- have a licence issued by, or on behalf of, the Texas Department of Agriculture!

Courtesy of Lune Valley Beekeepers via Ebees

Dates for your diary

Bees and Elephants

A talk by Brian Durk

Of Bees Abroad

Somerton Parish Rooms

Thursday October 10th - 7.30pm

Somerton Parish Rooms

TA11 7NB

Used Equipment Sale

Saturday 12th October 10.00am

At our apiary

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