



Somerset Beekeepers' Association



NEWSLETTER

October 2017 no.131



Please send any copy for the January 2018 edition to me by 15th December.
Email: friend.elizabeth@gmail.com.

Letter from the Chairman.



It feels like the summer has gone in a flash – partly because of the lack lustre weather but also because a lot has been going on behind the scenes in SBKA.

Our beautiful and informative new website is live and I hope you enjoy using it and discovering more about SBKA and your own Division.

The design and functionality has been driven by how Members and the public want to access information; now the site works just as well whether you're using a PC, tablet or mobile. There are lots of new features

including a fully integrated calendar, photo gallery and Members' blogs and, for the first time, the Divisions' pages are autonomous. Naturally there will be a few teething problems, so if you spot any errors or problems, please use the site's Contact Us page to report problems to our new webmaster, Neil Cook. And, of course, I'd like to thank Neil (a Yeovil member) for putting in an incredible amount of work to create and populate the new site which I believe is the best Association website in the UK.

In the next few weeks the Executive will meet to discuss other ways in which SBKA can meet the challenges of the times and further engage with the public as requested by Divisions' delegates at our recent Council meeting.

Honey Shows - while the shows are popular with the public, relatively few Members enter the competitions. Can we learn any useful lessons from the most successful?

EFB - this year Somerset has the dubious honour of being the number one county for EFB, according to BeeBase. Can we rise to the challenge laid down by the NBU's Giles Burge, our Special Lecture speaker, who said we could eradicate EFB with the right measures?

Partnership with Ferne Animal Sanctuary near Chard - this summer Ferne invited SBKA to explore ways in which we might work together. A few of us, including South West Chairman Robert Kemp, spent several hours with Director (and beekeeper) Elaine Hayes walking around the site. Now we need to look at how we can develop a partnership in line with our aims and objectives and that works for Ferne, too.

And, finally, what a beekeeping year! I've heard reports that the harvest is one of the worst for years with totals down between half and two thirds on last year. I hope you have managed to pull your colonies through the difficult season and that you are one of the lucky ones – I met one beekeeper who has cropped 800lb from 20 colonies!

Anne Pike chairman@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Exmoor Beekeepers host their **6th Annual Honey Show** of the modern era at the Tithe Barn in Dunster, TA 24 6RY, on **Saturday 7th October 2017**.



You are most welcome to enter lots of classes and come along and enjoy a day out in the beautiful historic village of Dunster in West Somerset.

Entry is free.

We have 28 classes made up of novice, open and all-comers. Please look on the SBKA and/or Exmoor BKA websites for details.

At 10:30 am, Clare Densley from Buckfast is coming to talk to beekeepers in the morning whilst Suzy Perkins undertakes the task of judging.

Throughout the day, tea, coffee and cakes, will of course be available as will a light lunch.

From 12.30 until 4.30 the general public, particularly families and children, are invited to join the beekeepers to admire all the entries; to browse our education corner where experienced beekeepers will be on hand to answer questions; to enjoy various bee-related activities for the children, particularly face painting; and to wander around several stalls with an eye to Christmas presents.

It is a fun day out and intended primarily to encourage beekeepers to partake and the public to become more aware of the importance of bees to our human world.



South East Division Honey Show will be held at

Market House, Lower Woodcock St, Castle Cary BA7 7BH

Sat 14th Oct 10:30am -1:00pm

We will be holding our annual Honey Show for the first time in Castle Cary Market House. The move, from Charlton Musgrove, is in order to make the Honey Show an event for all the family where we can show the public what we do and so that people of all ages can learn about bees and beekeeping.

There will be a school art competition and entries will be exhibited on the day. As well as prizes awarded by a judge, the public will be asked to vote for the picture, which they like best.

The Association's honey show has classes for various kinds of honey and wax and craft products and items. There will be honey to taste and buy, displays of beekeeping equipment, and teas and coffees.

Further information from Les Kimberley on 07855899257.



THE NATIONAL HONEY SHOW

Thursday 16th October – Saturday 28th October

At Sandown Racecourse KT10 9AS

Competitive entry forms are due by 9th October.

Further information is on the website <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/competitive-classes.php> and entry forms at <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/download-schedule.php>



The main lecture programme for this year includes lectures by Tom Seeley, Heather Mattila, Kim Flottum, Will Steynor and Peter Tomkins. On Saturday there is a lecture programme specifically for beginners with lectures by Roger Patterson, Meg Seymour, Pat Lehain and Daisy."

Please note: Apparently, it's best to use the postcode KT10 9RT rather than the one above.

Somerset Beekeepers Annual Lunch 15 October 2017



I am pleased to see we are already getting a lot of bookings for the County Lunch again this year especially as space is limited and we did reach capacity numbers last year.

The date is **Sunday 15th October** arrival from 12-30 to sit down and eat at 1pm at **Long Sutton Golf club, Long Sutton, TA10 9JU**

The lunch is two courses, a Carvery with up to 4 meats and a choice of deserts. There is a vegetarian option available on the day. The total cost will be £13.50. Tea or coffee can be purchased individually after the meal if you wish.

I do hope you can join us this year. They have said they can only cater for fifty and we nearly exceeded that number last year, so to avoid disappointment please book early.

Please send me your bookings (and the numbers who would like the vegetarian option) along with **cheque** as soon as possible **made payable to Somerset Beekeepers.**

The latest date for receipt of booking is Friday 7th October subject to space availability.

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

Tel: 01458 250 095 Email: apicrepe.tengore@talktalk.net

SBKA members are invited to a Joint Meeting with East Devon BKA

Thursday 11th January 2018

at 7.30pm

Roger Patterson will be talking on

'Dead Bees Don't Buzz - Surviving the Winter'

To be held at Whitchurch Canonorum Village Hall

Nr Bridport, Dorset, DT6 6RF



SBKA Lecture Day

Saturday 17 February 2018

9.00am -5.00pm

**at Edgar Hall, 8 Cary Court, Somerton Business Park,
Somerton TA11 6SB**

Tickets will be available from divisional secretaries priced £5 to include refreshments. Please bring a packed lunch.

Programme

9.00 am Coffee

9.30 am Opening by Ken Tredgett, President of the SBKA

9.35 am "*Queen Rearing*" - Ged Marshall

10.40 am "*Pollen*" - Michael Keith-Lucas

11.40 am coffee

12.10 pm "*Varroa Treatments*" - Jeremy Owen of Vita (Europe) Ltd

1.10pm Lunch

Simon Jones RBI will be available during lunch to help with any queries about bee diseases

2.20 pm Thanks and presentations

2.30 pm "*The year in the life of a bee farmer*" - Ged Marshall

3.30 pm Raffle and tea

4.00 pm "*The evolution of plants and insects*" - Pam Hunter

5.00 pm Close



BBKA Spring Convention 2018

Next years convention will be held on

Friday 13th April to Sunday 15th April 2018

at Harper Adams University , Newport, TF10 8NB

According to the BBKA website, programme and ticket prices will be available nearer the time.

SBKA Special Lecture

25 April 2018

at Edgar Hall 8 Cary Court, Somerton Business Park, TA11 6SB
Margaret Thomas, CSP, NDB will be speaking on the subject of
“Swarm Control for the Busy Beekeeper”.

Biographical details taken from the NDB website:

Margaret Thomas lived in Essex where she and her husband Dick learnt their beekeeping in the 1970s under the tutelage of Ted Hooper County Beekeeping Instructor at Writtle Agricultural College. She retired to Scotland in 2009. During the time spent in Essex she passed her BBKA examinations to become a Master Beekeeper and then went on to get her NDB in 1982. She then joined the NDB tutor team for the weeks' residential course held at the time at Sparsholt and later at York.

At Ted Hooper's retirement she joined the group of some 12 beekeepers led by Clive deBruyn (the newly appointed CBI) discussing varying topics and culminated in a two week stay with queen rearer John Keefus in Toulouse, France. The group spent the time grafting (with adapted matchsticks), making fondant, filling mini nucs, putting them out for mating and placing mated queens in travel cages ready for the post.

During the 39 years in Essex Margaret was an active member of the Essex Beekeepers and served on the CEC as Southend Delegate, Disease, and Examinations Delegate, managed the Essex Honey (Barleylands) Show for a couple of years and was awarded Life Membership of the Essex Beekeepers in 2010.

She is one of the Moderators of the BBKA Examinations Board and also tutors for the BBKA Correspondence Course.

She is a retired Bee Farmer – the BFA that represents commercial beekeepers in UK, and during that time managed between 40 to 60 colonies. As a bee farmer she served on the committee as Magazine, Pesticides, Minutes and Pollination secretary, the latter managing placing around 1000 hives in Kent on top fruit, some hives on borage and oil seed rape north of the Thames. Representing the BFA she joined a research group as the beekeeper providing the colonies for a project on pyrrolizidine alkaloids in ragwort and borage honey. She was awarded Life Membership of the BFA. Dick took over editing the Bee farmers Bulletin for some years.

Margaret has given lectures in a number of counties in England, Scotland, Ulster and also been guest lecturer a number of times at the weeks' course at Gormanston just north of Dublin. She has been the weeks' tour lecturer for Scotland twice.

She is now a committee member of the Scottish Beekeepers Association, where her brief is all subjects related to hive products. Beekeeping as an amateur with a limited number of colonies in a fickle climate is a new challenge. She continues to teach beekeeping.

She updated Ted Hooper's *Guide to Bees and Honey* and the *Beginners Bee Book*. Margaret is currently the secretary to the NDB Board.

PAST EVENTS

THE COUNTY HONEY SHOW and Taunton Honey Show



Taunton beekeepers Jenny and Sid Gammon scooped the blue ribbon for the best exhibit at the Taunton and Somerset honey show held at Taunton Flower Show with their exceptional soft set honey.

Jenny and Sid were also awarded three trophies for their hive products including prize-winning honey, wax flowers and candles. David Pearce and Graham Welfare were awarded four trophies each while Rosemary and Eleanor Burgess won three.

Forty classes attracted entries from Taunton Division as well as Exmoor, Somerton and Devon and were viewed by many thousands of people who visited the two-day show.

Peter Maben, Chairman of Taunton Beekeepers, said: "The show is a great shop window for bees and honey, providing visitors with plenty to see and do as well as showing the enthusiasm and passion of local beekeepers."



School entry

Ken Tredgett, President of Somerset Beekeepers, added he was delighted to see so many visitors swarm to the feature and hoped they would leave with a love of bees, a desire to plant for pollinators and an appreciation of the work that goes into producing every pot of honey.



Jenny Gammon received the Blue Ribbon award from Ken Tredgett

The Blue Ribbon for the best exhibit in Show in the judges' opinion: Jenny and Sid Gammon

County Cups:

Jubilee Cup - Most points in classes 1-18 inclusive: D.Pearce;

Miss M.D Bindley Cup - Winner class 2 Medium Honey: S.Perkins;

Terry Arnold Perpetual Challenge Trophy: Winner classes 18 -22 incl.

The Duffin Challenge Trophy: (Cake of Beeswax) Winner class 12 R & E Burgess;

The Clifford Langford Award for Mead: Winner most points in classes 8 – 9: G.Welfare.

Report following Central Division's Honey Show in the Bee and Honey Tent at the Mid-Somerset Show.



We are fortunate to be able to hold our Honey Show at the prestigious one day Mid-Somerset Show.

This year's show on Sunday 20 August was a great success and our Bee and Honey tent had a very high footfall for the entire day. The team of volunteers that manned the tent throughout the day was very ably lead by Elaine Culley.

It is always a brilliant opportunity to showcase the honey bee and beekeeping and there was a great deal of interest in the displays and the honey and wax products. The demonstration hive and wax candle rolling were very popular and members were on-hand to answer the many and varied questions from members of the public.

Although the number of entries for the honey show was down this year, sales of honey and related products were brisk.



Just a reminder that the **SBKA AGM** is on
10th March 2018

hosted by Wedmore and Cheddar Division.

It will be held at

the Isle of Wedmore golf course, Lascot Hill, BS284QT
Further details will be circulated nearer the time

ALL ABOUT BEES

SOMERSET HONEY SURVEY

We would like to know about your honey crop!

An accurate picture of the harvest gives us an opportunity to localise the BBKA honey survey work so we can talk to the press and our MPs about the state of our apiaries and if, say, a husbandry factory is identified, take steps to support improvement.

Please spare a few minutes and let us know:

1. Quantity of honey per colony
2. How does this compare with last year
3. Rough split between Spring and Summer honey
4. Your explanation for why the crop was up or down on the previous year
5. And your name and location

Email Anne Pike chairman@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



Hornet Alert

Everyone should, by now, have been contacted about the discovery of the Asian Hornet in North Devon and be aware of the need to keep a look-out in their area and to put up traps.

The NBU has also notified everyone on their database.

If you are not registered with them please consider doing so in order for them to be able to contact apiaries in any infected area.

Their website is www.nationalbeeunit.com

E: nbuoffice@apha.gsi.gov.uk or, T: 0300 3030094

Bulbs. Read this before you buy! *Extract from The Guardian 30 September 2017*

Recent articles in the newspapers have drawn attention to the fact that many bulbs are sprayed with pesticides and fungicides. **Neonicotinoids** are used as a flower bulb drench to keep aphids and other sap-sucking insects off plants, and are common pesticides in the bulb industry. The half-life of neonicotinoids is estimated somewhere between 34 days and three years as they break down in the soil; it is not only flying insects that are affected during that time, but bacteria, amoebae, worms and insects in the soil, too. Every bee that visits your bloom, every worm that tunnels around your bulbs, is tasting a tiny bit of poison.

The solution is not to give up planting bulbs, but to buy sustainably and naturally produced ones.

Sites mentioned which sell organic bulbs include www.organiccataogue.co.uk, www.crocus.co.uk and www.naturalbulbs.nl

NEWS FROM THE DIVISIONS

Ed. It's somewhat disappointing that more divisions don't tell us what they've been doing but it's up to you!! You might not think that you have much to say but have you had any good speakers that you can recommend, have you thought of new ideas that may improve your interaction with schools or with the public. Have you just got a good recipe for a honey cake!!

The SBKA does not work if it's simply a collection of divisions doing their own thing. We need to work together. It's just my opinion and you might disagree but if you do have anything of interest for the next edition, then please let me know.

Central

This year, Central Division is to hold additional divisional meetings over the winter months. Topics to be covered will include: candle making, selling honey, wax and other hive products and preparing exhibits for showing. The confirmed dates will be published on the website.

There has been a lot of interest shown in our 2018 Beekeeping for Beginners' Course, which starts in February 2018, with already a confirmed take-up of over half the available places.

For Sale

A SAF Natura Stainless Steel motorised 9-frame radial extractor, with a new motor and control box fitted this year. It has had very little use, cost £800 and is for sale at £300. This is a rare opportunity to obtain an electric extractor for your division. Contact Chrisi Kennedy on 07710 252155 or at ckennedy@projectconsultants.co.uk

Taunton



Extraction day .

One of the highlights of the Taunton season is extraction day when many of our beginners spend the day with David Pearce at his very well equipped premises.

This season our teaching apiary has 16 colonies and they produced a total of 330lbs; two thirds of the frames had to be cut out because the honey had granulated and only a few combs were suitable for cut comb.

Wedmore and Cheddar

We've had a good series of around My Hive meetings and a mixed result in terms of honey and diseases. Some people have had excellent honey crops and some have been a lot down on previous years. So much seems to depend on specific locations within the area. Varroa has been a problem. Those people using icing sugar do seem to have come off better and some of us do question the efficacy of MAQS strips. It would be interesting to have some feedback on this from other divisions.