

The Newsletter



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SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



Not long to go

The Honey Show will be here faster than we have allowed time for. It always seems to happen that way, so start your preparations now. Beeswax blocks are time consuming and should be a pale lemon yellow, and honey needs to be crystal clear, with no bits. Make sure multiple jars all have the same lot number, your frame for extraction contains no pollen and your candle has the right size wick. Cut all your lumps of fudge to the same size and make sure your loaf doesn't sag. Other than that you should be fine.

**FREE
admission**



Honey Show

and

Artisan Market

on Saturday 22nd September

at

Long Sutton Village Hall

TA10 9NT

1.00 pm to 5.00 pm

Come and see the bees and taste their honey!

Something for everyone:

Cider, Cheese, Cakes, Pastries, Pies, Cards, Plants,

Jams, Preserves, Pottery, Cosmetics,

Knitwear, Candles, Gifts

and of course HONEY!



Organised by Somerton Beekeepers

The Bee Space

Chairman Fred keeps referring to The Bee Space which is the name decided on for our new building. Stewart Gould promised to carve a sign to be ready for the opening in April of this year and then managed to damage his hand while making laths or the benches at the apiary and underwent three operations to make his fingers work again. Finally after nearly 5 months, the sign is finished and in place, and every visitor will know the name of the building.



Honey Jars



We have a stock of honey jars at the apiary - both 12 oz. (340g) hexagonal jars with twist off gold lids, and 1 lb (454g) jars with gold screw lids. It is the latter which you will need for the honey show. They are competitively priced at £23.00 per. Box. There are 84 jars in a box of 12oz. And 72 in a box of 1 lb jars. The price includes lids. You must buy a complete box, but you could share them with a friend if you don't have a use for them all. The 12oz hexagonal jars are particularly well priced, as they are normally more expensive than the 1 lb jars.

We have a supply of spare lids too. These can be bought in small numbers and are priced at 12p each. Bear in mind that these prices are because we bought in bulk, and are free of delivery charges. If you wish to buy any jars from our stock, contact Steve Horne or Fred Clarke (Fred is away until the end of the first week of September).

Sugar Prices 2018

Using nothing more complicated than a website called mysupermarket.com, and the websites of a couple of known discounters, I have managed and to pull this list together for you.

Although they have been the cheapest in the past, I couldn't find a price for Farmfoods of Yeovil. It may be worth checking in store.

The cheapest price of all was available at Tesco's Cityside store in Belfast. On August 15th they were selling 1 kg of Tate & Lyle granulated for 17p. I bet they didn't have any left on August 16th.

Although B&M Stores are cheap, they won't let you reserve products over the phone. You will have to turn up and take your chances. Having said that, there was a pallet full just inside the door in Shepton Mallet, and they had more in reserve. B&M also have branches in Yeovil and Bridgwater. They also pushed the trolley to the car and loaded it for me.

The nearest Poundstretchers are in Taunton & Chard.

Supplier	1 kg	2 kg	5 kg	25 kg x 2
Booker Foods	60	£1.50		£28.00 (56p/kg)
Tesco	69			
ASDA	65	£1.28		
Morrisons	70	£1.10		
Sainsbury	70		£3.30 (66p/kg)	
Waitrose	69	£1.35		
Ocado	69	£1.35		
LIDL	59			
Iceland	65	£1.20		
B&M Stores	50			
Poundstretcher	49			



Taster Day 2018

We haven't run a Taster Day for a couple of years, as it seemed that the bubble of popular interest in beekeeping may have finally burst. Our Beginners' Courses attract a steady 30- 35 people each year, with a peak in 2015 of 73 people signing up. Taster Days were much the same. With a maximum number of 30 being the capacity of the classroom which we used at the Avalon Marshes Centre, we had no trouble filling places, but then in 2016 we attracted only 6 people. Last year we gave it a miss altogether.

The subject came up again at a committee meeting and it was agreed to give it another go, as we do add to our funds from such events, mainly because all helpers are volunteers, and the only costs involved are for the magnificent lunches that Alison Dykes and her team provide. That money goes to subsidise all the events held for our members throughout the year.

We promoted the event in the Western Gazette, by means of a free 'advertorial', which the paper was only too happy to print, and on the 'Where can we go in Somerset' website. We had 20 people sign up for the day, which was just about the right number for our new building 'The Bee Space'. It was one of the many baking hot days which we have had this summer, with temperatures rising to 26°C and a cloudless sky.

The two 'classroom sessions' hosted by Joe King and Stewart Gould were well received and, as Joe put it, not too complicated. Between sessions our guests were given 11 different honeys to sample and they judged them on taste. Steve Horne had two honeys which shared first choice position with what was supposed to be a 'ringer'. Yes! This is the second time that Tesco's everyday honey (90p) has shared the honours. Various excuses were made, the most popular being 'It's what they are used to'.

The afternoon session involved opening three of our hives and came to a natural conclusion when it just got too hot to carry on. Many declared that they were amazed at how calm the bees were. It seems that they had expected bees to be trying to grab them by the throat.

Several participants thanked the organizers for a memorable day and a crackling lunch before departing, and even more have emailed to express their appreciation, declaring that they will be back for the Beginners' course in January.

Mike's Bee Supplies

Please call before you visit
T: 01278 445158

E: mikes-bees@windytor.myzen.co.uk
www.mikes-beesupplies.co.uk

National
BS Deep wired foundation £1.25 each
BS Super wired foundation 80p each

For a copy of our new 2018 Catalogue
Please email mikes-bees@windytor.myzen.co.uk
with your email or postal address

We take
Cash or card
(no cheques)

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

Hives
Suits
And more!

Frame making

One of our members has requested that a lesson on frame making should be organised. It would be primarily of interest to beginners and the less experienced beekeeper but as usual anyone can attend. The session will last an hour or two and will be held at our apiary building, The Bee Space, on a date and time to be arranged. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are interested (email pauline.fred@btinternet.com or 01278 72830).

Thanks,

Fred Clarke

Chairman

Apiinvert. A syrup ready to feed bees. Unlike sugar solution it requires no mixing, more readily accepted by the bees, less work required for the bees to invert (not wasting energy), more close to a natural food.

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 answer 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.

Apiinvert. 1 - 4 boxes @ 16 Kg £23 each, 5 + boxes £22 each

Apifonda. 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**

Behind the scenes

Often seen running around shaking her hair and banging her head with her hands disappearing into the distance. She is always present at Apiary functions, doing her utmost to help and make things run smoothly. She is a relative newcomer who has shown great enthusiasm for what we do from the first day she started. She presents the committee with ideas that they can pursue and is not offended if for some reason or another they are not carried out. Final clue she is another one who makes exceedingly good cakes! Thank you Sally Lye for your enthusiasm and hard work.

Fred Clarke
Chairman

Basic Assessment

Congratulations to all four of our members who took and passed their Basic Assessment this summer. Sharon Humby, Sally Lye, Nick Clarke and Charles Sundquist all passed with flying colours. Charles and Nick even came away with credits. Excellent news, and our 100% pass rate continues .

Comment on hot summers

This year during the prolonged absence of rain there were various comparisons with the last time this happened in 1976. I thought it would be of interest to visit the notes I made in 1976 and they are reproduced below.

Mild winter. Flow very good in the spring. June heat wave lasted till September . No honey brought in after June. Honey is dark with high % of honeydew. Heather yielded well. – surprising. Nuc queens slow to mate and high % failure rate. Total honey yield was 600lb from 19 hives an average of 31.5.

The total take was far better than in 1975 when it was 310lbs from 18 hives. Is this following a pattern as 2017 was poor and 2018 looks to be much better?

David Morris

Buckfast Abbey Visit

Once more we had an extremely useful and informative visit to Buckfast with Clare Densley sharing her, seemingly, inexhaustible knowledge. She puts everybody at their ease, new beekeepers and established hands alike. She manages to find anew angle on things, and this my fourth visit, was equally as enjoyable as the first.

I visited with Stuart Anderson, co-inventor of the Flow hive, in May of last year, and he gave Clare a FLOW Hive to try. I was anxious to find out how she had got on with it in light of the fact that ours has shown reluctance to accept the plastic 'self extracting' supers. So many bees were crammed into the brood box that they swarmed twice. With that in mind, the first question I asked Clare when it could be done discreetly was 'How did you get on with the FLOW?' '***** thing swarmed twice', she replied. I did confess that we had the same problem, and we both sighed with relief.

As we had several new beekeepers with us, I asked her the perennial question, which I ask for the benefit of others, on each visit. 'Are you still breeding queens?' Not only have no queens been commercially produced at Buckfast Abbey for many years, but she has just bought some queens in. Remember that when tempted to buy a '*Buckfast queen*' for £40.00. It's links with Buckfast Abbey are tenuous at best. These days, a 'Buckfast' queen is any queen supposedly bred for its quiet nature and productivity, but it didn't come from that part of Devon.

Have a look at Clare's garb in the photo - no gloves and flip flops, but she does have elastic bands around her ankles.

Will we be going back next year. I sincerely hope so.



Somerton Committee meeting

It was an uneventful meeting this month with little other than the safeguarding policy discussed. Somerset BKA had produced a policy which wasn't met with general approval by Somerton's committee, and especially the three members whose careers involved these matters. Eric McLaughlin, Steve Horne and Jackie Mosedale then set about composing what they believed to be a suitable policy for our needs. This has been submitted to Somerset BKA approval. BBKA had been dragging its heels, and had not produced one for national use, which it was believed would be the best way forward. Since the Somerton meeting, a BBKA Safeguarding policy has surfaced, which, for the most part, concurs with Somerton's ideas. There is perhaps still some way to go.

Continuation Course

There has been much debate about more experienced members not being given the attention that they deserve and being 'excluded'. Some complain that most of our programme is for new beekeepers, with the emphasis firmly placed on them. The winter programme of events, topics and speakers doesn't support that, but if more experienced beekeepers want to be involved, here is your chance. Gerald Fisher used to run a continuation course, which when he gave it up, fell into the default position of using the winter programme speakers to talk on suggested topics. It wasn't a structured course any more. It would be good to see that re-instated. It needs an experienced beekeeper, or two, at the helm. Dive in - become involved. Your association needs you etc. Who will step forward? It will be interesting to see.

We continually ask what you would like to have included in the programme of events, but there have been virtually no suggestions. If you can think of anything or anybody you would like to see, or listen to in Somerton, get in touch. If you want it, let us know. Contact Fred Clarke at pauline.fred@btinternet.com or Joe King at jk.pilton@btinternet.com

MAQS Treatments

Somerton BKA placed a bulk order for MAQS varroa treatments for our members and got enough to fulfil the requested amount of treatments. The majority of people who placed orders duly turned up on the day and collected their treatments. Unfortunately, quite a few people seem to have forgotten that they placed orders, and Somerton BKA have been left holding the baby, so to speak. There are 3 tubs (30 treatments) of MAQS in the 'Bee Space' building, which were ordered and not collected. That represents £141.00 of your money. Could those who ordered, but have not collected, please contact Steve Horne on 01278 662335, or email him at steve.horne1@btinternet.com to arrange collection.



That £141.00 would secure the services of one excellent speaker for our winter programme.

Honey Crop

Most people are reporting much better returns than last year, with some new beekeepers getting a crop in their first year. Three members in particular have had amazing results. Mind you, they are fortunate enough to get a Spring harvest as well as a main crop, with one gaining from Oil seed rape, followed by apple blossom, as she is next door to an 80 acre orchard, and finally, as her bees are in the grounds of a stately home, she benefits from the late flowering silver leaved lime trees too. She harvested 808 lbs from 9 production hives. Another member got 800 lbs from the same number of colonies, while one managed 900 lbs from 10 hives.

Slightly better than last year then .

Dates for your diary

**Beginners' Practical Course
Seventh and final Session**

Preparing for winter

Saturday September 8th - 10.00 am

Divisional Apiary

Downslade Lane, Upton

**Wax Recovery and Exchange
Marin Anastasov**

Thursday September 13th - 7.30pm

Somerton Parish Rooms

Somerton Divisional Honey Show

Saturday September 22nd

1.00 - 5.0 pm

Long Sutton Village Hall

Martock Road

Long Sutton

TA10 9NT

Somerton BKA AGM

Thursday November 15th

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