

Somerset Bee-keepers' Association NEWSLETTER



Better Weather in 2014

We all know that 2012 was the worst year on record, for beekeeping, since David Charles was a lad. The rain started in February and just kept coming. Queens were not getting mated properly and some didn't return from their mission. 2013 was going to be better, but March was cold and wet, so a bad start again. Then it improved, the sun came out and all was well with the world, or was it? The prolonged dry spell meant that blossoms and flowers in general stayed in bloom for a shorter period and nectar was in short supply for many. Some faired quite well and got a good return, but not all. Let's hope that 2014 is just a normal year, whatever that may be.



Issue 116
Spring 2014

www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

Somerset Beekeepers' Association November Council Meeting

Because the meeting on 14th September was to be considered to be inquorate, decisions made at the meeting were brought forward for ratification. These were as follows.

- There should be an urgent review of the rules to remove any ambiguity
- Treasurer's report, Capitation should remain at present levels and Voluntary Research contributions should increase to £2. (amended from the minutes)
- BBKA ADM (Annual Delegate's Meeting) - SBKA is to submit a proposition that BBKA News should be renamed the British Bee Journal.
- A Somerset list of lecturers/demonstrators should be established
- A policy review group should be set up. It was agreed to vote on the recommendations from the inquorate September meeting en-bloc and they were unanimously accepted.

It had been suggested that the county join IBRA (The International Bee Research Association) as a block membership, so that the resources would be available to all members and it was unanimously agreed that SBKA should join as a Bronze Corporate Member for 1 year and then review the situation. The resources available are truly amazing and it would pay every member to investigate the possibilities. To gain access to the IBRA web site and all its resources, simply go to www.ibra.org.uk. On the left hand side of the home page you will see the log in section. In the email box type IBRA@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk and in the password box type [Somerset](#). That's all there is to it.

Senior Honey Judge Award

Congratulations to Suzy Perkins, who is known to most of us and has gained her Senior Honey Judge award. She has worked tirelessly for this and many people around the country have praised her judging and friendly approach.



Somerton & District Apiary

Hot on the heels of Taunton & Quantock Divisions, Somerton has acquired planning permission on a piece of land at Long Sutton and hope to be erecting a building on the site in the coming year. Nothing as large as Quantock', or as grand as Taunton's, Somerton's building will be 8 metres x 6 metres. Once the planning permission had been gained, a motion was put to the AGM and passed by a large majority of those present. The New Year should see a hive of activity. A picture at this stage, would just show a field.

QR code for Somerset BKA website

A lot of you would probably have been wondering what a QR code is. Well! That's it on the right. If you have a smart phone, you can now scan this image, provided you have the appropriate app. By doing this, your smart phone will take you straight to the SBKA web site, without having to do all that laborious typing.



It does work. I have just loaded it into the newsletter from my desktop pc, and have scanned it using my smart phone. My smart phone instantly showed the SBKA web site. If this all getting too complicated for you, don't worry, you are among friends and there will be counselling sessions for those who have been disturbed by all this technology.

Royal Bath & West Show 2014

As you already know the Show Committee has requested a list of the people stewarding in the Bee and Honey Marquee very much earlier this year. So, the time has come to seize the chance of taking an active role by stewarding at this year's Show. Last year's Show was excellent - this year could be even better!

If you would like to take part and/or can help with setting up on Sunday, 25th May, please contact me on 01373 464736 or e-mail me

tredg@talktalk.net as soon as possible. The rota for stewards in the Marquee is either all day, 9.00am to 5pm, or for a half-day, 9.00am to 1.30pm or 1.00pm to 5pm.

Your help is needed and will be very much appreciated, so don't delay. Make a note of the dates (May 28 - 31st inclusive), ring/email me and make sure your name is on the rota as soon as possible.

Ken Tredgett



Somerset BKA AGM 2014

The 2014 AGM of Somerset Beekeepers' Association will be held at the Shrubbery Hotel, Ilminster on Saturday March 8th at 2.00pm. The speaker will be Bob Maurer, chairman of Surrey Beekeepers' Association and author of Practical Microscopy for Beekeepers.

Like all Somerset Beekeepers' Association meetings, this is an open meeting and all members are welcome to join the throng. If you would also like to join fellow beekeepers for a carvery lunch, you should forward a cheque for £15.00 before February 27th (made out to the Shrubbery Hotel) to Bridget Schneiders, Park Farm House, Donyatt, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 0RN. Bridget can also be contacted on 01460 52473 or by email at dominics@globalnet.co.uk.

If you wish to partake of lunch and hear Bob Maurer, whose book is viewed as a refreshing approach to a difficult subject, it is recommended that you arrive by 12.00 noon for drinks between then and 12.30pm when lunch will be served.

National Honey Show Results

Looking through the results of the National Honey Show, only two names stuck out as being Somerset BKA members. Suzy Perkins of Somerton & District Division won 1st prize in the sweet mead class and Ken Edwards of Quantock Division won 3rd prize for a video or DVD on a beekeeping subject

The Beekeepers' Quarterly - *The Quality Quarterly Scheme*

Using the Quality Quarterly Scheme, members of Beekeeping Associations can receive The Beekeepers Quarterly at £20 per year, a reduction of £10 on the full print subscription price and £10 on a digital subscription, a reduction of £8.

A growing number of Associations are taking advantage of the scheme for both print and electronic versions of the magazine and maybe your Association falls into this category. However, if not it is very simple to join. The Association needs to collect the names and addresses of interested members which are then forwarded to Northern Bee Books. Those individuals already in full subscription will receive a refund of the unused part of their subscription. We will then bill the Association, and ask that they pay with one cheque rather than a series of individual cheques. During the year the Association may add further subscribers, at a pro-rata rate but we suggest that all subscriptions end with the same issue.

We can supply, on request, sample back copies for your members to see, together with subscription forms that can be distributed at your next meeting, or they may view a sample issue at <http://beekeepers.peacockmagazines.com/>

Subscriptions can be started at any time of the year but many associations include this offer with their Annual Membership Renewal letter. If you would like to participate, contact your secretary and enquire if it is possible. Contact should then be made with Northern Bee books direct.

Free Cappings Drier



Maybe I'm just a 'tight wad', but I thought when glancing inside a redundant washing machine that the stainless steel drum looked remarkably like a honey cappings drier. I know how much they cost because my neighbour tells me every time I borrow his. They are available from one of the main beekeeping suppliers for £100 + postage of £8.50. Now that's a lot

of money. The washing machine drum was looking more attractive by the minute, and of course, was free.

Have you ever tried to get the drum out of a washing machine? I doubt it. They are trapped inside a waterproof housing, which has two great lumps of concrete attached for stability and then they strap a motor to it. That's what makes washing machines so heavy. That entire assembly is suspended on large springs. In order to free the drum, you need to release those springs, which are under tension. That's after you have disconnected all the electrical wiring and the drive belt, which is also under extreme tension. Once you have got the drum and its waterproof housing out of the machine, you have to remove the waterproof housing. Then – and only then do you have a 'free' stainless steel drum, that with a small addition or two and added cost, will make a cappings drier, a patio heater, or a hat for a cow. Suddenly £100 + £8.50 postage seems quite reasonable.



Mice in beehives

Scientists from the University of Chicago Medical Center have found that a compound from honeybee hives arrests the growth of prostate tumors in mice. And the techniques the researchers used are likely to give a lot more information on how and why many natural remedies do -- or do not -- work.



Propolis is the honeybees' own caulk, used to patch holes in their hives. It's a resinous mixture that the bees obtain from trees and plants. Propolis has been used for centuries as a natural remedy for many ills, ranging from sore throats to allergies to burns. It's also shown some anti-cancer activity. But it's gained very little acceptance in the medical community because there's almost no solid evidence on how it works or if it works at all.

Now we know why they go in there.

I Haven't Got Any News For You



It would appear that after all my showboating with regard to the inclusion of the Somerton Newsletter in the 'Have I Got News For You' programme, that they have not found the content silly enough for inclusion - so far. Silence descends on our house each Friday evening in the hope that Somerton & District Beekeepers' Association will be mentioned, but nothing to date.

Lecture Day - Saturday February 14th

There are still tickets available for the Lecture Day. This popular event which is held every year, is heavily subsidised by the County Association. The cost is £10.00 for members of Somerset BKA. If you would like tickets, please contact your divisional secretary, who will also give you details regarding lunches and refreshments.

As usual, the venue is King's of Wessex Academy, Cheddar, Somerset and the all day event starts at 9.00 am.

The speakers are listed below with a brief history of each:

Gerry Collins, MSc NDB

Gerry Collins started beekeeping at the age of eleven years as a junior member of Hagley and Stourbridge branch of Worcestershire BKA, passing the BBKA preliminary (the old name for the Basic) exam one year later in 1959. Today he is a BBKA Master Beekeeper, Senior honey judge and Holder of the National Diploma in Beekeeping. Have served in various capacities at local, county and national level. Currently, he is on his third chairmanship of the BBKA Exam Board and second chairmanship of Doncaster BKA. He also ran the BBKA Correspondence Courses for eighteen years, writing much of the course material.

He is an examiner for every BBKA examination and a General Husbandry trainer. He played a major role in the introduction of BBKA modular exams (writing six of the original module syllabi) and have set and marked several module papers. Having spent most of his working life in Yorkshire lecturing in biology at Doncaster College, retiring in 2007 to spend more time with his 25 colonies enabling him to take even more photos to add to an existing large collection of images on all aspects of bees and beekeeping. Many of his photos have been used to illustrate the new BBKA 'Course in a Case' and some BBKA leaflets.

Professor Dave Goulson

Dave Goulson is Professor of Biology at the University of Sussex. He received his bachelor's degree in biology from Oxford University, followed by a doctorate on butterfly ecology at Oxford Brookes University. Subsequently, he lectured in biology for eleven years at the University of Southampton, before moving to Stirling in 2006, and then to Sussex in 2013. Dave works mainly on the ecology and conservation of bumblebees. He has published more than two hundred scientific articles on the ecology and conservation of insects, with a particular focus on bumblebees. He is the author of *Bumblebees; Their Behaviour, Ecology and Conservation*, published in 2010 by Oxford University Press, and of *A Sting in the Tale*, a popular science book about bumblebees, published in 2013 by Jonathan Cape. He also founded the Bumblebee Conservation Trust in 2006, a charity which has grown to 8,000 members.

Dr Dino McMahon

After finishing his PhD at Oxford in 2010, where he studied the evolution of an unusual parasite (Strepsiptera), he took up a research fellowship at Queen's University Belfast investigating causes of disease decline in UK pollinators. He is interested in the close interplay between hosts and their parasites. How do these relationships evolve and what are their ecological impacts? For most living communities, single host-species interactions are an unrealistic representation of the natural world. These are better viewed as multiple communities of hosts and parasite species. Honey bees are host to at least eighteen viruses, two microsporidia, parasitic flies (*braula*), trypanosomes (*crithidia*), ectoparasitic mites (*varroa*); and bacterial and fungal pathogens like American Foulbrood and Chalkbrood.

Dino is interested in how disease interactions are shaped by this wider community. Do parasites enter into conflicting or co-operative relationships when they co-infect the same host? Does this result in raised or reduced virulence, and does this depend on host variables such as species, age, caste, or even order of parasite arrival or dose? Several non-native pests and pathogens of high impact (e.g. *varroa destructor*, *Nosema ceranae*) have also recently emerged as problems in honey bees and coincide with recent honey bee losses. How have these novel parasites altered the disease landscape?

Demise of honeybees in Northern China

48% of all honey consumed in the UK is imported from China, yet China's indigenous honeybee (*Apis cerana*) which previously survived under varied geographical conditions across China, has decreased dramatically in numbers, due to environmental pollution



and competition from Italian bees (*Apis mellifera ligustica*) that were introduced to China just before the turn of the 20th century.

With the demise of bees across huge tracts of North Western China, pollination relies increasingly on the wind and human intervention. Pears are a specialty of Hanyuan county, Sichuan province. Farmers here can usually harvest about 5 tons of pears a year, but this depends on artificial pollination rather than honeybees.

Each April, the farmers collect flowers, and brush male anthers to obtain pollen, which will be dried for two days. They then tie a handful of feathers on a long bamboo pole, to imitate the hairy bodies of bees, and the feathers are lightly dipped in pollen and then applied to flowers in order to pollinate them. Hundreds of farmers climb up trees to pollinate flowers, one by one. "It was unbelievable the first time I saw farmers doing it," says Tang Ya, a pollination researcher from Sichuan University.

"For fruit growers, artificial pollination can guarantee profits, but as more young people leave their homes to seek jobs in cities, I'm afraid that artificial pollination will be very difficult to achieve in less than two decades". A hive of bees can pollinate 3 million flowers a day, but a person can pollinate only 30 trees.

Dates for your Diary



January 2014

Wed 14th	Somerton	1 st Introductory class - Somerton United Reformed Church Rooms
Wed 21st	Somerton	2 nd Introductory class - All classes at above venue - 7.30pm
Wed 28th	Somerton	3 rd Introductory class - As above
28th	Somerton	AGM - The Parish Rooms, Somerton - 7.00pm

Febtruary

Wed 4th	Somerton	4 th Introductory class - As above
Wed 11th	Somerton	5 th Introductory class - As above
Saturday 14th	Somerset	Lecture Day - Kings of Wessex Academy, Cheddar
Wed 18th	Somerton	6 th Introductory class - As above

March

Saturday 8th	Somerset	AGM - The Shrubbery Hotel, Ilminster - 2.00 pm
--------------	----------	--

Members are welcome to attend the meetings of any SBKA division, but it is suggested that you check with the host or secretary when attending the meetings of another division, as the time or venue may have changed. Further details are often available on the website or divisional newsletters. This list is taken from the Yearbook and may have changed or been added to since it was originally published.

Neo-nicotinoid ban in place

The British Government has reluctantly complied with EU requirements and a two year trial ban came into force on December 1st 2013. It will be interesting to see the results, as some claim that two years is not long enough for the residues of the three main 'culprits' to have been purged from the eco system.

And finally..... From New Zealand

A Te Puke beekeeper who stole nearly \$14,000 worth of company assets, including 400kg of bees, has been sentenced to 140 hours' community work. Leon Raymond Guy, 36, who earlier pleaded guilty to six charges of theft by a person in a special relationship, was also ordered to pay \$13,879 reparation, when he was sentenced by Judge Thomas Ingram in Tauranga District Court.

From the New Zealand Herald

I'm wondering what the special relationship was

Editor: Stewart Gould
Email: newsletter@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk
Address: 1 The Folly
Ditcheat
Shepton Mallet
Somerset BA4 6QS
Mobile: 07739 345271

The newsletter is also available on the SBKA web site www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

Copy deadline for next newsletter: 26th Feb 2014

©2013 Somerset Beekeepers' Association

Any views expressed within this newsletter are not necessarily the views of Somerset Beekeepers Association nor any area division