

Somerset Bee-keepers' Association NEWSLETTER



Late Spring

Although blackthorn was everywhere from mid February onwards, rapeseed has been abundant for the last four weeks and dandelions have grown in profusion, there are mixed reports of honey yields, with some beekeepers claiming the usual 'I've had seven supers on since January' and others saying that although the bees are building up really well, the supers remain stubbornly empty. Swarming seems to have got off to a slow start as well, with only a few reports of members being taken by surprise. Bait hives at the ready.



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www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

BBKA Public Liability Insurance

The following statement was published in Wedmore & Cheddar 's newsletter and has caused quite a stir.

'It's easy to assume that, because we are covered by third party public liability insurance through the BBKA, collecting swarms is a relatively risk-free business. However, you should be aware that the insurance we



have through the BBKA carries an excess of £500 for third party property damage claims. Since this is more likely to occur than damage to people (hopefully at any rate!!), collecting that swarm might turn out to be a costly exercise. Be warned!

Details of the excess on the BBKA website (under FAQ's) are currently incorrect but the above has been confirmed by the BBKA'.

Many newsletters are circulated nationally and internationally through an internet hub called Ebees, and this was the case with the Wedmore & Cheddar newsletter. Since then the matter has been discussed in various forums and apparently, was a topic of conversation at the Chairman's Day at Stoneleigh last Saturday.

Dorset BKA have issued a statement to all their members regarding this matter and have suggested that members inform property owners that swarm collectors will not accept liability for damage to trees, shrubs and the like.

No official statement on the subject has been made by Somerset BKA at this stage. There is a meeting of the council on May 10th, so watch this space.



The Wonder of Bees, BBC 4 – Martha Kearney

Also causing a stir at many levels, is this series and its content. Although it has drawn many people's interest, alerting them to the plight of honeybees and, indeed, bees in general, I would urge new beekeepers to be very careful in accepting the details quoted and procedures followed, as gospel. In episode two, Martha and her Master Beekeeper, abandoned a queen supersedure manipulation. She had bought a queen by post and placed her in an introduction cage in a new WBC hive with just three frames of bees from the hive which they were going to re-queen, because the bees were far too feisty. The original hive was about six feet away, so all the flying bees went home - fine.

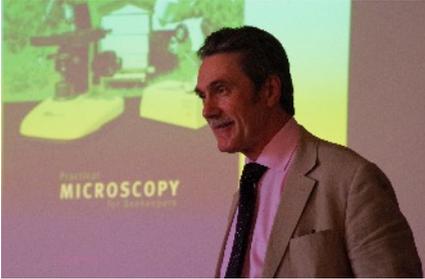
After three days, the next move was going to be to take the frames with the new queen and place them back in the original hive, after killing the old queen. Just in time it was decided to give the old queen a chance and establish a new colony with the new queen.

In another part of the programme Martha tells us categorically that worker bees hatch in 16 days (that's the queen Martha) and bees don't eat the formic acid in MAQS strips either. The fumes kill the mites. She freely admits that she has been keeping bees for ten years with no tuition and feels that it is about time she got to grips with things. The picture of bees on stray comb is a still from the programme and is a pretty good indication of the state of her hives, which seem to die off at an alarming rate. Last winter she lost three out of six.



With so many erudite and experienced beekeepers about, it is a shame that the BBC decided to show somebody getting it wrong, or maybe that was the point?

AGM of Somerset Beekeepers' Association



Prior to the AGM, which was held at the Shrubbery Hotel in Ilminster on a sunny March day, the waiting throng was entertained by an informative talk by Bob Maurer on practical microscopy, which is coincidentally, the title of his book. The talk was illustrated with some amazing images.

As Jackie Mosedale had served her three years in the chair, Jonathan Friend of Wedmore & Cheddar Division, who has been vice chairman, was elected to the post and thanked Jackie for her contribution.

David Berkeley, a member of Taunton Division, was presented with a framed certificate by SBKA President Caroline Butter, to honour his fifty years as a beekeeper.



To round off the presentations, this year's winner of the West Country Honey Farms Award, is Gail Johnson, who was presented with her trophy



and crystal bowl by Jenny Gammon, last year's winner. Nominations for this award are made by the members of SBKA and the winner, who is judged to have made a significant contribution to beekeeping, is decided by a panel of previous winners.

Jill Purdie of Yeovil & District Division was confirmed as Yearbook editor, which was just as well, as the yearbooks she had edited were delivered to the Lecture Day at Cheddar in February.

Helicon Focus



Mention of this was made in the article about the talk given by Bob Maurer at the Somerset BKA AGM. Bob mentioned two particular websites relating to macro photography. One was Nano Flight Showreel and the other was Helicon Focus. The Helicon Focus website will give you a fascinating insight into the world of focus stacking. That is a technique of taking multiple shots of one subject, changing the focus slightly for each shot. The programme then selects all the in focus areas and piles them up, one on top of the other, and you end up with a macro photograph with incredible depth of field.

For the uninitiated, depth of field is the amount of the photograph which is in focus. With a landscape it is desirable to have the entire picture in focus, and this is achieved by using a small aperture, which requires a longer exposure. In portraiture, or still life, it is only the subject which is important and so a larger aperture and faster shutter speed can be used. The same is true of sports photography, where the action is the most important thing and a fast shutter speed is often essential.

Macro photography has built in problems. Because of the extremely close focus, getting a good depth of field is very difficult. You would have to use a very slow shutter speed to compensate for the extremely small aperture. With small objects, such as bees, which have a habit of moving, obtaining a sharp image, with all of the subject in focus, is consequently very difficult. That's where Helicon Focus comes in.

www.heliconsoft.com/heliconsoft-products/helicon-focus

Stolen hives

The following is an email received on **April 26th** through **Ebees**. The cartoons were not included.



*I regret to have to report that I have had two hives stolen from one of my apiaries on Snitterfield Fruit Farm near Stratford-upon-Avon. The orchard where they were located was sold in January and I had some difficulty finding the details of the new owner and have only recently made contact. We saw the hives on **15 February** and I have now been told by the person who bought the orchard that they were not there on **1 March**. I assumed that he had moved them - he is a beekeeper himself - but he says that he assumed that I had moved them out.*

The brood boxes were branded F01. One hive had bees and was in a single National brood box labelled with a tree tag numbered 3302; it had one super. The other hive had two National brood boxes with tree tags numbered 3358 and 3970; it had no bees. Frames were marked 'PE' and a year code using an indelible marker. The floors were of a unique design as shown here: <http://www.stratfordbeekeepers.org.uk/Newsletters/September2005.htm/>

The theft has been reported to the police and I am offering a reward for information leading to the conviction of the thief. I would be grateful if this information could be circulated to your members.

Peter Edwards – Stratford on Avon Beekeepers Association.

Email beekeepers@stratford-upon-avon.freereserve.co.uk

Whatever happened to weekly inspections?



BDI grants for Healthy Bee Training

Our chairman Jonathan Friend brought some interesting information back from the Chairmen's day at Stoneleigh last week. He is uncertain if this has been well publicized, but it matters not, because this is the content from the BDI website that Jonathan discovered. The grants are for £100 association/event, meaning that BDI will not make several grants to the same association or to an event if hosted by more than one association.

Healthy Bee Training Grants

Whilst Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd's primary aim is that of providing insurance against losses incurred when disease is found, its aims also include the 'Promotion of other measures for mitigating the losses suffered by beekeepers through bee diseases or other causes'. In other words, working towards a healthy bee population in England and Wales.

With the increasing drive from Government that beekeepers should be helping themselves rather than relying on support from the bee inspection service, BDI has decided to introduce a series of grants to member associations to support practical disease recognition and training at a local level.

Starting in the 2014 season, BDI will be giving a fixed grant of £100 per member association to support disease (healthy bee) training days.

Eligibility for a grant

All member associations of BDI will be eligible to make one claim per calendar year of £100 for an event. Where the BDI member is an area association, each branch/division within the member association will be eligible for a separate grant.

Members will not be eligible for a grant in their first year of membership and must have a minimum of twenty BDI insured members during the relevant year.

Events covered by the Healthy Bees Training Grant

A practical event, with leaders/demonstrators who are knowledgeable in disease recognition. This could include Regional or Seasonal Bee Inspectors

or other suitably qualified beekeepers. BDI are pleased to be working with the National Bee Unit to promote bee health. These events can cover a range of topics, including for example, maintaining healthy bees, disease recognition, integrated pest management and approved medicines. The event can be a Bee Inspection Service arranged event or a locally arranged event.

Pre-approval of a programme is required as a prerequisite of making a claim. The application form is available from this page. Acknowledgement of BDI is required both at the event and in all advertising material for the event. The BDI logo is available as a download from this page for this purpose.

Claims Procedure

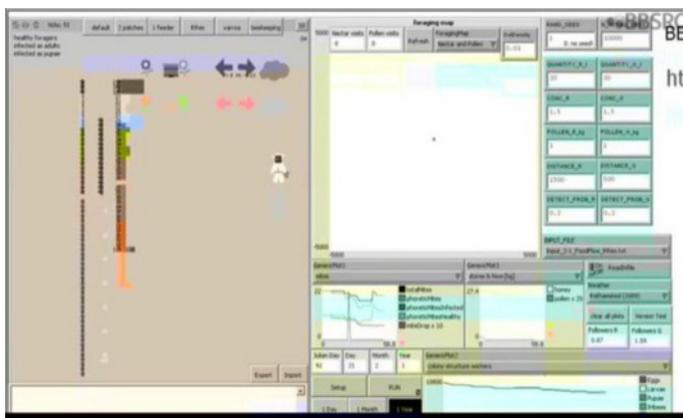
Claims should be made retrospectively and sent to the BDI treasurer, on the claim form that can be downloaded from our website. Evidence of the programme should be provided together with a signed declaration by an association official that the event met the objectives. The grant is fixed at £100 irrespective of the actual cost of holding the event. Please note that only one claim can be made per event, even if two associations are involved in the event.

Claims should ideally be made within three months of the event, and by 31 October 2014 at the latest. Claims received after this date will not be considered.

BDI – Working for Healthy Bees

<http://www.beediseasesinsurance.co.uk/home/healthy-bee-training-grants>

Exeter University unveils a new beekeeping computer model



Would you like to use it?

The Environment and Sustainability Institute at Penryn have developed a model called BEEHAVE which simulates the life of a colony including the queen's egg laying, brood care and foraging in a re-alistic landscape. The purpose of this is to allow a simulation of a honey bee colony over the course of several years and so allow scientists to understand multiple environmental effects on honey bee colonies.

The overview of this work is available here

http://www.exeter.ac.uk/esi/news/title_359936_en.html. Or for those more interested in the detail, here's also the link to the Journal of Applied Ecology paper: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-2664.12222/abstract>.

If you want a look at the model itself then go to <http://beehave-model.net/> The idea is to get others to try, explore and use the model, be they people involved in bee management, land (incl. crop) management and environmental risk assessment i.e. policy makers, risk assessors, farmers, beekeepers, etc. To that end, the university are thinking of arranging some training workshops during the course of this year. If anyone is interested, they'd like to hear from you so that they can inform you as details become available.

So if you are interested please contact Pete Kennedy on pete.kennedy@btopenworld.com

A new research project by International Bee Research Association who are looking for volunteers to help.

Full details can be found at www.ibra.org.uk/articles/CSI-Pollen which explains that the research is around the diversity of pollen sources collected by honey bees. They need beekeepers to join in with this research.



What is involved for the “citizen scientist”? Essentially, volunteers need to have three colonies of honey bees, three pollen traps, three honey jars with lids, an email address, and a little time. Each three weeks over the season they will receive an automated email giving them a target date for collecting a sample, and containing a unique weblink. They then need to run the pollen traps for several days. A sub sample of pollen from each trap sufficient to fill a honey jar lid is then taken, and is divided into different colours, which are then counted. The data from each colony is then entered on to the website. The samples can then be stored in a freezer for possible detailed analysis.

The volunteer also needs to find the location of their hives on Google Earth, and list the landscape characteristic (such as urban, arable, grassland etc.) nearby. This is the end of the “first level” of the project. Subject to funding being available, the intention is that the bee scientists will be then be able to undertake various “second level” analyses on a subset of samples to provide further information, and several laboratories have already offered facilities.

So far, coordinators from 16 countries have decided to take part, with others to follow. Norman Carreck will be our co-ordinator for England and Wales. If you are interested in joining the project or have any queries, please contact him on: nor-man.carreck@btinternet.com and he will send you full instructions.



Dates for your Diary

May

Thurs 1 st	Quantock	Queen rearing 1 - prep. Apiary
Sat 3 rd	Taunton	Husbandry & Hygiene
Sat 3 rd	Somerton	Practical training - swarm control
Sat 3 rd	Mendip	Early Manipulations, David Maslen
Tues 6 th	Quantock	Queen rearing 2 - graft. Apiary
Sat 10 th	Somerset	SBKA Council Meeting - Quantock apiary, Spaxton - 2.30pm
Wed 14 th	Frome	Extraction, FRC - 7.30pm, David Eaton
Wed 14 th	Taunton	Queen rearing theory
Sat 17 th	Somerton	Apiary visit, Jackie Mosedale, Chilton Polden
Sat 17 th	Yeovil	Simon Jones at Andy & Lorraine's apiary
Sat 17 th	Burnham	Apiary visit to Lizzie Harris, hosted by Mark Beekeepers
Sat 17 th	Central	Queen Rearing, Colin Williams, Stoberry
Sat 17 th	Exmoor	Alan & Tricia's apiary visit and bee tea, Bilbrook
Mon 19 th	Quantock	Queen rearing 3 - set up nucs.
Sat 24 th	Quantock	Honey & Cider - visit to Barry Hulatt's apiary, Ashcott
Sat 24 th	Mendip	Harvesting Queen cells, David Maslen
Sat 24 th	Taunton	Queen rearing practical
Sat 24 th	Wed & Ched	Queen rearing & The June Gap
28 th - 31 st	Somerset	Royal Bath & West Show, Shepton Mallet

June

Sun 1 st	Burnham	Apiary meeting hosted by Ray Reddish and Christine & Mark Gullick
Wed 4 th	Taunton	Queen cell harvesting
Sat 7 th	Central	General Inspection. Eliot Hall, Stratton on the Fosse
Sat 7 th	Somerton	Practical training - The June Gap?
Sat 14 th	Quantock	Swarm control
Sat 14 th	Taunton	Beeswax Course (14 people max.)
Sat 21 st	Central	Preparing nucs. Chris Wright
Sat 21 st	Yeovil	Pub Lunch, Royal Oak, Over Stratton, 12 noon
Sat 21 st	Mendip	Swarm control, Tony Richards on Blue Anchor
Sat 21 st	Somerton	Apiary visit to Diana Robertson, Huxham
Sat 21 st	Taunton	Waggle Dance - venue TBC
Sun 22 nd	Frome/Quantock	Practical training - Husbandry, (Quantock's apiary)
Sat 28 th	Somerton	MS Society visit to apiary
Sat 28 th	Taunton	Beekeeping Taster Day

July

Sat 5 th	Somerton	Practical Training, Disease recognition
Sat 5 th	Taunton	Practical Training, Disease check of hive
Sat 12 th	Bunham	Apiary meeting hosted by Thomas O'Neill - Wasps & Hornets
Sat 12 th	Quantock	Varroa control (assess/plan/treat)
Sat 19 th	Cetnral	General Inspection, Eliot Hall, Stratton on the Fosse
Sat 19 th	Taunton	President's Afternoon
Sat 19 th	Mendip	Finding and Marking Queens (David Charles)
Sat 19 th	Quantock	Apiary visit, Elaine Fakenham
Sat 19 th	Yeovil	Apiary visit to Ian & Ruth Homer TBC

Wed 23rd
Sat 27th
Sat 28th

Quantock
Wed & Ched
Taunton

Wild Wednesday National Trust, Fyne Court
Uniting colonies
Beekeeping Taster Day

Aug

1st & 2nd
Sat 2nd
Fri 8th
Sat 9th
Sat 9th
Sat 9th
Sun 10th
Fri 15th
Sat 16th
Sat 16th
Sun 17th
Fri 22nd & 23rd
Sat 9th
Sat 16th
Sat 30th
Sat 16th
Sat 23rd
Sat 30th

Taunton
Central
Taunton
Burnham
Taunton
Quantock
Exmoor
Exmoor
Mendip
Quantock
Central
Quantock
Somerton
Somerton
Somerton
Somerton
Taunton
Taunton

Taunton Flower Show (Honey Classes)
Show preparation & honey extraction, Earth Science Centre
Remove supers
Apiary visit hosted by Heather Bennett & Keith Whitting
Practical Training, 1st Varroa treatment
Apiary visit, Robert Palmer
Porlock Show
Dunster Show
Bee Diseases with Megan Seymour at Ron Hardwick's apiary
Honey Extraction, Apiary
Mid Somerset Show, incl. Central Honey Show
Bridgwater Flower Show (Honey Classes)
Practical training Taking the honey
Practical training Extracting the honey
Practical Training Preparing for Winter
Apiary visit to Suzy & Bernie Perkins, Tengore House, Langport
2nd varroa treatment
Extraction Day

SAT 20th September County Honey Show, Long Sutton Village Hall - 1.00pm

Members are welcome to attend the meetings of any SBKA division, but it is suggested that you check with the host or secretary 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.

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