

Somerset Bee-keepers' Association NEWSLETTER



Looking forward to a better summer

Not only was 2015 the worst beekeeping year in living memory, it was followed by the wettest and warmest winter since Noah's wife said 'I'll just get the washing in love'.

There seem to have been many more reports of lost colonies over the last winter, than usual. Then spring got off to a hesitant start, with hail, snow and thunder in the same day, with temperatures dropping from 16°C - 3°C in minutes.

Things can only get better.

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www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



Special Lecture 2016

For many years the Somerset BKA Special Lecture has been held at Hazlegrove School, Sparkford, but this year a new venue is being tried and on Wednesday May 11th at 7.30 pm, Edgar Hall Somerton will pay host to well known Kent beekeeper Bob Smith.



His topic will be 'Really getting to grips with swarm control'. This is a subject close to the hearts of many beekeepers. There is no charge for the evening, but donations for coffee and refreshments are always welcomed.

Disease recognition day - Saturday July 2nd

Simon Jones and his team of Seasonal Bee Inspectors will be on hand to show live examples of the most common and the worst bee diseases, including EFB and AFB. Recognising these two in particular, is not easy because they are not common, and most people tend to steer clear of them. It is vital however, that every beekeepers should know what they look like, so as to reduce the incidence even more.

Tickets £5.00 from Jackie Mosedale - tel. 01278723320 or email: jackie@jmosedale.wanadoo.co.uk

Somerset BKA AGM

This year's AGM was hosted by Frome Division at Orchardleigh Golf Club. Most importantly, the lunch was excellent, as was the company, and the speaker.

Michael Keith-Lucas is a retired Senior Tutor in Plant Sciences in the University of Reading, and has specialised in woodland history, pollen in archaeology, and pollen in forensic science.

Pollen was first used to reconstruct the landscapes in which people lived in the past, but then the archaeologists started asking more penetrating questions, such as what time of year did this person die?

These turn out to be exactly the sorts of question that the police ask at the present day when bodies are discovered without any knowledge of when they died, so the archaeology leads directly into forensic science.

In his talk on 'The Uses of Pollen in Forensic Science' he gives examples of its use in solving crimes of fraud, theft, fire-arms offences, bombings and murder, and how pollen and spores disperse and arrive at the scenes of crime. He also looks into what needs to be done to avoid detection, or how to commit the perfect murder!



In the talk he gave us, he gave a much more general picture of the various forms of pollen, its properties, uses, and just how much of the stuff there is floating around the world. One amazing statement he made was that in each square centimetre of every surface in every home, there are, on average, 5,000 samples of pollen.

Election of officers

There was little change in the officers, except that Jill Purdie has stepped down from the position of yearbook editor. A replacement is sought for next year.



The most important appointment was that of Ken Tredgett of Frome Division to the post of President. He succeeds Caroline Butter of Wedmore & Cheddar Division, who has done a sterling job, and attended more functions than anybody else in living memory. But there was a double celebration for

Ken Tredgett when his distinguished service for county beekeepers was rewarded with the equivalent of a 'honey Oscar'. "I can't quite believe it!" said Ken, who has been practicing the craft for more than 40 years.

“It is a huge honour, and a great surprise, to be chosen by my peers to receive the West Country Honey Farms Award.”

Retiring President Caroline Butter, who presented the magnificent trophy, paid tribute to his work for his local Division and the county. “He has set up and run training courses for beginners, organized an educational day for more experienced beekeepers and is a honey steward at the Royal Bath & West Show as well as being responsible for the organization of the Somerset County organizing stand.”

Ken’s interest in beekeeping stemmed from his father and he later combined his passion for the craft with supporting members of the Frome and District Division, and subsequently beekeepers throughout the county.

He held the post of Frome secretary from 1974 until 2007 before becoming chairman of Somerset Beekeepers from 2008 to 2010.

Somerset Beekeepers’ Annual Lunch 2016

I have booked Long Sutton Golf Club for our SBKA Annual lunch again this year, after receiving such positive feedback from those who attended last year. **It will be held on Sunday 16th October**, arrival from 12-30 to sit down at 1pm. The address is Long Sutton Golf Club, Long Sutton, TA10 9JU. There will be two courses with a carvery of up to 4 meats and a choice of desserts. There is a vegetarian option available.. The total cost will be £13.50. Tea or coffee can be purchased separately after the meal if you wish.

I do hope you can join us this year.

Please send me your bookings (and numbers who would like the vegetarian option) with a cheque made payable to Somerset Beekeepers, by Saturday the 1st October at the very latest.

Suzy Perkins

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Somerton Divison's land purchase

As reported in the last issue, Somerton Division received a magnificent gift which allowed them to pursue the purchase of a piece of land for a divisional apiary. That purchase has now been completed and Downslade Quarry in Upton, near Long Sutton is set to become their new home.

The plot is nearly three quarters of an acre, and like the Quantock Divisional apiary, has been filled. As can be guessed from the name, it is a former quarry. The rest of the quarry bounds the plot on two sides, but a field and Downslade Lane are on the other two. The entrance is off Downslade Lane, which is an ancient byway between Upton and Pitney. The county footpaths expert believes it to pre-date 1535, when the first highways act was initiated, but certainly no later than 1600 as, to his knowledge, no lanes were so named after that date.

After much debate at county and divisional level, it was established that Somerton Division could not purchase the land in their own right, as they exist only as a division (or part of) Somerset BKA. The land was therefore purchased in the names of three trustees of Somerset BKA, namely the chairman, secretary and the treasurer. Once the Land Registry have completed their paper work, the land will be placed in the hands of the charity commission and their official custodian will act as sole trustee. This is the simplest way to do things and will save legal costs every time a new officer is appointed to any of those three county positions.

The land can be handled in exactly the same way as if the three Somerset trustees were the custodians, and Somerton Division will be the managing trustees, responsible for the day to day running.

A group of 21 volunteers turned up two days after the completion of the deal, to plant the 420 hedging saplings supplied by the Woodland Trust.

A photograph could have been inserted here, but it would just show a straight row of plastic tubes protecting the hedging, and some uninteresting flat land.



Are neonicotinoid pesticides ending up in honey?

The problem: Neonicotinoid pesticides have been widely used as a seed treatment on mass flowering crops like oilseed rape. Traces of these pesticides can be found in the pollen and nectar on which bees feed, so there is a risk that they may end up in honey. Although there is currently an EU moratorium on the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on oilseed rape, they are still widely used on cereal crops. However, recent evidence suggests that neonicotinoids can persist in soils and be picked up by wild flowers growing on the edge of arable crops, thus providing a further risk of exposure. What we are trying to do: We want to analyse samples of locally produced honey to see whether any traces of neonicotinoid pesticides are present.

What we need: We are looking for small samples of honey that can be linked to a location (i.e. an Ordnance Survey grid reference of where the hives were placed) and collection date (e.g. month or at least year).

If you are interested in participating please e-mail Ben Woodcock at bawood@ceh.ac.uk.

We will send you a small sample tube for the honey, a short questionnaire and pre-paid return packaging. If you have more than one potential honey sample (i.e. you have hives in lots of locations) let us know and we will send you more tubes. We will treat all information as strictly confidential and no results will ever be linked to specific individuals. If you are interested in the results for your honey we will be happy to provide them. This project is run by Prof. Richard Pywell from the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (CEH) which is the UK's Centre of Excellence for integrated research in terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems.

Project Engage

LETS GET BRITAIN BUZZING

Project Engage has been designed for smaller schools and education establishments to provide an interesting and engaging way for students and teaching staff to support charitable projects, without asking for anyone to put their hand in their pockets for “yet another” fundraiser.

It is vital to point out now that the teacher and school IT department level of involvement can be as simple as an email asking us to collect the equipment, we take care of the administration side of the programme, it really is that simple.

We want to encourage both the educational establishment and their pupils to get involved in an annual project everyone can get behind, and see an achievable target. The main aim is to engage the students in this programme and let them take the lead as much as possible, we live in a very disposable society and this would be a valuable lesson to teach in our schools.

How can you raise funds at no cost?

We have thought hard how to support charities, whilst not asking for people to sponsor or fund-raise, and we believe we have a winning formula. We have selected something that many students and families have available, and is a problem for them to dispose of.

so we can solve a problem that exists, and do some good at the same time. For a few years now, we have offered a free recycling service to schools for redundant IT. What our proposal involves is selecting all the working laptop computers that are of a suitable standard [i.e. Dual Core machines, min 1GB RAM], securely data-erasing the hard drives, and refurbishing them for resale. We will donate 100% of the proceeds of these items directly to the charity concerned. To get the students involved, we want to select a target that is meaningful.

The money raised will be donated to the British Bee Keepers Association to help fund research into the verroa mites. The school will become a friend of the honey bee and through out the year a bee keeper will come into the school and talk to the children about bees and how we can all help by planting flowers and shrubs.

We keep the school regularly updated with the amount raised to date, and can help with meetings and briefings from both us and the charity to keep the students and teaching staff up to speed and informed.

We do this at no cost to the educational establishment, as well as the charity, so we do ask a simple quid quo pro that we also have an exclusive contract to recycle all school's IT equipment, also at no cost.

Article transcribed exactly as information supplied by iQeol
Only contact detail given is the telephone no. at the head of this article.

Exmoor Division Honey Show 2016

This year's honey show will be held on Saturday October 1st in the Tithe Barn, Dunster, Somerset TA24 6RY

Judging will be carried out by ***Mrs Suzette Perkins***

The Guest Speaker is **Graham Royle** who is Vice Chairman of Cheshire BKA, as well as being Disease Liaison Officer, Examination Secretary and Chair of the Education Sub-Committee. Graham is a very popular speaker and supplier of equipment, bees and good advice! Graham is only the third beekeeper in Cheshire, and one of very few in the whole country, to have obtained the NDB—the National Diploma in Beekeeping—the highest beekeeping qualification.

There will be light refreshments throughout the day and various stands

Cheddar Flower Show

The well established Cheddar Flower has, for several years, struggled to find a goodly number of entries for its honey section. There are four classes.

- A jar of light honey
- A jar of medium or dark honey
- A jar of set honey
- A cake using honey (recipe to be included)

If you would like to take part, the show will be held in Cheddar Village Hall on Saturday 20th August from 2.00 pm onwards, but entries have to be submitted by 6.00 pm on Wednesday August 17th latest. Contact Mrs Chris Sims 0934 743704 for more details.

Somerset BKA rules updates

There have been several amendments to the association rules, in a particular a new rule 17 has been written, which is shown below.

17. Registered, Country and Partner Members are full members of a Division and have SBKA and divisional voting rights within that Division. They may also be Associate members of other Divisions. Divisions are empowered to fix their annual subscription rates for all classes of membership, which in the case of Registered, Junior, Partner and Country Members shall include the amount of the SBKA and BBKA capitation fees at the current rate. B.B.K.A. and S.B.K.A. capitation are not payable in respect of the other classes of membership and voting powers shall be restricted to Registered, Country and Partner Members only except in respect of purely Divisional matters.

Promoting BBKA Junior membership is in the best interest of the youngster who appears to have no special advantages in doing so because:

- a. That continuing with the present arrangement of Divisions having Junior Associate members is the best route for youngsters to become members of their local beekeeping group.*
- b. That keeping it local, Divisions are best placed to encourage youngsters to join.*
- c. That such members have no voting rights*

As the rules no longer appear in the yearbook a full set is being sent to the webmaster for inclusion on the website.



Somerset BKA- Facebook presence

Those who use **facebook** will be pleased to know that Somerset BKA's presence has been amplified, and this is now an open site. There is much to like here, with videos and still photographs from several contributors.

The administrators are Anne Pike and Richard Bache, so if you want to know more or upload some images yourself , go to the facebook page and see for yourself.

www.facebook.com then search for Somerset Beekeepers

Dates for your Diary



Wednesday 11 th May - 7.30 pm	Somerset BKA	Special Lecture - Bob Smith 'Really getting to grips with swarming', Edgar Hall, Somerton TA11 6SB
1 st - 4 th June	Somerset BKA	Bath & West Show BA4 4NN
Saturday 2 nd July	Somerset BKA (Jackie Mosedale)	Disease Recognition Day, Edgar Hall, Somerton TA11 6SB
Sunday 12 th July	Somerton (Somertonbees@btinternet.com)	Beekeeping Taster Day Avalon Marshes Centre, Shapwick BA6 9TT
August 5 th & 6 th	Somerset BKA & Taunton Division	County Honey Show & Taunton Honey Show, Vivary Park, Taunton TA1 3QF
Saturday August 13 th	Quantock	Quantock Division Open Day - at their apiary
Saturday Sept 17 th - 1.00 pm	Somerton	Somerton Honey Show, Long Sutton Village Hall TA10 9NT
Saturday 1 st October	Exmoor	Exmoor Honey Show, Tithe Barn, Dunster TA24 6SJ

If you would like to see your division's activities here, just forward details to the editor. There is not room to include everything during the active season, but there seems to be a dearth of social gathering in the winter.

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.

Lecture Day - 20th February 2016

I have been sent a comprehensive and fulsome report on the Lecture Day, by Steve Atrill of Yeovil Division. It runs to the equivalent of 5 pages of this newsletter, and for that reason it has not been included, but it is a good and very interesting read. I have sent the article to the Somerset BKA website webmaster, and am asking him to put it up on the web, so that anybody can visit the site and read the whole article. The alternative would have been to précis it for the newsletter, and that would have been a terrible shame.

There are full reports on each speaker and the content of their specialist topics.

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