



YEOVIL BEE NEWS

May 2017

Welcome to the newsletter of the Yeovil & District Division, Somerset Beekeepers' Association. See also our website: www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

**Next Meeting –May Apiary Meeting:
Suzie Perkins demonstrates
"Handling Bees on the Frame"
2:30pm Saturday 20th May
at Tasha Steven's Apiary**

Unfortunately our booked speaker, Bernard Diaper has to go to hospital and is unable to attend our meeting. But we are very fortunate that Suzie Perkins has agreed to demonstrate in his place. The subject of the demonstration will be "handling bees on the frame", a skill that is so important to all Beekeepers.

Suzie is a very experienced beekeeper and has done some excellent demonstrations for us in the past. She is qualified to Advanced Husbandry, holds the Intermediate Certificate and is a Senior Honey Judge. So she knows her stuff and will lead an interesting apiary visit - they are always a bit of an unknown at this busy time of year!.

Directions

As you come into Chiselborough, The Cat Head pub is on your right and you pass the village hall on your left. Please park in the **Village Hall car park** and walk up from there (about 7 minutes). If you have difficulty walking, then do drive up to Tasha's but there is limited parking. At the village hall there's a road that goes off to your left towards Norton, don't take that one. Take the gentle left hand turn after that. Go through the village, out the other end and carry on for two hundred yards. Look for the wooden building. Signed Little Brympton.

Tasha's home is in East Street, Chiselborough. The post code: TA16 6TW should get you close. If you have any queries on the day please call Tasha on 07814 742 653.

April Apiary Meeting with Ken Edwards at Steve & Marie Attrill's

The day dawned fair, and the imagined or perceived parking problem vanished with plenty of space and set the scene for the meeting. It turned out to be a most informative and instructive day. The turnout was impressive.

First Ken sat in front of the gathering and talked to us about setting up apiaries and he offered us all a welcome to his at Quantock. Laggards crept in the back. During his talk a huge umbrella was dragged across the assembly to provide shade. Yes it was hot! When you have been beekeeping for 40 years you go to these meetings in the hope that you will learn something and he was a past master at quiet and calm delivery. Everyone took something from the talk. For me demonstrated how to use a hive tool to split every frame from its neighbour and then go quietly through the hive picking out each frame without using the hive tool again, except to push the frames slowly back together at the end. My friend and I have a habit of going through our hives together and now we work so much faster as I part the frames and he looks at one side and I the other. It is a slick concert. I am obsessed by getting better all the time.

Then we went through a hive which was romping in the honey from neighbouring OSR fields. This was a powerful colony. Stephen had fed them with pollen early in the year so the Queen got laying earlier and that, along with the warmth of the black weather shield he puts on his hives, had pushed them in to swarm mode early! I have learnt subsequently that most of his have swarmed and even his first year queens. (If you came to that winter lecture from the scientist who proved that our bees do not need to cluster if warm enough then this will make sense to you.) The more elderly of you might wonder if we do want our bees rammed into spring so fast. That is a talk in itself! I am not a great lover of OSR honey and am content to have my bees use the rape for building up more slowly into field beans which does not granulate readily.

A sumptuous tea followed with lovely cakes and sandwiches which completed a really good day that made me a better beekeeper. If you did not come t....gh s.....!

Thanks to Steven and Marie

John Carnegie

The Flow Hive: A talk by the co-inventor at Somerton

Hearing the story of the "Flow Hive" straight from the horse's mouth was particularly interesting for me as I purchased one myself back in 2015 as part of the crowd funding that they embarked upon. The talk was mostly of how the flow hive came about over a ten year period and I have tried to encapsulate a 2 hr talk into the paragraphs that follow.

They say that necessity is the mother of invention but that wasn't necessarily the case when Stuart Anderson and his son Cedar invented the Flow Hive. The journey was sparked by a form of taxation that penalises you if you own land but don't raise a crop of some sort. Cedar Anderson lived on such a plot and his landlord discovered that if he kept hives he wouldn't have to pay around \$15,000 dollars in taxes, so Cedar became the owner of 20 hives courtesy of his landlord. The benefit was of course that he didn't have a huge hike in rent, the drawback was harvesting 20 hives for honey in rainforest conditions. Three generations of Andersons had kept bees but not in such quantity, twenty hives is not enough to warrant a commercial approach so they had to be managed the hobbyist way which in the tropical climes of Byron Bay, Australia was a sweaty, messy affair. After one such session, Cedar hot, tired and stung, went round to his dad's saying that there must be a better way to harvest the honey and they sat down to tea lightheartedly bouncing weird and wonderful ideas for effortless honey extraction. Stuart didn't think anything would come of it and

when Cedar went home for the night thought that was that, but the seed had been sown in Cedar 's mind and he returned to his dad with an idea for a flow hive.

Stuart had always been a tinkerer, in fact it ran in the family, and between them they built a prototype, then they built another and another until they had a "Eureka" moment that enabled them to come up with a design which was the basis for the flow hive today. Along the way they tried and discarded plenty of ideas, one that sounded plausible had a heating element that ran down through the comb and at a flick of a switch would melt a channel through which honey would pour, unfortunately so did the wax!

The father and son team were now gripped by a belief that they had a product that could really work and had given up full time employment to devote more energy to it, but they needed money and opted to try crowd funding, they did their research, went to crowd funding classes and despite being advised by crowd funding cognoscenti that a new type of hive isn't "sexy" enough for that, went ahead. One of Stuart's daughters worked in television and shot a video which they posted on the Internet and it went viral, 10,000 hits by teatime 30,000 by bedtime, 1 million when he woke up! By now Stuart was having an out of body experience; life was becoming a bit unreal, ironic really as you would understand if you've ever been to Byron Bay. A week after this viral video they launched the crowd funding and were lucky enough to get a slot on the news, "Live from Canberra" Cedar introduced the concept, explained that they needed funds to the tune of 70,000 dollars and pressed the start button on his smart phone to get the process rolling. The cameras panned to Stuart who was to expound further on the invention, barely into his stride, Cedar's face popped into camera shot with a jubilant "We got it dad, we got the 70,000!!" Strewth as they say, they couldn't believe it, their bank (paypal) couldn't believe it either and closed down their account, they opened another account which got closed, within a week they had 12,000,000 Australian Dollars and multiple paypal accounts including friends and family - all closed. The rest is history, to date 44,000 flow hives have been delivered around the world to over 140 different countries.

How does it work?

The super has comb that is made from food grade plastic, the "Eureka" moment that made it possible was the alignment of the cells within the plastic comb, each hexagonal cell has been rotated a 6th and has a corner at the top rather than the side. The bees fill this in the normal fashion, when capped and ready to harvest a metal " key " is inserted and turned which splits the comb and allows the honey to flow down and out the back of the hive directly into your storage container of choice. The key is then turned back, the comb is "closed" and the bees can start again, simple. Minimal disturbance to the bees, minimal effort to the human.

A question and answer session followed, a major concern was OSR honey and how does the flow hive cope with that – apparently fine if you harvest in time.

How long do the supers last? – they don't know but 30 years is a good estimate if the wax moth larvae don't eat it and they suspect they won't.

A few people questioned whether the cost of the hive was worth it, which is really down to the individual. I have not harvested any honey yet, but I spoke to someone who has and he was just about to order another flow hive.

There was more but eyes glaze over and it's time for bed, I was pleased to hear the story and pleased that it was an endeavour fuelled more by humble needs than the lure of the dollar.

More information can be found on the website <https://www.honeyflow.com>.

Crispin Bond

Chairman Carnegie

Swarms are a coming. Thanks go to Robert for donation 2 for beginners. He is always kind and well meaning as are all beekeepers in my experience. That last word reminds me that, with all the experience I have, the bees often teach me that I am not as clever as I think.

Mike Lewis is working hard on my behalf to find land in Yeovil for an apiary. I have found that the land near Whyndam Park is council land as is the site not far from the allotments. The latter has a hut there already but I need to visit this site as it is also the site of an old rubbish site. It is evidently more private too. I have found the Council Member who is in charge of both the sites but as yet he seems elusive. I have also found that one can coat a wooden hut to make it very hard to set fire to! Just imagine our own building where could meet and not have to pay rent.

I was badly burnt on the wrists taking a cauliflower cheese out of the oven (I have little feeling in my hands) and used some Propolis ointment on them and within a week they had healed. My wife could not believe it. That is something I need to explore again as this little pot was made in the seventies! My brain wanders to when my battered legs get ulcers. I hope I transform the medical world as propolis cures them!

The OSR is coming to the end and do remember to extract it before it sets. A beekeeper gave me very long stainless steel electric uncapping device. When I asked what it was for he replied that he always melted his OSR frames on it to retrieve the honey!

I went to the lecture in Long Sutton all about the Flow Hive. The chap giving the talk was a co inventor and seemed to believe this was the best invention since sliced bread. I don't believe he answered the question re OSR particularly well.

We need to address the collecting Swarms situation. Everyone I ring is unavailable.

We need to address the matter of those with no email and slip out contact. They must be sent everything.

Time slips away like thieves in the night. I have Queen cells to deal with and Artificial Swarms to do.

Remember that we meet at The Airfield Tavern 7.30 17th May.

John Carnegie

Chairman



Divisional Polo Shirts

The first batch of polo shirts are on order. This is what we expect them to (nearly) look like. The WBC hive will be stitched in white and the "Yeovil Beekeepers" will be in gold. The background will, of course, be in green.

The shirts are £15 each. If you would also like as well, contact Bill Patterson. He can be reached on 0778 969 3203 or by email on patterson_32@sky.com.



Keep on the Alert for EFB

EFB is close to Yeovil again this year. There is one reported outbreak in Illminster and two in South Petherton.

Now is a good time to check your colonies for EFB. When the colonies are expanding, there is more chance that you will see any infected brood. So make your next inspection a foulbrood inspection.

If you do not know what you are looking for, this is a good reason for you to find out. So how to find out?

- Read a book - there are plenty in the Divisional Library, contact our librarian
- Attend a "Bee Health Day". Taunton are holding one this year with Simon Jones, our RBI.

A summary of the symptoms are shown below, copied from the NBU web-site. A colony would show some or all of the following:

- Erratic or uneven brood pattern;
- Twisted larvae with creamy-white guts visible through the body wall;
- Melted down, yellowy white larvae;
- An unpleasant sour odour;
- Loosely-attached brown scales;
- Unlike AFB, the remains of larvae that die from EFB do not rope when drawn out with a matchstick.

If you are unsure about EFB in your colony, you can contact a member of the Divisional committee to confirm. But if you suspect EFB, you must contact our Regional Bee Inspector (RBI) Simon Jones. He is very helpful and will very quickly come back to you. His contact details are below.

EFB is a notifiable disease. You must not try to treat it yourself and you must not move any of your colonies or equipment if you suspect EFB. It is very contagious and easily spread!

Simon Jones

simon.jones@apha.gsi.gov.uk

Tel No: 01823 442228

Mobile No: 07775 119459

Swarms

Are you able to gather or help to gather swarms this year? Or would you like a swarm to start a new colony or bolster your stocks?

If you do, then please contact John Carnegie **as soon as possible** so he can add you to his list of contacts. The swarms appear with no notice so you will need to be ready and prepared at very short notice. And the swarms are already keeping John very busy so please put your name forward ASAP!

Note that only full Yeovil members should apply for a swarm and you need to make sure that you have equipment available to hive the swarm as it will be gathered in a very temporary container, e.g. a cardboard box.

Coming soon ...

| Event | When | Where | Details |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Committee and Yeovil Show Meeting | Wednesday 7:30 17th May | Airfield Tavern, Yeovil | All members welcome to discuss division and show matters |
| Apiary meeting | Saturday 2:30 20th May | Tasha Steven's Apiary | Bernard Diaper demonstrates |
| Apiary Meeting | Saturday 2:30 17th June | Andrew Cooke's Apiary | |
| Somerset Bee Health Day | Saturday 17th June 9:00 to 16:30 | West Buckland Village Hall & Heatherton Park Apiary | Presentations & demonstrations of bee diseases by Simon Jones |

The Yeovil Show Preparation

The Honey show documents are now nearly complete. You can view and print off the Honey Show classes you can enter on the Yeovil Show web-site:

<https://www.yeovilshow.org/competitions/2017-show-schedules/>

If you are able to help with the Show, just come along to our next committee meeting at 7:30 on Wednesday 17th May at the Airfield Tavern in the meeting room just beyond the restaurant.

Foundation Exchange

Malcolm's foundation exchange was very poorly supported. What do you all do with your recovered wax?

And are you renewing your brood frames regularly to reduce the probability of disease (see the EFB warning) and to remove the build-up of chemicals that the bees bring in on the pollen?

Somerset Bee Health Day

Taunton are hosting a Bee Health Day where Simon Jones discusses bee diseases , shows typical diseased comb and goes on to demonstrate in the Taunton Apiary.

Full information is available on the SBKA web-site:
<http://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk/bibba.html>

Or contact Mike Dillon

E: mikedillonbees@gmail.com

T: 01823 669619

M: 07585 537030

An Unexciting Flower?

The Cotoneaster is not a very exciting looking flower to us, but it is obviously a different matter for honey bees! They swarm all over the bushes at this time of year, especially once the sun comes out as it did last week in my garden!



Successful Queen Rearing – with Vice Chairman Marvin Collins

First of all, back to basics as indoctrinated (ever the wise) by Marvin into our heads a few years back. Queens; eggs for 3 days, brood for 5 (approximately) then sealed for 8 i.e. 16 days. She then has to settle and mate which will obviously be weather dependent in order to provide a fertile 8 million plus offspring – an amazing feat by any measure.

Marvin showed me his newly acquired queen rearing kit, essentially; an enclosed chamber for the queen to lay eggs into, cups to attach the eggs (in cups themselves) onto a modified brood frame (double row) and 'hair-curlers' to protect the hopeful queen cells from other queens. Instead of grafting, Marvin captured the queen and placed her inside the enclosed chamber that itself was held within a cut-to-shape brood foundation with elastic bands for support. The queen was therefore trapped to lay her eggs in the numerous cells, each with its own unique cup – oh the simplicity. He didn't paint or apply wax to



these cups, instead relying on the queen to lay her eggs 'au natural'. The queen could still be tendered and fed through the perforations of the chamber until she had laid her eggs, which she dutifully did. Marvin then transferred the individual cups (each with an egg) into an individual plastic support affixed along a modified brood frame (of two rows) critically in the vertical. 20 eggs laid with anticipation and fingers crossed as this was his first (yeah, I know!) attempt at queen rearing. This complete modified frame was then added to a good sized colony which very rapidly enclosed each egg with many bees – don't you just love the insect

instinct. They were then left for the beekeeping guide of 7-8 days to form long queen cells. 17 of the 20 successfully grew and were a good size of circa 2-3cm just like any that we have seen (especially this year!). The 'hair-curler' enclosures were placed over them in order to protect them from any other queen. 3 plus 5 days later planned to the day (they actually merged on day 7) on a glorious May day that was glorious sunshine, light wind and 22C. The colony chosen was actually queen-less but had developed a nice size queen cell, naturally, nevertheless the colony was very (very) feisty. Five good-sized queens had cut their way out in beautiful circular fashion and another two in the time it took to place these into queen cages. Not a bad start!



Some good advice was that once emerged, the queens should be utilized quickly otherwise her fertility could be affected and don't clip them at this stage !! Luckily, plenty of queen-less colonies (courtesy of swarming and the wonder that is beekeeping) and all of the precious queens were put into active hives. I was surprised that the emergent queens looked very large and were all easily recognizable as queens. It is now up to nature and the weather to see what the results will be. Now Marvin, where did you obtain that queen rearing kit from?

NB The new queens are now distributed amongst members and form the basis of new colonies. Marvin has re-queened a number of his existing colonies.

Steve Attrill



Divisional officers

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|--|---------------------|
| President | Fred Horne | 01935 421623 | Treasurer & membership secretary | Sharon Blake | 01460 242124 |
| Chairman | John Carnegie | 01935 851234 | Librarian | Tasha Stevens | 07814 742653 |
| Vice-Chairman | Marvin Collins | 01935 426153 | Newsletter editor | Nic Bard Nic_bard@hotmail.com | 07877 284545 |
| Secretary | Andy & Lorraine Dobson | 07825 912274 | Mentor Liaison Officer | Jacqui Taylor | |
| Swarm Coordinators | John Carnegie Tasha Stevens | 01935 851234 07814 742653 | County Delegates | Malcolm Blake John Carnegie | |

The Yeovil division secretary email address is : yeovilbee@gmail.com.

Please contact any officer with your comments or suggestions.

Please send any suggestions, articles or comments or ideas to share with our other members directly to the editor at nic_bard@hotmail.com.

Yeovil 2017 Programme

2017

- 17th May '17 - Yeovil committee meeting at the Airfield Tavern
- 20th May '17 - Suzie Perkins at Tasha's apiary
- 17th June '17 - Apiary demonstration at Andrew Cooke's apiary
- 15th/16th July '17 - Yeovil Show
- 22nd July '17 - Apiary demonstration at Crispin Bond's apiary
- 19th Aug '17 - Apiary demonstration at Sarah Theo-Jones' apiary
- 19th Sept '17 - Anne Rowberry at TBD
- 17th Oct '17 - AGM at TBD
- 30th Oct '17 - Joint Meeting with SW at Over Stratton Village Hall
- 2nd Dec '17 - Skittles social evening, The Phelps Arms, Montacute (TBC)

2018

- 16th Jan '18 - Ken Basterfield (TBC) at TBD
- 18th or 19th Feb '18 - Lecture at TBD
- 20st Mar '18 - David Maslen at TBD

TBD - venue not yet decided!

April to August outside apiary meetings start at 2.30pm

Help?

Next Saturday and Sunday (20th/21st May) I have booked to remove some cladding and bees behind it. South Petherton. It will need 2 people at least. If you can help me, please ring or email me.

01935851234 or

killercarnegie@yahoo.co.uk