

The Newsletter

South East Division of the Somerset Beekeepers Association
March 2017

SBKA website www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk



2017 Programme

Friday 10 March 7.30pm

Preseason Talk : Megan Seymour "Preparing for the New Season"
Megan Seymour, Seasonal Bee Inspector
Charlton Musgrove Village Hall



Megan started beekeeping with her father who kept 3 WBC hives with colonies at the end of the garden. She was always very interested and particularly loved the honey. She started keeping her own hives about 20 years ago with 2 hives on an allotment, but rapidly moved up to 5 colonies. This led to her taking the basic exam and working her way through the BBKA module system. Finding the basic fundamental theory of keeping bees to be a great help with her own beekeeping, she was awarded the Wax Chandlers prize in 2008.

Currently managing about 25 hives on several different sites she concentrates on queen rearing and selling nucs rather than honey production. Her job as a Seasonal Bee Inspector since 2008 has given her vast "Bee Miles" and the opportunity to work with the Bees and Beekeepers in the South West of England.

Saturday 29 April : Visit to Quantock Division's Spaxton Road Apiary, TA5 2NU
An opportunity to see the facilities at this excellent apiary. Our friends in Quantock will provide a training session on making shook swarms with hands on experience.

Saturday 20 May : Apiary Visit hosted by Bridget Beattie and Brian Martin

Saturday 24 June : Apiary Visit hosted by Jeremy Lee

July (date to be finalised) : Visit to commercial apiary near Banbury

Saturday 19 August : Apiary Visit hosted by Kevin and Pippa Shillington

Mid September : Ends of Season Apiary Visit and Picnic (to be arranged)

14 October Honey Show - see below! (AGM to be arranged)

SE Division awarded £1500 by SBKA

Following the decision to vote up to £300 of our own funds at last year's AGM for equipment to help with promotion work, an application was made to SBKA for further funds for this purpose. To our delight, £1500 has been awarded to us.



We told SBKA that we wish to develop our ongoing programme of attending relevant local events to educate the public and promote beekeeping in our area and to encourage new beekeepers to join BBKA.

We were encouraged by the response from the public to the events we attended in 2016, although we have learned that some venues are more productive than others.

We already have a good relationship with the local school and will be able to attend at their apiary for outside events as well as the winter beginners class we already provide for the children.

We are now keen to expand our programme next year but have decided that we could adopt a more professional approach if we owned some new equipment which could be more specific to our cause rather than rely on borrowed and `make do` equipment.

2017 Beginners

The 2017 beginners theory classes have now finished and we shall be running practical sessions as soon as the weather allows to get the newcomers acquainted with life in the hive.

All the beginners seem keen to acquire bees this year, so after those sessions they will each be allocated a mentor to help them get started.

Our beginners are the future of the Division and you will no doubt meet them at our programmed events this summer.



Callington Honey Fair

A Honey Fair is held in Callington, south east Cornwall on the first Wednesday in October each year. Originally a mediaeval charter fair it had lapsed and was revived in 1978. In 1979 Callington Lions Club took on the organising and running of the Fair and has done so ever since. Our member John Wood has been involved from 1979 and is currently helping to plan the event for this year.



The event centres around the Cornwall Beekeepers Association annual exhibition and honey show which is much like ours in Somerset. However in Callington they have the opportunity to promote beekeeping to the public, some three thousand of whom attend of all age groups. The show takes place in the Town Hall and includes displays and trade stalls.

Other attractions are a children's art competition (opposite), a display by the local model making club and "Teas with the Bees" where honey cream teas and refreshments are sold.

Outside the Town Hall the adjacent roads are closed for the day and there is a street market and a fun fair, the local shops participate in a themed shop window display competition, there is a town criers competition and live music. The show enjoys the support of the Town and the Council and as the pictures show the public join in to make it successful. At the end of the day presentations are made to the winners of the honey classes by the Lions Club which has provided the cups and trophies over the years.

The Lions Club uses the money raised from the day to support local and Lions charities and is able to provide a free venue for the Beekeepers to hold their show.



The Annual Dinner

At the AGM there was discussion about the Christmas Dinner and it was decided to revert to the practice of having an annual dinner in the New Year, when things are a little quieter for most people and it's good to have an excuse for an evening out.

This year's dinner took place on 26 January at the Bell and Crown in Zeals and very good it was too. Bridget Beattie has taken over from Caroline Hopkins' as our social secretary so thanks Bridget.



It's here The Asian hornet [*Vespa velutina*] has arrived in Somerset.

Thankfully the Asian hornet found in Somerset was a dead one but too far gone to establish whether it was a worker or a queen. As no nest has been found we hope it was dead before it left on its journey and was brought here concealed in a consignment of goods and delivered to north Somerset unintentionally and that there is no risk of a colony building up somewhere undetected.

However, it is a different story in Gloucestershire where a single hornet was discovered and a large area was searched by a group of bee inspectors from the NBU. As well as watching apiaries for Asian hornets `hawking` honey bee colonies [hovering outside hives and picking off bees as they leave or return to the nest], infra- red cameras were also used to find hornet nests in trees hidden by leaves even a helicopter using thermal imaging was trialled to help in the search. In the event only one nest was found and its inhabitants destroyed, the nest is being carefully examined to establish if any queens had been produced.

It's good to know the authorities are doing all they can to keep our bees safe from this latest pest.

And now here is the point of this missive, we should also do our bit to alert the NBU as soon as an Asian hornet is spotted in our area. So set up your hornet traps and if any are spotted immediately notify www.nonnativespecies.org or www.nationalbeeunit.com send a photo if possible.

The Asian hornet is recognised by its black or brown body, brown legs with yellow ends and dark abdomen except for a single yellow ring at the 4th segment. It is smaller than our European hornet. Do not approach a nest as these are aggressive and I have been told that they can actually squirt venom at their victim.



Promoting Beekeeping in 2017



Following the work we did in 2016, we want to continue in the same way this year, encourage new beekeepers and inform others about bees and beekeeping. A visit to Quantock apiary has given us lots of food for thought and with the funds which we now have we have been able to choose a new gazebo, (or shelter as the suppliers call it).



A SESBKA logo will now be chosen from amongst those submitted to adorn our new shelter.

These events are fun to attend and we welcome more volunteers, even if just for an hour or so. With luck we shall present a more businesslike image this year, (and more importantly be less prone to having our entire stand blown away). This year we shall be at :



Cary Plant Sale Saturday 6 May 10-12

Bruton Packhorse Fair 29 May

Barton St David Carnival 15 July

Penselwood Fete 6 August

Yarlington Fayre September

The Honey Show 14 October 2017

Those of you who were at the 2016 AGM will remember that there was a lively discussion about the Honey Show. Whilst those who go to it always enjoy the afternoon, it was felt that it would be good if it could be held somewhere visited by the public. This would have two benefits as it would meet our objective of promoting beekeeping as well as hopefully attracting more members.

After a good deal of deliberation we settled on Castle Cary Market Hall for this year's honey show on Saturday 14 October. This is a great location in the centre of town with plenty of people passing by.



One idea which he has suggested is to have a children's art exhibition as part of the event.

As well as being fun for the children, there is the added benefit that it will draw in the mums and dads, ensuring lots more visitors !

We shall need about a dozen volunteers for the show so please let me know if you can help on the day.

An organiser for the art exhibition/competition would also be a great help as soon as possible.



News from the Hive



Hot one day freezing cold the next makes life very difficult for bees and beekeepers! Today is warm, sunny and lots of yellow flowers are providing a very welcome energy boost. We have used up so much of our useable stores this winter as we have been active on many days, but we collected from all the lovely ivy flowers in the autumn and find we can't use it. It takes a long time for our beekeeper to learn how to heft our hive and if we have lots of useless honey stored it can give a false reading. So please help us out. We would like fondant if the weather is cold but on a warm sunny day syrup would be our preference. However don't destroy our draught proofing by opening the hive up too much.

Out Apiaries

We have received two offers of sites for apiaries. The first is from a lady who says, *"We would be interested in keeping bees but the only problem is that we don't live full time in Charlton Musgrove. Would you know of anyone in the area who would be interested in putting few hives on our property and looking after them" while we are not in the area?"*



The second is from a lady who's says, "We

And now news of an interesting event being organised by our friends in Somerton....



Since Lorenzo Langstroth promoted the bee-space in 1852, almost 165 years ago, little has changed in beehive design.

Two years ago Cedar Anderson and his father Stuart from Queensland in Australia, launched a product that they had been developing for ten years. It took the beekeeping world by storm, because it is, arguably, the most innovative change in beekeeping since Langstroth.

The Flow system has been the cause of much debate since its launch, and it is now set to hit the British market.

Stuart Anderson is visiting the UK this Spring and, in collaboration with **Somerton Beekeepers' Association**, has agreed to tell the story of the Flow Hive and its development.

To hear the full story from the horses' mouth, join us :-

**Long Sutton Village Hall
Martock Road, Long Sutton,
Somerset TA10 9NT**

**Saturday May 6th
2.00 pm**

**Tickets £5.00
Contact Steve Horne by email at
steve.horne1@btinternet.com**



Bath and West Show

Somerset Beekeepers have a very impressive display at the Bath and West Show and seek volunteers to help put it up and help whilst it is open. As well as being a fun day in itself, you get to look around the show if you are there for a half day. Also, if you enter the honey competition, you can sell your own honey at the show with the SBKA taking a small commission. Please contact Ken Tredgett if you are interested, (and haven't already put your name forward). 01373 464736



**Equipment owned by the Division and available for use
by members**

Bee-suits, various sizes	Les Kimberley (01963 351176) Lionel Horler (01963 351037)
3-frame honey extractor (3)	Mark Groom (01749 813413) Philip Snuggs (01747 840309) Pippa & Kevin Shillington (01747 822368)
9-frame honey extractor	Bill Barribal (01963 34770)
8-frame electric honey extractor	Pippa & Kevin Shillington (01747 822368)
Honey tank	Pippa & Kevin Shillington (01747 822368)
Honey creamer	Pippa & Kevin Shillington (01747 822368)
Honey filtering equipment	Philip and Audrey Snuggs (01747 840309)
Steam wax extractor	Richard Brain (01963 32069)
Library of books	Les Kimberley (01963 351176)
Hive for teaching	Les Kimberley 01963 351176)
Digital Projector for teaching	Les Kimberley (01963 351176)
Frame presentation box	Pippa & Kevin Shillington (01747 822368)
Apideas (mating boxes)	Lionel Horler (01963 351037)
Small melting/uncapping tray	Tina Harley (01749 813262)
Foundation Matrix	Joe Bleasdale (01749 813122)
Nucleus boxes (3)	Tina Harley (01749 813262) Carol Seymour (01963 33680)

Please let me know if these records are not up to date, particularly if you are looking after any items which are not on the list. Library books are listed on the SBKA website under our Division.

President

Ken Jeanes
01963 370769

Chairman

Lionel Horler
01963 351037

Vice Chairman

Dennis White
01963 34054

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Les Kimberley
01963 351176

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01963 351037

Honey Show

Carol Seymour

Social Secretary

Bridget Beattie