North Somerset Beekeepers







Welcome to the Christmas edition of our branch newsletter.

Message from our Chair - Annabel Lewis

As we head towards the end of 2020, I look back at the year we have had and wonder a little at the year it has been. This time last year I certainly didn't expect that!

I hope you have all managed in your own way and I hope you all get to see or speak with your friends and family over the holiday period.

I have high hopes for next year and what it will bring. Hopefully, we can get some sessions at the club apiary going and more interesting talks, both using Zoom and possibly face to face. Fingers crossed!

In the meantime, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and hope you can all Bee Happy and Bee Merry and Bright!

BBKA online talks

The next event in the BBKA series of online zoom talks is aimed at youngsters during their Christmas school holidays but adults are most welcome to join the webinar too.

Why do the bees buzz? Margaret Murdin, 22nd December 2020 2-3pm

Margaret is a Master Beekeeper, holds the National Diploma in Beekeeping and is a Past President of the BBKA but describes herself as an ordinary, practical beekeeper, currently with twenty colonies across three apiaries. Margaret began as a member of Ormskirk and Croston Branch in Lancashire where she learnt her beekeeping over the years before moving to North Oxfordshire.

Please go the BBKA website to book a place: https://www.bbka.org.uk/Event/why-do-the-bees-buzz-a-christmas-lecture-with-margaret-murdin

Secretary's thoughts - David Capon

The stated aims of our Branch are to promote beekeeping through education, training, and demonstration, and to provide support for members in the practice of beekeeping.

How to do this in a year where for all of the active beekeeping season we have been unable to hold meetings, visit the apiary, or even chat in the flesh with fellow beekeepers.

I remember back in the days when I got paid for working, I think in the 1990s, attending a seminar where we learnt all about the impending 'Information Superhighway' that would completely revolutionise the way the world worked; prophetic words it turned out.

What have we done this year?

We set up a 'WhatsApp' group to support ten new beekeepers who had acquired bees in the expectation that they would be fully supported at the apiary, four experienced beekeepers have been able to guide them through a series of crises.

We have posted videos on Facebook of hive inspections and other things you might face in your hive; Facebook has also been a means of promoting discussion between members and answering questions.

We have hosted a number of 'Zoom' talks, including talks from two people on the other side of the Atlantic, without having to pay their airfare!

We have set up groups for studying for the module exams, and the improvers course by using Zoom, and intend to complete our aborted Introduction course by this means. It is a sobering thought that only 20 or so years ago none of this would have been possible. So, despite the situation



that we have been in this year the Branch has done its best to fulfil its aims.

On that note I would like to wish all members a very Happy Christmas and look forward to returning to more normal practices in 2021.

Thanks from the Treasurer – Tony Slater

A big Christmas thankyou to the vast majority of members who are now paying their subscriptions on-line.

Membership Renewals Reminder – Heather Pitch

Thank you to all those members who have already paid their subscription for 2020/2021. Can I please remind the remaining 24% to do so as soon as possible as I will be sending out a final reminder email on 1 January. Those that have not renewed by 31 January will be marked as lapsed.

If you do not wish to renew or if your Gift Aid status has changed, please email heather@pitch.plus.com.

BDI Insurance Cover

During the last season I received several NBU alerts informing me that EFB had been confirmed within 3km of one or more of my apiaries.

There is an article in December's BBKA News by Celia Davis stating: "BDI policy is not to pay anything if the full number of colonies, in every apiary, is not covered. Providing you have adequate cover, compensation will be paid linked to current prices". Her advice is to "count up all the boxes which may, at some time in the summer, contain a colony of bees, and pay for that number".

All subscriptions and premiums that are paid before 31 March will take effect immediately. These, plus any "top up" paid after 31 March will not enjoy cover for 40 days following payment. For more information, have a look at the BDI webpage:

https://www.beediseasesinsurance.co.uk/about-1/learnmore

Basic BDI covers your first 3 colonies, including nucs. Apideas and mini-nucs are not covered so do not need to be counted in your total.

Please check your cover and if you need to increase it, please make the following payment:

No of Hives	Extra BDI
0-3	£0.00
4-5	£2.00
6-10	£5.25
11-15	£7.75
16-20	£9.50
21-25	£11.10
26-30	£13.60
31-35	£16.10
36-39	£18.10

to the Branch Account No: 01839153, Sort Code: 30-99-51 and send an email to heather@pitch.plus.com so I can update the BBKA database.

Message from our apiary manager – Eric Sortwell



As we come to the end of 2020; looking back it has been a big disappointment not to be able to welcome club members and new beekeepers to the Apiary.

Hopefully, next year we

will be back to normal, or a sort of normal, and be able to make full use of the Apiary.

Throughout the year a small, dedicated team of volunteers has been looking after the club hives and bees. We are currently treating the bees with oxalic acid; the mite drop from each hive has varied very substantially, some as low as twenty, others well over a hundred over a three-day period. We have checked their stores to ensure they have sufficient to see them though the winter and put on fondant where needed.



The grass cutting team has had an early Christmas present; the committee have approved the purchase of a new mower and strimmer. This should make life a lot easier next year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Apiary team for their support throughout the year, in helping to ensure that North Somerset Beekeepers has a top quality Apiary.

Wishing all members a Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year and we look forward to meeting you in 2021.

Review of talk by Julia Common - Annabel Lewis

On December 3rd Julia Common, from the Delta area of the Frazer Valley, just outside Vancouver gave a fascinating talk to our members.

Firstly, Julia talked about Hives for Humanity, a society that she set up with her daughter, where the aim is to connect people to nature, community and themselves. It started with a single bee hive in downtown Vancouver and Julia freely admits she had misgivings and preconceptions of who she would be dealing with. The project quickly expanded and involved at-risk populations of people with tasks like gardening, beekeeping and fostering connection to land and community. You can find out more about this at the website www.hivesforhumanity.com .

Julia then went on to talk about large scale pollination with her bees and especially inside 6 hectare greenhouses where the bees were pollinating strawberry plants. Her bees were being used where the farmer had been unable to get the usual bumble bee pollinators. Julia now has this as a regular arrangement, as her honey bees worked so well.

Finally, Julia talked about beekeeping using nucs only and how she was focusing on this as it involves far less heavy lifting and the bees are doing as well for her as they did using full size hives. Hopefully, this will be a topic of another talk for us in the future.

Julia's talk was recorded and can be viewed at this link: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/96IKHJWf3X0Hykse

dl0nmFNSTMSA3OCYesqe7uXDXSslIw2tF7jXmU6Df RgBMg.WyX87sGCCr-d65Sf

Passcode: zr83Uyj+

The bee carol - Carol Anne Duffy

Silently on Christmas Eve, the turn of midnight's key; all the garden locked in ice a silver frieze except the winter cluster of the bees.

Flightless now and shivering, around their Queen they cling; every bee a gift of heat; she will not freeze within the winter cluster of the bees.

Bring me for my Christmas gift a single golden jar; let me taste the sweetness there, but honey leave to feed the winter cluster of the bees.

Come with me on Christmas Eve to see the silent hive — trembling stars cloistered above — and then believe, bless the winter cluster of the bees.

https://mysecondspring.ie/blog/bee-carol-carol-ann-duffy

