



Blagdon, Clevedon and District Branch
of Avon Beekeepers Association, Charity No. 271717

Branch Website: www.northsomersetbeekeepers.org

Issue 59 July 2013

Editor: Jan Davis, Landi-Kotal, Brinsea Road, Congresbury, BS49 5JJ
Tel: 01934 832825. E-mail: jandavis@btinternet.com

Editorial: What a busy summer this has been for the Branch. There are lots of photos and pieces about the various events.

Thank you for all your contributions. There is a separate page of photos of the opening of the Branch Apiary and a piece by our Chairman, Wendy Welham.

I hope the weather has helped your bees but we do need a little rain to help the nectar flow. (I don't like to complain!) Enjoy!



North Somerset Show 6 May 13

Pollination Dating

The club receives many offers from members of the public, who feel they can't keep bees themselves, but would be happy for bees to be placed onto their land. We also have a beekeepers with too many bees to keep in their own apiaries.

A new section on the club website aims to allow perfect matches to be made, see the website for full details.

Swarm Collection

Philip Clemente

There have been several swarms at the new Apiary, all dealt with usually by picking up the queen and waiting for the swarm to return.

I have been out on a few, mainly at Weston Super Mare when their swarm liaison officer was on holiday.

The famous swarm in the Post Box resulted in my being told of a swarm in a Post Box by a member of the public several years ago, I phoned the Post Office and was told that I should contact their sub contractor Romac. I phoned Romac and was put through to a very indifferent person in their office. I explained the situation and was told that they would go and destroy the bees. I told him what I thought of him and his Company in 'Builder English' and slammed the phone down. A few days later I had a phone call from them, I assume my recorded conversation had been played to the management, and was told there was a change in policy and my name would be added to a list of bee collectors. Hence the famous one. I collected it and put it in John Penrose's hive. The next day I was told another swarm had taken up residence in the Post Box, and I asked Dave Welham to collect it, however I assume it was only the scout bees and those out foraging that had returned.



Microscopy Course

Bob Kirkwood

On 6/7 July six Branch members attended a microscopy course at the Basterfield honey farm at Southleigh, East Devon. The two day course, tailored to meet the requirements of the BBKA Microscopy exam, was organised by Stephen Brain in conjunction with Ken Basterfield and his son Dan, two switched on dudes, who presented the material. The course covered the practicalities of microscopes (with a pinch of eye-glazing physics theory), bee dissection,

slide preparation of the bits that survived Genghis Khanian assaults with scalpel, tweezers and needle, plus a more gentle treatment of pollen. A unique opportunity rarely afforded (we hope) to beekeepers to see real examples of both of the notorious foul broods in the comb was presented, together with the chance to prepare microscope slides of these cankers. All of this with lots of high quality equipment, instruments and consumables in modern laboratory accommodation, with ready access to expert comment on queries and rounded off with excellent lunch and tea break material. The course was voted a resounding success – enjoyable, informative and inspirational, the members all heading home to carve up some bees.

Highly recommended!



Tweet tweet -

Congratulations to Phil Clemente and David Welham who went global on Twitter with the swarm they took from a post-box in Christon. Royal Mail re-tweeted the story and photos to over 36,000 followers...
..... First Class!

Chair's Letter

As I write we have just finished Wimbledon fortnight. From memory this has always been a couple of weeks of rain & overcast skies but these last two weeks have been glorious! The bees are all over my various geraniums & other nectar-rich flowers. By the time you read this, the President's BBQ and the opening of the new apiary will both be over. I am hoping for good weather on both days but the pictures in this newsletter may tell a different story! Whatever the weather, I hope all your colonies will stay happy, healthy & productive this season.

Members' Corner

Congratulations to Andrew Archer, Peter Butcher, Bob Kirkwood and David Welham on passing the BBKA Mod 2 exam.
Welcome to Chris Blake and David Speed who join as full members and Moya Woodford as an associate to our Branch. We hope you enjoy your beekeeping with us.
At the Branch Apiary opening we said goodbye to Peter Carter and his family who are moving to Sligo. Our very best wishes and thanks to him. Our President Tom Salter is moving to Hampshire but he assures us he will be back. He was made an honorary member of the Branch for all his hard work and help over the 15 years he has been a member. Thank you Tom.



New addition to our BCD family Paddy Brading
My first grand child, Harriet Rose, was born on 3 June 2013. To say that I'm a very proud grandma is an understatement. She is beautiful, of course, and both mum and baby are well. Maybe there is a bee recipe though for colic as Harry has demonstrated that she has an amazingly powerful set of lungs!

President's BBQ

This year the President's BBQ was held in the south of France! No it wasn't - it just seemed like that as the weather was absolutely perfect. And to be honest, so was the venue. Walnut Tree Farm in Kenn was a perfect setting with plenty of places to sit in the sun or the shade, and lots of projects to see and admire. The photos here tell a happy story. Even the youngest guest, Teddy, managed to enjoy himself without falling in the pond or getting anyone else covered in cream.

Sincere thanks must go to Helen Fordham and her family for allowing the 'invasion' by a well-behaved swarm of beekeepers. They made everyone feel so welcome and never tired of taking us on a continuous stream of conducted tours. It was such a shame that more of the members were unable to attend.

The BBQ was a splendid end to the Presidency of Tom Salter who is leaving us to find some new foraging sites in Hampshire. Good luck Tom!



change

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS 2013

Sat 3 August 2pm

Tom Salter: 'Swarm Control'

Tickenham Hall Please bring something for shared tea

Sat 5 October 2pm

Ivor Davis: 'Queen Rearing'

Churchill Memorial Hall Please bring something for shared tea

Advance notice!

Sat 23 November 2pm Branch AGM

International lecturer Norman Carreck, is our guest speaker.

Churchill Memorial Hall Please bring something for shared tea

If: please contact **John Banks 01275 855685**

Ja.banks1@btinternet.com or the website
www.northsomersetbeekeepers.org

Website Password

There is a protected area on the website, for information that is not for general consumption. This includes telephone numbers and home addresses for the committee, some useful forms for members, committee minutes and a new booking calendar for the club honey extractor. The password for this protected area is **smok3r1962**

National Honey Show Are you new to beekeeping? Would you like to see what honey, combs, wax and mead should really look like? The National Honey Show is the 'gold standard' honey show, the equivalent of Wimbledon for tennis players, this year is the 82nd National Honey Show. There are almost 250 classes and beekeepers come from all over the world to enter. A full programme of workshops and lectures will run during the show and there will be a wide selection of trade stands.. Guest speakers this year will include a great cast from the world of beekeeping: Norman Carreck, Celia Davis, Ricarda Kather, Mike Palmer and Dr Robert Paxton. For those relatively new to beekeeping or those wanting to refresh some common themes there will be lectures on Swarms and Swarm Control; Common Bee Diseases; Products of the Hive; Tasks Throughout the Year. If you have already had success at your local or county show, why not enter some of the classes? A little planning now will give you lots of potential for show entries.

The 2013 schedule of classes will be published in August 2013 but in the meantime, you can get a good idea of what is needed by looking at the 2012 schedule. You can find this and lots of interesting information about the show on the N.H.S. website - www.honeyshow.co.uk

The show is at St Georges College, Weybridge, Surrey, KT15 2QS on Thursday 24th (1.45pm to 6pm) Friday 25th (9am to 6pm) and Saturday 26th October (9am to 4.30pm). Admission for non-members is £15 but you can become a member of the National Honey Show for £12 and then entry is free. Accompanied children of 16 years and under are also free. You can join at the door or visit the website - www.honeyshow.co.uk.

In the apiary

Well our Brockley apiary is now officially open. I would like to thank the small group of dedicated members who have put in a terrific effort to get the apiary ready for its opening. Although only officially opened this month the apiary has been in regular use every Sunday since April for the practical teaching sessions; a total of over 30 members have attended these sessions. We have demonstrated how to do a comb change, set up a nuc box and carry out an artificial swarm, as well as marking and clipping a queen.

We now have seven club hives in the apiary, with a mixture of National, Deep National and Commercial brood boxes. Several new members have got their bees, and are experienced the delights and traumas of managing their first colonies.

With the warmer weather recently the bees have been trying to make up for lost time and many hives have certainly been getting into swarming mode; it's at this time of year that you realise you never have quite enough spare kit. To those of you in your first or second year of keeping bees my advice would be take advantage of the winter sales to make sure you are prepared for next season. You need to have spare boxes and frames made up at the ready.

Although the bees have been flying, mine have been quite slow at bringing in nectar for the last couple of weeks; still a bit of a June gap despite all the spring flowers being late, or perhaps it's just me. However, I am optimistic that with the limes flowering and the bramble not far behind, a few weeks of hot weather will put everything right!



David Capon (Apiary Manager) dicappon@gmail.com 07551994848

The Grand Opening of the Blagdon, Clevedon & District Branch Apiary

July 13 2013

Saturday 13th July was the date chosen for the official opening of our new teaching apiary in Brockley and what a brilliant day we had for this event! Gazebos that were brought along ‘in case of rain’ were used instead to provide some much-needed shade.

After nearly two years of searching, for a site geographically central to our wide-spread Branch, the project has been made possible by Solarsense UK who kindly loaned us part of a field. Members and their guests were joined by Richard Simon and Thomas Heiser of Solarsense for the unveiling of the new apiary sign by one of our members, John Penrose, MP.

The hard work of Branch members during the winter months turned a muddy corner into an invaluable teaching asset with a shed, mixed bee-friendly hedging and a water feature. Well OK, it’s only an old bath sunk into the ground but, to the bees, it’s a source of liquid refreshment. Mulching and the planting of nectar-rich flowers completed the project. Our members can now improve their skills and learn new ones at the regular Sunday morning sessions.

Thanks go to all of you who have helped in any way to get this apiary up and running. This has involved many expeditions to view plots of land for sale, attending various working parties, maintenance of the site, and finally getting the apiary prepared for the opening in Saturday afternoon’s heat.

Several thousands of honeybees also attended the opening!

Wendy Wellham

