

North Somerset Bee Keepers



May 2018

Welcome to the 9th edition of our branch newsletter. As usual your feedback and contributions are very welcome. Please send items to the editor by 25th of the month.

Bee diseases day – date for diary – *Annabel Lewis*

The local bee inspector has kindly agreed to lead a bee diseases day for us again this year on **June 2nd** at the **Langford Veterinary School**. Further details to follow and sign up will be via the website in due course.

The bee improvement and queen rearing Group: What next? – *Rob Francis*

We had a successful meeting with interested members of the branch on Wednesday 3rd May. After we explained about what the group has achieved over the past four years we outlined how we wished to move forward.

Rather than just rearing our own queens, to give us greater command and flexibility over our own colonies, we would like to create the basis for a strategy for improving our queens in North Somerset. This is obviously a long-term goal but this year we aim to start on this.

Put simply: the more we import queens from distant localities, whether in this country or further afield, the less we provide our own stock with a resilience and stamina to adapt to local conditions in the long term.

We are in the early stages of planning but we have begun to select from colonies that are calm and strong nectar gatherers (honey makers!). Of course, there are many other desirable characteristics to consider which will be considered and debated, including resistance to varroa. We do hope that by June will

have ‘good’ queens available for members to purchase at a reasonable price.

At the time of the newsletter going to press the details of how we are to do this are not yet decided. If you are interested in contributing to this project, we are meeting at The George in Backwell at 7.30pm on Tuesday 22nd May. Following that we will be creating a list of members who wish to acquire queens. Details for this will probably be put in the website. As you can imagine that this is going to need some clear thinking and good coordination. It is early days as yet but if you are interested keep your eye on the website; we’ll also provide further details in the next newsletter.

Apiary Update – *David Capon*

After two postponements we have finally completed our apiary induction sessions for attendees of the Introductory course. Like most of you I’m sure, our bees are behind where we would normally expect them to be at this time of year, but hopefully the recent warm weather will give them chance to catch up.

Open apiary sessions will take place every Sunday morning at 10am from now until the end of the season; all are welcome to attend and although there will always be experienced beekeepers on hand we welcome beekeepers in their second or third year to come along and share their experiences with the beginners.

As you may know we have moved the bees to the lower part of the field as Solar Sense are developing the upper part. This may only be a temporary move as we are in the initial stages of considering a move to the far side of the field between the solar panels

installed there. Although this will cause us further short-term disruption, it may give us a long term security for the apiary, watch this space.

Next branch meeting – John Banks

The next branch meeting will be held on 9th June, 2pm, at Churchill War Memorial Hall. Our Swarm Collection Liaison Officer, Adrian Wells, will be speaking on swarm collection.

Keep your eye on our website for any changes to the 2018 programme, which has just been updated: <http://northsomersetbeekeepers.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/BeeKeepingDiary2018-180326.pdf>

Beekeeping taster session – Stephen Brain

Stephen is holding a second beekeeping taster session on Sunday September 23rd. This is a precursor to the winter course. The session will be held at: The Limes, Kenn Moor Road, Kenn, Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 6UB. To book a place, contact Stephen on: 0777 321 1394.

Wider events coming up in next couple of months – Jenny Wakenshaw

- GBKA Auction 19th May
Undercover at Cotswold Riding School for the disabled, Prestbury Park Racecourse, Cheltenham GL50 4SH
- Royal Bath and West show 1st - 4th June
Show Ground Shepton Mallet
- BIBBA 2 Day Queen rearing course 11th - 12th June
Denbighshire LL21 0HA
steve-rose@bibba.com £90
- Welsh Beekeeping Ass Conference
13th-15th July
Booking: www.wbka.com
- Somerset Lecture Day 4th Sept £5
8 Carycourt
Somerton TA11 6SB
- BIBBA Conference 7th - 9th Sept
Royal Agricultural university
Cirencester GL7 6JS

- HUMBLE by NATURE
Various Dates: Beekeeping- Natural and Sustainable
Monmouth £115
- Zest Hives
01258473015
williamfsummers@btinternet.com Saturdays 10 - 1pm £20. Hosey Bridge, Dorset DT101HE

Bee craft monthly online “hang outs”

All are invited to join the Bee craft online discussion of topical issues. Watch the discussion or ask questions or comment live by email. Hangouts are recorded for future use. Future dates for your diary are: May 30, June 27, July 27, Sept 26, Oct 31, Nov 28, Dec 19. Access here: <http://www.bee-craft.com/beekeeping/bee-craft-live/>

Monitoring Asian Hornets – John Banks

As mentioned in the last newsletter daily monitored Asian Hornet traps is important for early identification and monitoring of Asian Hornets. To date we only have the location of one trap on our website. Please email the post code of your trap to: ja.banks1@btinternet.com to add to our map.

Information on how to set up an Asian Hornet Trap, the National Bee Unit leaflet was attached to the last newsletter.

North Somerset Show – Sandra Slater & Michelle Stagg

Our stand at the North Somerset Agricultural Show was very popular. There was fantastic weather and large numbers of the public visited, sometimes queuing to see the “attractions”.

The honey members had provided for sale was sold out by mid-afternoon. We provided (paper) straws for tasting the honey, and this proved popular with small children – it was a job to stop some of the unhygienic little urchins lingering there too long and ‘double dipping’.

As always, the display hive was a big draw and Ian Cooper did sterling work there for most of the day until he lost his voice. Others stepped in and many “I’ve seen the queen” stickers were handed out. Richard Ellis was notable for his presence explaining the virtual hive.

Best of all, we thought it was a great showcase for NSBKA. Several visitors chatted with members about beekeeping and more than a few asked how they could become beekeepers. About 50 leaflets were handed out.

As usual the Honey Show was expertly judged by David Capon. New member, Fran Frappell, kindly agreed to be the Honey Show secretary. She didn't know what she was letting herself in for but did the job magnificently. Congratulations to Jenny Wakenshaw who won the overall competition.

This is the first time we have organised the show on our own, and we could not have done it without the help of the following people:

- Hans Wilson of Chew Valley Hire Ltd – generous sponsorship of the NSBKA stand, and provider of the honey show prize
- Wendy Welham – helpful guidance
- Jan Davis, Andy Scarisbrick and Rob Francis – printing
- Setting up and putting away: Martin Gate, Andy Scarisbrick, Tony Slater, Ken Stagg, Eric Sortwell, Richard Ellis and Garry Packer
- Helpers on the day: Peter Smith, Annabel Lewis, Alison Fisher, Rob Williams, Ian Cooper, Jenny Wakenshaw, Jane Boss, Andy Scarisbrick, Alison Smith, Wendy Welham, Paddy Brading, David Welham, Martin Gate, Eric Sortwell, Ken Stagg, Tony Slater, Lynda Redding, and Rob Cleeves
- Show secretary: Fran Frappell

A big thanks to Richard and Lynn Ellis, who parked their camper van behind the tent and produced very welcome hot and cold drinks throughout the day.

And of course, David Capon, without whom it would not have been possible. Not just as Honey Show judge but carting the display and other equipment to and from the show, putting up and taking down the equipment, and setting up the display hive. On a personal note, in the lead-up to the day, he was someone we could always turn to for good advice and quick action.

We hope all those who helped had as much fun as we did!



Thanks to Sandra and Tony Slater for the photos

Bees for Development – monthly give away

Bees for Development has been supporting bees and beekeepers world-wide for 25 years. To celebrate they are offering Birthday Giveaways every month in 2018. This month's prize is a pair of original, framed watercolours of bees by artist Kate Osborne. To enter add your details here: www.beesfordevelopment.org/giveaway/index.html