

North Somerset Bee Keepers



September 2018

Welcome to the 13th 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.

Annual club membership renewal – Stan Wroe

That time of year is looming again. Our membership year starts on 1st November. More information about how you can renew your membership will be available nearer that date.

Winscombe Michaelmas Fair – Adrian Wells

The Winscombe Fair will be held on **September 8th** from 13:45 and includes a Honey Show. Hopefully a lot of members have entered honey and honey products into the show.

We still need some help on the day to set up and take down our stand and to spend some time at the stall, selling our products and talking to the public. It's a lot of fun and very rewarding. Please contact me at: adrianwells@live.co.uk

Bristol Honey Show

The annual Bee and Pollination Festival was held over the weekend of 1st and 2nd September at the Bristol Botanical Gardens. As part of this festival the Bristol Beekeepers held their 90th annual honey show.



There were 20 classes in the show including honey, wax, art, mead and baking and the club reported over 110 entries. The tables looked great with an array of honey jars of different colours.

All the entries were so carefully prepared for the event.

The weekend was well attended by both beekeepers and the general public and along with the honey show there

were lectures, displays, plants for sale, bumblebee conservation, seeds and many other things to see as well as the beautiful Botanical Gardens to look around. To top it all the weather was warm and dry which was a bonus.



Our very own Apiary Manager and Honey Judge, David Capon was awarded the Bristol Silver Queen Trophy for the highest number of overall points in the show. David won prizes for his medium honey, set honey, honey judged on taste alone, honey frame, cut comb, wax candles and wax blocks. While the trophy had to stay with the Bristol club, David was awarded a Bristol Blue Glass plate to take home. Well done David!



Bristol Silver Queen Trophy.



Martin Gate also won a first prize with his honey and Annabel Lewis won prizes for honey, cut comb, honey frame and her cake. Next year it would be great to see some more entries from our branch.

Tickenham Show

The branch was well represented at this year's Tickenham Show, which took place on Aug 18th. We had our usual stand with observation hive, candles and badges and lots of people came and visited us.



There were a good number of entries in the honey classes; the usual rivalry between Tickenham residents, John and Amanda Banks, saw John get a first for his frame with Amanda second; but the tables were turned in the wax class with Amanda taking top honours!



It was good to see a new name on the Honey Cup with Eric Sortwell gaining most points in the Honey classes. This was widely applauded by his Facebook friends! Hopefully Eric's success will encourage more new beekeepers to have a go at showing.

Committee focus

Over the next few months we will be raising awareness of our committee members by providing a short profile of individual members. This month:

Contact the Editor: northsomersetbeekeepers@gmail.com

Garry Packer President



I will have been president for two years in November and was previously Chair.

The president's main role is to chair the AGM and host the summer BBQ, neither very onerous and it is a pleasure to support such a vibrant and diverse group of beekeepers.

I started beekeeping 8 years ago and had some successes and failures, certainly early on I was a bit too keen to knock down queen cells without understanding what was happening in the hive. I currently have two hives; one is doing really well and the other suffering a bit after it became queenless. Hopefully I will get that one back on track soon.

I really enjoy schools outreach and have just done an assembly at Locking Primary school talking about bees (as they have a swarm which has taken up residence in a tree). This makes a change from going into secondary schools and talking about the maths I use at work.

Adrian Wells – Swarm Liaison Officer

I've kept bees for quite a while, my interests in the subject include designing and making my own equipment, and boiling bee keeping down to the essentials, working with the bees at their level and generally enjoying the fact that you learn something new about them almost constantly. I tend to have strong views on many aspects of bee keeping and they are often controversial! My other interests tend to be somewhat more extreme, including caving, gliding, traction kiteing, kayaking, judo, aikido, kung fu, and anything to do with digital electronics! Bees offer a different pace and head-space to our modern lives; a hive in the garden is a very restful thing.

As the Swarm Liaison Officer [SLO], it's my responsibility to coordinate swarm capture within the area and to promote education among the public that come into contact with bees. Calls usually start with "Help! We've got bees!", so the first job is to calm the caller, and then

establish just what it is that they have. Few calls are about swarms, sometimes it's just a bush covered in foraging insects! Usually it's a nest of Tree Bumble Bees, sometimes wasps, but whatever the call, we calm and educate. When possible, we collect swarms, share them, and show novices just how easy it is.

I also sit on the committee, which mainly entails us trying to take the agenda as far off topic as possible before the Chair, the very capable Annabel Lewis, notices! That's not really true; but the committee covers a very wide agenda when it meets, discussing everything that needs to be done to ensure that the club serves its members. So the role of SLO is very rewarding on several fronts.

Improvers' course – basic – Rob Francis

For those of you who have been keeping bees for a year or so then The Improvers Course is a great way to hone your skills and develop an understanding of bees and beekeeping. The course itself is designed for 'apprentice beekeepers' and covers all you need to know to help gain confidence with bees and to make decisions about their care.

What members of the course often find most useful is sharing their experiences, the highs and lows, of the first steps in keeping bees. At the end of the course you can take the practical Basic Assessment (but this is not obligatory) which then enables you to study and take the BBKA modules.

The course will begin at the start of January and there are seven sessions through to the end of March. As yet there are no further details but if you are interested email me and let me know. More precise details about dates will be in the next newsletter.

Do you want to try a module?

We are hoping to get a group together in October to study **Module 1**. If you are interested could let me know. We'll then arrange an informal meeting to get going. Contact me at: robfrancis@btinternet.com

A group of members (5) has agreed to study the BBKA **Module 6** (Honey Bee Behaviour) syllabus, and perhaps prepare for the exam in March 2019. We will organise a fortnightly discussion meeting at The George, Backwell, and work through past papers. It is not necessary to commit to taking the 90 min written exam until after

Christmas. Last year, the study group meetings were great fun, and were also a very useful source of advice and ideas about beekeeping.

Please contact rob.williams.longashton@gmail.com if you are interested in finding out a bit more.

Local events - John Banks

Visit our website regularly for any changes to the 2018 programme: [Bee Keeping Diary 2018](#)

Next branch meeting – 6th October Brains Trust

Do you have any questions, peculiar to your honey bees, that you need advice about?

If so come along to Churchill Memorial Hall, Churchill at 2pm on Saturday 6 October 2018 and ask our team of experts for their opinion. Our experts comprise: Stephen Brain, Ivor Davis and Martin Stickland.

So please come along with your questions and listen to the responses from our Brains Trust of well-seasoned and acknowledged honey bee experts.

Even if you have no questions or problems with your bees, the responses from our experts should prove interesting.

The event will be a bit like Gardeners Question Time, except it will little to do with gardening and a lot to do with bees!

Additionally, we may stump the Panel, because if your bees are like my bees, they do not read books (or if they do they ignore the written word!).

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.

Winscombe Michaelmas Fair 8th September Winscombe Community Centre

- Entries before 20:00 Thursday 6th September
- Exhibits placed by 10:00 Sat 8th September

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

- BIBBA Conference 7th - 9th Sept
Royal Agricultural University
Cirencester GL7 6JS
<https://bibba.com/event/bibba-conference-2018/>

Over the 3 days there will be seminars, workshops and three streams of presentations:

1. *Bee breeding, bee improvement, queen rearing*
2. *Other beekeeping topics to suit everyone*
3. *Beginner and beyond*

- Somerset Lecture Day 4th Sept £5
8 Cary Court, Somerton TA11 6SB

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: Sept 26, Oct 31, Nov 28, Dec 19. Access here:

<http://www.bee-craft.com/beekeeping/bee-craft-live/>

Hire of branch honey extractor

Don't forget that you can hire one of extractors uncapping trays and filter buckets to help in extracting your honey.

The cost is £5 for four days. The equipment will be supplied clean and must be collected and returned clean to Sheila James who kindly manages the honey extractors on behalf of the branch.

To arrange a date for collection, please email:
sheilajamesgardendesign@talktalk.net

Out apiary in Portishead available

I have smallish south west facing area at bottom of my garden in Quantock Road, which I am turning into wild flower and insect area. This would be a quiet private site for a bee keeper with a couple of hives. There is private gate a rear of garden and plenty of storage space in adjacent shed for bee paraphernalia. I was a previous beekeeper in Warwickshire until a couple of years ago.

Contact Christine on 07971573138 or 01275 217491.