

North Somerset Beekeepers



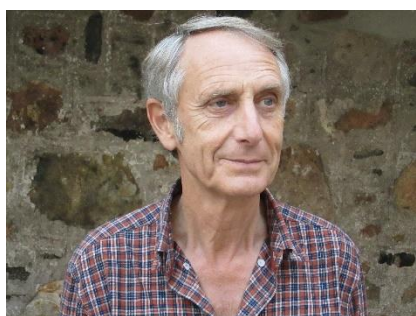
January 2020

Welcome to the latest 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.

Branch talks and educational events – *Rob Williams, Programme Manager*

Keep your eyes on the events programme for up to date information. It can be found on our website here: <https://www.northsomersetbeekeepers.org/events--courses.html>

Next branch meeting 18th January 14:00-16:00



Our next branch meeting will be held on Saturday 18th January at Churchill Memorial Hall, Churchill.

Will Steyner will be giving a talk on beekeeping as a

profitable sideline. This lecture is about turning a hobby into a business and the challenges this represents when the time available to devote to it is limited. The various options to maximise the income from a small number of hives will be looked at along with ways of modifying equipment to enable the operation to run as efficiently as possible. The talk concludes with a section on marketing produce and putting on beekeeping demonstrations at a craft show.

Improvers course – *Rob Francis*

If you have been keeping bees for a season or more then this is an excellent way of sharing your experience while expanding your knowledge and understanding. We meet for 7 sessions on every other Tuesday in St Andrews Church Hall in Backwell. It's fun as well. At the end of the course you will have the opportunity of taking the BBKA Basic Assessment which acts as a gateway to further assessments. However, there are some who just take the course to gain further understanding about the craft of

beekeeping. The fee, payable at the first session is £20 which includes course materials.

The course will be held in St Andrews Church Hall, Backwell at 19:30 to 21:00. If you are interested, contact Rob Francis who will add your name to the list and send information at rob-francis@virgin.net. For further details visit: <https://www.bbka.org.uk/practical-assessments>

Introductory course – *Andy Scarisbrick*

Aimed at new beekeepers this course will be held over 10 weeks starting on 30th January in Churchill Memorial Hall at 19:30-21:00. Interested parties can sign up on our website.

Branch Honey Show 8th February – *David Capon*

Our Branch Honey Show takes place on Saturday Feb 8th at 2.30pm at Tickenham Village Hall. The show is open to all full and associate members and is judged in front of them by me.

This is a chance for you to get an insight into what a judge is looking for in honey show exhibits, and for you to receive feedback on your entries. Even if you don't yet have your own bees you can enter some of the baking classes.



A full schedule is attached, please note a couple of changes from last year. Standard BS pattern jars are no longer mandatory, you can use any matching jars of minimum weight 340g net. The cake recipe has reverted to one that was used previously and is not the same as last years.

It is not too early to start preparing your entries!

Membership subscriptions – final reminder – Heather Pitch

Membership fees were due on 1 November 2019. Anyone who has not renewed by 31st January 2020 will be deemed a lapsed member and will have to pay a £5 re-joining fee. In addition, they will lose their BDI cover until 40 days after outstanding fees are paid.

I sent out reminders from Beekeeping Membership Services noreply@membershipservices.org.uk on 31st December. If you have not renewed or received this reminder, please check your junk folders as it contains a special renewal link. All you need to do when you have clicked this link is check your details are correct and submit the form. Please note that the basic sub is £37 for up to 3 hives. If your Gift Aid status has changed, please add a note to the Notes for Membership Secretary box.

Payment can be made online to Lloyds Bank, Sort Code 30-99-51, Account No: 01839153. Make sure that the word “Subs” appears in the reference.

On the other hand, if you no longer wish to be a member, please email heather@pitch.plus.com

Vacancy on committee – Education Coordinator

We are still looking for a member to act as Education Coordinator. If you would like further information, please contact Annabel Lewis at: busybee6@virginmedia.com

New branch website – John Banks

Just a reminder that our new website is up and running. Please let me know if you feel anything needs to be corrected or added, email: ja.banks1@btinternert.com

The website can be found at:

<https://www.northsomersetbeekeepers.org/>

Please help us to make your website as good as it can be.

Apiary update – Eric Sortwell

Summer rota

Over the last few weeks I have been chatting to club members at all levels of experience asking for support with the Sunday training sessions for our new intake of beekeepers this year, I have put together a rota which is now on the website.:

<https://www.northsomersetbeekeepers.org/uploads/1/2/3/4/123455751/apiaryrota2020.pdf>

Please check to see if you are happy with it.

1. Yes I am happy.
2. Can I do more.
3. Can I do less.
4. I need to change dates I am on holiday.
5. You have missed me off why?

Please contact me on any of the above I will finalize at the end of January once I have heard from everyone, then I will republish in February.

Varroa treatment

All seemed to go well with the recent treatment, but only time will tell. (See below)

Apiary team

Following discussions with club members and volunteers I have put together a team of members to assist with the running of the Apiary as follows:

- Eric Sortwell Apiary Manager with overall supervision and successful operation of the Apiary
- Jamie Llewelyn Assistant Manager, to assist with the above
- Jodi Moger Assistant Manager, to assist as above
- Fran Frappell Responsible for Bee Suits
- Lucy Joy Club clothing sales
- Juliet Fowles General maintenance, hedge and grass trimming and apiary hygiene.

Grass cutting team

- John Molesworth
- Mike Batchelor
- Richard Ellis

Many thanks to all the above for volunteering.

But please remember any help from club members at any time would be much appreciated. It is your club and apiary.

Boundary hedge

One side of the Apiary has a mature hedge made up of Dog Rose, Hawthorn and Blackthorn. I was thinking of cutting it down to about four feet in height, but Juliet has suggested laying it which I think is a fantastic idea. She has volunteered to do the job but needs some help to do it. Is there anyone that would like to help? If so, please get in touch.

The coming year

Looking forward to the coming year, so much is going on so make this the year to get involved.

Official Grand Opening of the apiary

Friday 15th May 2020 at 12.00 noon to 2.00pm. This will involve the University of Bristol and will be a day not to be missed.

Queen rearing group

Our own queen rearing group starts this Spring. If interested please contact me at: eric.sortwell@talktalk.net



Oxalic Acid applied with Gas-Vap – Annabel Lewis

This year I finally tried using oxalic acid vape instead of dribbling it over the bees in sugar syrup. I came across a small device called the Gas-vap from Bridge Cottage Bees. It is made from copper pipe and workers with a cook's gas burner (the sort used to brown the tops of crème brûlée!).

Before trying it out I watched this video with instructions found on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fXT5uaVQnJ0&app=desktop>

I then tried it on my own bees first and was very impressed at the ease of use. It has a measuring spoon so you use the correct amount for each hive and you can also get an extension to use with polly hives, so they don't melt, and hives with landing boards on them. On the health and safety side, you do need some heat proof gloves, and you need to be very aware of which bits are hot, as if you pick up the wrong bit without a glove you will get burnt. You also need the correct breathing and eye protection as it is a gas we are dealing with.

It is a welcome addition to my ever-expanding beekeeping kit and only takes up a little bit more space in our garage!!

Demonstrating of Oxalic acid application

On 15th December members gathered at the apiary to try out various methods for the application of Oxalic acid.



These included vaping and trickling and Annabel's new device which she describes above.

David Capon demonstrating vaping colonies at the branch apiary.



Safety first – attendees had to be wearing appropriate protective clothing.



Vaping on broodless colonies (or after uncapping any sealed brood) was repeated a week later, and significant varroa drop noted.

Note from Editor:

Thanks to all members who provided photos. I often take them from our Facebook page but am also pleased to receive interesting photos. Send them to northsomersetbeekeepers@gmail.com

If you sign them, I will be able to acknowledge you in the newsletter.