



**Editorial:** Many of us have now had a chance to at least peek into our hives. It is what most beekeepers look forward to once the weather warms up and the flowering blackcurrant (*ribes*) is out; otherwise known as 'shirt sleeve' weather. The other spring occasion lots of beekeepers look forward to is the annual BBKA Spring Convention at Stoneleigh, reputed to be the biggest one day trade show for honeybees & beekeeping, in the world. As usual, there is a great mix of high powered lectures and workshops over three days and of course the trade stands and an exchange of wax and chance to buy seconds at Thornes on Saturday. If you have never been, it is a great experience. I recommend it! At our County Association's (Avon BKA) AGM in March we were lucky to be treated to a great lecture on pollen by Clive de Bruyn. The actual AGM was interesting too as David Welham says elsewhere. The winter's Introductory Course, Basic Course, Woodworking Group and Module Study Group have all finished and we should say a huge thank you to all our members who have helped run them and to everyone who attended. Great fun and it is good to know a little more about the creatures we love to look after. See you soon and keep your bees well,

### Knives, are you legal?

Tom Francis

I was asked by a beekeeper if it was lawful to carry his knife around with him that he uses solely for beekeeping. I asked to see it and was shown a "lock knife" with a six inch blade. Sadly I had to say that the knife was one banned under section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 which could (frighteningly) lead to a police officer arresting him just for having it in his pocket and the potential for a prison sentence!! You have probably seen lots of stories in the news about "knife crime" of which most cases are about gangs, however the law doesn't distinguish between gangs and decent members of the public. I hope that this helps you to keep within the law. The law states "any person who has an article to which this section applies in a public place shall be guilty of an offence". An article is a bladed or sharply pointed article and includes Stanley knives, kitchen knives, swords and anything you can think has a blade. The only defence is "good reason" so a carpet fitter with a Stanley knife would have a good reason, a normal member of public with a favourite lock knife they always carry would not be a good reason in my opinion. You are allowed to carry a pocket knife so long as its blade folds, is no longer than three inches and that the blade does not lock (if you had a one inch lock knife it would be illegal). I know that a little three inch folding pocket knife probably isn't going to do the job a) the blade is too small and b) the fact it folds mean you could pinch your skin when using it should it collapse in. Here are ways I think you can still use your favourite blade whilst working within the law.

If you are going to use your favourite lock knife I would advise firstly don't carry it unless you need to use it and don't carry in your pocket in a public place. I would suggest if you have to carry it from your home to your apiary, put it in a tool box and if possible padlock it to show you are being responsible.

A public place I suggest would not include an apiary so if you can leave the knife there maybe in a tool shed, that would be best and you can still use it (and carry it) without fear of breaking the law.

If stopped by a police officer and for whatever reason they say that you are to be searched and you are carrying a lock knife, be honest. Tell the officer if its in a tool box and tell them that its solely for beekeeping and that you have taken reasonable steps to keep it secure.

Should you want to ask me any questions, please feel free to call me at work on 0845 456 7000 and ask to leave a message for PC 3919 Francis of The Mounted Section. I am not in the office because of the nature of my job however I check my e-mails at the start of my day and will get back to you. Stay safe.

### Swarm Collection

Jon Webber

Once again, we're approaching the season when bees might want to swarm. The most important thing as the Branch's Swarm Liaison Officer, is to get members 'signed' up to help the swarm-collection process. The basic principle is that all aspects of swarm collection are done under the auspices of the Branch. As a Branch we wish to ensure beginners, or existing beekeepers are offered a colony derived from a swarm that has been re-queened, certified disease free and with a laying queen and sealed brood.

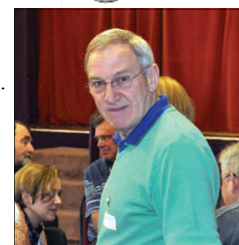
I'm looking for the support of more experienced members who are prepared to put their name forward to be a "Collector" and for the Branch to get a good spread of Collectors across the whole district so it won't mean you're going to be called out too many times. I really will try to make sure everyone gets a call-but not everyday if I can help it. It is proposed that if you are asked to collect a 'swarm' the Branch will pay your travel expenses at 40p per mile. (I hope there won't be too many 'wild-goosebee-chases'. Once I've got the knack of asking the right questions of callers, I should be able to identify honeybee swarms from wasp/hornet and bumble bee sightings.)

Please contact me with your details asap if you are prepared to 'sign-up' as a Swarm Collector for the Branch. Again this year we'll be using the "Bee Line" for people to report a swarm and request the Branch's help in collecting it. The telephone number for people to call is:

**07890 223934 .**

Please publicise this in among your friends and neighbours. I'm grateful for and really welcome everyone's help, advice and support in fulfilling this role as the Branch's Swarm Liaison Officer. Many thanks.

Please contact me at: [jonwebber@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:jonwebber@blueyonder.co.uk) or 07802 199757 or use the **Bee Line**



### Chairman's Letter

The warmer weather has shown that our new hedge has taken and is sprouting well. This will eventually provide a close source of forage for the bees over the years to come as well as a windbreak. The weather has also enticed me and the bees, out into the garden, all of us working hard! We seem to have lost only one hive over the winter; the other five are doing well with the bees taking in pollen.

Our meetings got off to a great start with a good showing from some of the new members. We also have a new venue for meetings (Tickenham) which will make it easier for many to attend. It's very nice to see children at our meetings. Continuing our 'new' theme we now have our own website. I hope you will all be logging on to get updates and reports on everything that goes on in our branch, and reminders about things to come. Please contact me if there is anything you think should be notified on our website. It's another warm sunny day so I'm off to watch the flowers grow! Happy beekeeping

**Members' Corner** We welcome new members **Ann & Bryan Fawcett, Andy King, Helen Moody, Russell Spooner, Kate Kennedy, Richard Ellis, Rachel Langan, Alysun Jones, Tina & Ian Roberts, Matthew Browne & Hayley Smith, Jon Mangnall, David Hook, Juliet Fowles, Paul Bibby, David Capon, John & Jan Chilcott, Paul Denny, Andrea Grist, Keren Parnell, Stephen Banting, Rebecca Geden, Fiona Melford, Sheila Morris, Janet McCulloch and Phil Heath.**

We wish you very happy beekeeping with us – we are fortunate to have lots of well qualified and experienced beekeepers who are happy to help!

### FORTHCOMING MEETINGS 2011

Sat. 9 April 2.00pm @ Caroline Cherry's home in Clevedon.

**Swarm Control, Brian Campbell**

Sat. w/e 14-17 April **BBKA Spring Convention, Stoneleigh**

Sat. 7 May 2.00pm Walled Garden Apiary,

**Integrated Pest Management, Tom Salter**

Every Sunday morning at **Langford Apiary**. For members. Please come at 10am. Learn new skills from old hands. Topical monthly talks. The **President's BBQ** will be held on July 16 12-4pm Quiz and Games for all the family. More info later.

Visits are to be arranged during the summer to Somerset Levels and on 25 June to Bristol Botanic Gardens.



The 2011 Introductory Course and at the practical morning.



**Meet and Greet Afternoon** Peter Carter Assistant, Programme Manager Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March saw a different sort of meeting for BCD Beekeepers. The Committee has been only too aware of the growth of interest in beekeeping and the subsequent upsurge in membership over the past two/three years.

So, in arranging the current year's meetings, the programme team felt that an opportunity was needed to introduce recent members to existing (someone dared to call them "old"! ) members. With this in mind we had a new venue as well – Tickenham Hall, which we hope to use again –and according to those present, the event was a success. Wendy Welham spoke about the Mentoring System for new beekeepers and several of us who were prepared to be mentors stood up and introduced ourselves. Wendy also spoke about the monthly Saturday programme being open to all, the meetings were both social and informative.

Tom Salter gave a short talk about what we should be doing with our colonies at this time of year and the preparation for the summer and hoped-for honey crops in the late summer. There followed a most enjoyable "shared tea".

New beekeepers don't be shy! Come and join us on our Saturday sessions, your copy of the programme/Newsletter/website for details.

### BCD Committee Report

David Welham, Secretary

We have held two committee meetings so far this year. At the first we set out the aims for the coming season and at the second we started to plan and set objectives. Matters of particular interest were: -

The branch wishes to obtain land as an outright purchase or on a long lease 25yrs so that we may start our own training apiary with the necessary facilities.

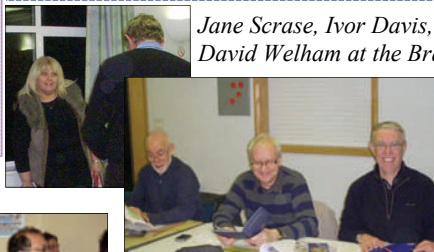
We decided to launch our own web site: [northsomersetbeekeepers.org](http://northsomersetbeekeepers.org) the site can be accessed directly or through a link from the ABKA web site.

George Simms' widow Gill, has donated several books and items of equipment to the branch. It was decided that from the sale of some of these items we would purchase a George Simms Memorial Cup to be presented at the Portishead Show.

Honey prices for 2011 shows were set at: 11lb £5.50; 12oz £4.50; 8oz £3.50.

Five frame nucs from the branch will be: Members £150.00 non members £175.00

The 38<sup>th</sup> Avon BKA AGM 2012 will be hosted by Blagdon Branch.



Jane Scrase, Ivor Davis, Rob Francis, Peter Carter and David Welham at the Branch Study Group for BBKA

Module 3 (Pests & Diseases).

Jane & David took the exam in March; we wish them well!

Thank you to Ivor for running these study groups every year. Next year it is Biology!

### 2011 Workshops

Martin Burwin

There were strange things happening at Kenn village hall on Tuesday evenings in January! Excited voices, banging and crashing could be heard coming from inside. Has a club been set up for tearaways or could it be something more sinister!!!!

No it's **Blagdon Beekeepers** attending the winter workshop.

A great time was had by all that attended. Nuc boxes, feeders, open mesh floors and supers were assembled under the watchful eyes of the more experienced members at a fraction of the cost that you could buy them for.

A big thank you to Stephen, Phil, Tom and Martin for organizing these workshops and could we please have another one next year.

### Branch Honey Show

Tom Salter, Snr Honey Judge

Nine members put a total of 20 exhibits into the show.

The member with the most points in the show and winner of the Golden Jubilee Cup was Belinda Kumpel; Keith Santo was runner up. The winner of the Novice Shield was Keith Santo. Worthy of mention was Keith's honey gingerbread cake. I have judged this recipe at four other shows in the past 12 months and this was the best example being light and full of flavour.

Extract from Wendy Welham: "Several members brought their children which made it a really enjoyable afternoon. The youngsters were very interested in the things that Tom showed them (future beekeepers?). The surprise of the afternoon was that Tom had to tick someone off for talking – and it wasn't one of the children!!!"



### Christmas 2011 Meal

Phil Clemente has now booked the venue for the Christmas meal which will be on Friday 2 Dec. 2011 at Gatecombe Farm at Long Ashton. He will get the menu later in the year. Phil says "mark your diaries and let's fill the place!"

### Apiary Notes

Philip Clemente, Apiary Manager 01275 879697 [nerja5@hotmail.com](mailto:nerja5@hotmail.com)

We are about to start a new year at the Apiary, with 36 plus beginners, we should have a good year with plenty of work for all the experienced beekeepers who have agreed to help each Sunday. Don't forget, you may not be a beginner but you are welcome to attend the apiary sessions, get your questions answered, answer some from the beginners or just for the social aspect.