

BOURNEMOUTH & DORSET SOUTH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter

July 2021

Honey Show – now 30th October

We are very happy to announce this year's Honey Show will be on **30th October**. This is a slight change to what was announced in last month's Newsletter.

Through much consideration, it has been decided that as we are coming out of Covid restrictions, that this year the Show will be a closed event opening only to BADS members and not to the general public. For this reason, we are staging it at West Parley Memorial Hall, a hall we are all very familiar with and know the layout well. We can relax and enjoy a much-needed catch up with our fellow members over a good cup of tea and cake.

Fred Sedgeley – Show Co-Ordinator

Association Diary Dates

West Parley Memorial Hall

2021

Tuesday 21.09.2021 (evening) - September meeting

Tuesday 19.10.2021 (evening) - October meeting

Saturday 30.10.2021 (daytime) – Honey Show

Tuesday 16.11.2021 (evening) - November meeting

Tuesday 14.12.2021 (evening) - December Christmas meeting

2022

Tuesday 18.01.2022 (evening) - January AGM

Tuesday 15.02.2022 (evening) – February meeting

Tuesday 15.03.2022 (evening) - March meeting

Tuesday 19.04.2022 (evening) - April meeting

Evening meetings from 7:00pm to 10pm

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information. For arranging speakers I am being helped by Ed Gentle.

Natalie Sewell, Treasurer

07786 998614 treasurer@bads-bka.org

Swarm season 2021

This has been my first year as swarm co-ordinator and I have really enjoyed it. I was all ready to receive calls from early April but due to the cold and wet it was the end of the month before I had my first call! And it was all a bit stop start through May, but on the busiest day I had 8 calls – whilst on one call two other people were leaving messages. It was great to speak to people, most of whom genuinely wanted to protect the bees and make sure they were moved to somewhere safe.

By far the most calls came in about bumblebees and I have to thank Peter Darley for his amazing help and commitment in dealing with all of these calls, rehoming and giving advice. Thank you to all the swarm collectors who have been so lovely to speak to and so helpful.

Clare Tilly – Swarm co-ordinator



21st April 2021: Swarm season starting late this year because of the weather....?



First swam of the season for me. Call out by a dog walker in playing fields in Ringwood.....

Asked how high, he said two feet off the ground. When we got there, they were in the air. Got the swam box out and set it up. They stalled about one foot off the ground. Collected and hived.....

Ian Warmer – Member

Welcome to our New Members

Membership numbers are increasing and I would like to welcome our new members and beekeepers, several who have attended the Beginner's Course run by David Aldersey. We wish you every success on your new beekeeping venture:

Alan Pope, Nick Holmes, Ed Gentle, James Gentle, Barry Conway, Sue Rogers, Elsa Hatton, Mark Hatton, Bradley Mole, Agnes Hunter, Richard Smith, Stuart Cook, Vaughan Bradbury, Janine Foy, Wendy Robinson and Georgia Robinson.

Anne Moran – Membership Secretary

Wannabee Day 12th June, High Mead Farm

12th June dawned sunny and warm which boded well for our first Wannabee Day at High Mead Farm for just over two years. 25 people had enrolled and 25 people duly arrived. They were a great group of people of all ages. Everybody was keen to learn more about bees and lots of them had good questions to ask as the day progressed. After a morning of two presentations and our usual question and answer sessions, we broke into two groups (the hungry and not quite so hungry!) The second were clad in beesuits and had a long session with Kelly and Helga around the hives. After an hour the second group had their chance to experience handling frames of bees. This time Mike Duffin donned his beesuit and helped open the hives. The bees behaved themselves throughout!

From comments made on the day, and afterwards, everyone seemed to have thoroughly enjoyed themselves and certainly it was a rewarding day for our members who had organized and presented the day.

I would like to thank the team of Kelly Smith, Anne Moran, Adrian Rozkovec, Mike Duffin and Helga Aldersey who all gave up most of their day and ensured the events success.

David Aldersey – Organiser of the Day

Here are a few pictures taken on the day (thank you Cate Battson).





Bumble Bees... and others

There are about 270 species of bee in the UK, of which 250 are solitary bees, 25 are bumble bees and only one is the honey bee.

Now that we are fully into summer all our insects are emerging and making the best that they can of whatever weather is thrown at them. Some, our dragonflies for example, hatch on a species-by-species basis throughout the season, but the majority of our insects are on the wing as soon as the weather is right. How a pupa can tell that it is time to emerge is dependent on several factors including temperature, day length, and perhaps an in-built sense of time, but mainly it must be temperature.

Global warming is bringing forward Spring for flowers, plants and insects. Not only are there more bumblebees, but our solitary bees are also going strong.

Solitary Bees

One of the commonest solitary bees is the Red Mason bee, **Osmia bicornis**, having recently changed its name from *Osmia rufa*. This lovely little bee is common in the south of England and is always a welcome sign of warmer weather. Usually first seen in April, it takes its name from its habit of building its nest in holes in masonry. It does no harm and is a good pollinator. I have several 'nest boxes' around the garden for this bee. An old log drilled with 8mm or 10mm

holes is ideal, and as the picture shows, it will happily use a sawn-off bamboo cane such as are in commercially available 'bee hotels'. The bee lays an egg on a pollen store, seals it in and continues until the nest is full. The eggs hatch and the larvae feed on the pollen, pupate and then next year make their way out into the wide world. The laying female has the ability, and no one knows how, to determine the hatching time of the eggs so that the eggs nearest the entrance hatch first and those at the bottom of the nest last, thus ensuring that no bee is trapped by its sibling.

This year I made some plexiglass nest tubes for them and the picture of the completed nests shows pollen, larvae and



a lot of frass (larval 'poo'). None of the nests appear to have been breached by *M. obscurus*, so I hope for a good hatch next year.

However, there is a 'nasty' involved. *O. bicornis* is parasitized by a Chalcid wasp, called **Monodontomerus obscurus**. It even looks like a nasty, but is only a few millimetres long.....



It loiters at the entrance to the mason bee's nest and when the bee is away, it slips in and lays an egg on the bee egg. When the bee larva hatches, the wasp grub eats it, pupates, and is next summer's wasp adult. Now, mid June, *O. bicornis* has had its day and the adults have died out.

Just occasionally I get a call to a site where the occupant is the delightfully named Hairy-footed flower bee, **Anthophora plumipes**.....



This all black bee is a solitary bee but nests in large colonies. One colony last year I was called to in Broadstone, housed several hundred bees each with a small underground tube nest dug into the soft earth underneath a balcony. Fortunately, the owner of the flat was sympathetic and the bees were allowed to stay. This year there were far fewer bees there, although were some still using the site. I expect that there were aggregations of nesting females elsewhere.

Another bee which generates calls is the *Andrena* spp. mining bee of which this is **Andrena flavipes**....



Again, a solitary bee but which nests in large, sometimes very large, colonies. These nest are usually in lawns or paths and with their underground nests with 'volcanoes' of dry, excavated earth around the entrance, can sometimes seem like an invasion. But they are quite harmless, and like all pollinators are an undisputed force for good.

Bumblebees

Now is also the time for bumblebee calls. Clare Tilly, our swarm coordinator, passes all the bumble calls to me to deal with and at the moment we are heading for 60 calls and 50 site visits this year. Where I can I try persuading the caller to keep the bumbles, and a good number will, but some callers want them moved. Usually, they are impeding use of the garden, or the grandchildren might get stung. I don't think that I have ever taken a call where the object is simply destruction of the colony; callers 'don't want to hurt the bees', they just want them to be somewhere else. The commonest bees that callers want moved are the buff-tailed and white-tailed bumble bee, *Bombus terrestris* and *Bombus lucorum* respectively, and the Tree bumble bee.



Typical **buff-tailed bumble** **worker** bee.

The **Buff-tailed queen** has two obvious mustard coloured yellow bands and a thin line of buff hairs between the black abdomen and the tail, which can be a white or buff in colour. The **White-tailed queen** has no buff hairs and the yellow banding is a lemon colour. In the field it is generally not possible to distinguish between buff tail workers and white tail workers.

Tree bumbles, but they have a different attitude. They were first recorded at Landford in Wiltshire some twenty years ago, an import, accidental or natural, from the continent. They love to nest in holes in trees, hence 'Tree bumblebee', and the British, bless them, put out bird nest boxes by the thousand, so the bees had ready-made nesting sites throughout the land and now are as far north as Scotland. But they are quite feisty....



Picture of a typical **tree bumblebee**. Same white tail, no yellow banding but a chestnut-coloured thorax.

All bumblebee colonies start with one queen in the spring, then workers, and then males and new queens both of which leave the nest. The males mate and die and the gravid females hibernate to start the cycle again the following year. In the old colony, the queen and all the workers die.

The buff tails are usually pretty forgiving, but the tree bumbles are not. Neither species is particularly aggressive, but if you are attacking their home, naturally they become defensive. When moving an underground colony of tree bumbles it took two hours to trace and dig out the nest and I got pinged several times. Bumbles do not die having stung as their stings are smooth and can sting you repeatedly without harming themselves.

The technique is to find the nest and lift it entire into a suitable receptacle, and I have made such suitable boxes with ventilation ports and closable entrances. Leave the box at the site of the nest for the bees to learn that that is their new home, return after dark, stop up the entrance and move the box and bees to a new site. Naturally, some bees do not make it back to the nest at the end of the day and end up 'sleeping out'. When they return next day there is nothing there for them and they just mill about at the site. This sometimes means a return visit to collect these

stragglers. The moved colonies usually settle at their new site and successfully continue their life cycle.

For tree bumbles, approaching quietly, you can often see ten or a dozen guard bees just inside the entrance on the look-out for trouble. They sting first and ask questions later. Approaching too closely to their nest box home is to invite investigation, and a dozen fizzy bees buzzing around your head is enough for most people to want them moved. The technique to move them is similar to that for buff tails, but a bit easier. Turn up after dark, block the nest box entrance with a piece of sponge and move the nest box entire. Two rules to observe. One, that the nest box is in good repair and does not fall to pieces when being removed. On one memorable occasion I unscrewed the nest box in the dark, full of tree bumbles, to have it fall apart in my hands. There is little dignity but a lot of sense in running for cover! Two, put the removed box in a large plastic sack and secure the opening before taking it off site. Again, when located at a new site they settle and finish their life cycle pollinating flowers, vegetables, and crops and being good wildlife agents. The nest box is usually returned to the caller at the end of the year.

In Summary

Dealing with the public and their queries and concerns is always educational. Some claim to know more than they actually do, some are quite concerned with what they see as dangerous insects, some just want to talk through what they have and simply require reassurance. It is very heartening that everyone says 'I don't want to hurt the bees', even the lady who was 'pinged' by a buff tailed bumble in the garden and ended up in A&E with anaphylactic shock. I do not charge for this service, but if anyone asks, I say that a donation to BADS would be most welcome. I generate a hundred pounds or so each season and it still gives me the opportunity to promote the cause of all bees to the general public.

To date, late June, I have taken 60 or so calls, most passed on by Clare Tilly, our swarm coordinator, and made 50 site visits. 54 calls were bumble bees and 10 were honey bees. In case you are thinking that the numbers don't stack up, some people called more than once.

It is a service to the public, BADS is always mentioned, and the cause of bees of all stripes, is promoted.

Peter Darley-Swarm Collector

Bee Supplies – Mike and Liz Duffin

If you need bee equipment or supplies please be aware that the Duffins, are the local agents for Thornes (EH Thorne Beehives Ltd), a major national Beekeeper supplier. They are very helpful, keep a good stock and you don't have to pay for packaging and postage!

Upper Hurst
Snails Lane
Blashford
Ringwood
BH24 3PG
01425 474552

Please support them!

This is YOUR Association Newsletter. Please feel free to share your beekeeping experiences – good or bad – along with photos, honey recipes, hints and tips, anecdotes and links to any interesting articles.

In response to the members, please note that we have agreed to provide a 2 monthly, rather than quarterly Newsletter, so all the more reason why we are requesting contributors.

Please email Adrian Rozkovec: newsletter@bads-bka.org

Like us on Facebook:



Follow us on Twitter:



Recipe

Oat and Honey Muffins

These fluffy light muffins are perfect for breakfast or a mid-morning snack because they are packed with nutritious oats and dried fruit.

Ingredients

- 250g (9oz) plain flour
- 1tbsp baking powder
- 100g (3½oz) porridge oats
- 125g (4oz) ready-to-eat dried apricots (chopped)
- 50g (2oz) soft light brown sugar
- ½tsp salt
- 2 medium eggs (beaten)
- 175ml (6flox) milk
- 75ml (3flox) sunflower oil
- 5tbsp clear honey

Equipment

- 2 x 6-hole or 12-hole muffin tin
- 10 paper muffin cases
- Large mixing bowl
- Sieve
- Wooden spoon
- Large jug
- Fork
- Oven gloves
- Cooling rack

1 Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C, gas mark 5). Line a muffin tin with 10 paper cases. Sift the flour and baking powder into a bowl and stir in the oats, apricots, sugar and salt.

2 Put the flour mixture to one side. In a large jug, beat together the eggs, milk, oil and honey with a fork until thoroughly mixed and frothy.

3 Pour the wet mixture in the jug over the dry ingredients in the bowl. Stir with a wooden spoon until the ingredients are just combined. The batter will be lumpy and quite runny.

4 Divide the mixture between the muffin cases, so they are ¾ full and cook on the top shelf of the oven for 20–25 minutes. Leave in the tin for a few minutes, then transfer to a cooling rack.

Leslie Morton – Committee Member