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TAUNTON BEE-KEEPERS

E Mail FORUM

tauntonbeekeepers.org.uk/joinlist.html

Contact James Fidell 01984 623030

SBKA website at :

www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

FUTURE MEETINGS

Saturday 30th April

FUN WITH WAX

2.00pm Heatherton Park

To book a place, contact Jenny on
01823 270465
who will be tutoring the course

Saturday 7th May

DISEASES

2.30pm Heatherton Park

Adam Vevers, Simon Jones and Pat Brooks our Foul Brood Inspectors will examine the colonies at the Apiary giving us an insight into how they undertake their examinations.

Saturday 4th June

QUEEN REARING

2.30pm Heatherton Park

Dan Basterfield will show us how to set about raising our own queens, an aspect of beekeeping that we should all try.

Saturday 11th June

HYGIENIC BEES

2.30pm Heatherton Park

We welcome back Glyn Davis a former President of BBKA

BEE LINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TAUNTON & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS

April/May 2011

Number 70 Vol 10



David Pearce shows the participants at this year's Introductory Course the parts of a hive. The course took place over five evenings with two modules each evening with a tea break in between. The next stage is for the members to attend 'hands on' sessions at Heatherton Park throughout the summer months. It is hoped that they will be returning to the classroom for the Continuation Course to be held in the Autumn.

There were ten tutors covering different modules some of whom undertook the Introductory Course themselves but a few years ago. We are very fortunate in our Division to have such talent and a willingness to impart their knowledge of the craft to others.

Editor

TIPS AND TRICKS

A 'tennis' headband is good for those hot summer days in a bee suit.

Use a LED head torch when loading up in the dark for a trip to the heather.

A two directional 'caravan' spirit-level makes levelling your hives easy.

Petroleum jelly reduces problems of propolis on frame runners or Apidea parts.

A frame hanger is handy to hold the end frame removed from the brood box.

Frame lifting 'scissors' disturb bees less than fingers on lugs.

An old-fashioned magnifying glass makes finding those eggs a bit easier.

A squirt of WD40 on smoker fuel (before lighting!) speeds up the process.

Always use hive straps in parallel not 'crossed'.

Use see-through small bore plastic tube (say from a spray mist bottle) to remove any specs from the bottom of a jar of clear honey entered for showing.

A new (!) small toothbrush dipped in the honey can be used to 'wet' corners of hexagonal jars to prevent bubbles being trapped when the jar is filled.

From the Warwickshire Beekeeper via e Bees

Removing Scum From Honey

Problem: You take the lid off a bucket of honey to find a thin layer of scum (bubbles, tiny bee bits and pollen) across the surface of the honey. You would like to remove the scum before tipping the honey through a fine filter cloth into your honey dispensing tank.

Solution: You could ladle off the scum but that is slow, cumbersome and inefficient. Why not try this: Lay a single sheet of newspaper across the surface of the scum and press lightly to ensure it is in contact with the scum. Then lift the sheet of paper off. Voila! The scum layer is removed clinging to the paper. It works a treat for layers up to around 3mm thick.

PS: Don't be in a rush to remove the layer of scum that settles on top of the honey in your honey dispensing tank after your final fine filtering. That layer helps to retain the aromas that give your honey its attractive individuality

From BKA of Australian Capital Territory via e Bees.

HIVE WATCH

It gladdens beekeepers hearts to see the fields of yellow at this time of year be it oil seed rape or dandelions. The bees are able to 'get going' with this abundance of pollen and nectar on their doorsteps.

The rape this year is two weeks earlier than last year due to the weather in February and March. It has also resulted in the appearance of the pollen beetle on our O.S.R. sites and the crop, unlike past years, had to be sprayed.

With this earlier season we will hopefully not be caught out. Plenty of foundation should be available to relieve the congestion of those rapidly expanding brood nest to deter swarming. Making up some nuc hives at the end of the month rather than waiting until May/June could ensure they become large enough to take advantage of the main flow in July. After all, a swarm in May is 'worth a load of hay.'

Extracting O.S.R. should be undertaken the same day as it is removed from the hive if possible. Experience has shown us that the honey often remains in a liquid state but granulates if left for a few days. Also ensure the extracting room is warm before bringing the supers indoors.

Dandelion honey also granulates quickly. If you do extract some of this early honey, the dandelion has a glucose taste rather like Lucozade. On the Somerset Levels, dandelion was regarded as the main source of honey for the year and may be it still is. I do know that it is not a favourite of the honey judges!

Editor

EDITORIAL

I'm sure that most of you will have opened up your hives during one of the recent warm days. Generally the bees appear to have come through the winter well. Some will not have survived and that is normal. The heavy losses of a few years ago may well have been allayed by better management and hygiene as well as nature doing its role of natural selection.

Beekeeping as a craft has many facets and one of those involves the uses and properties of beeswax. With this issue I have produced a 'wax supplement' with the help of Jenny who could be regarded as our expert in this field. You will see that the amount of wax required is easily obtained from your cappings or brace comb.

I have given some information on the basic extracting equipment that the Division has for hire. Somebody once told me that beekeeping is a 'rich man's hobby'. It is if you invest in all your beekeeping needs in one outlay. Those starting out beekeeping will we hope find this a valuable service in their first few years.

Please note that there are some interesting meetings coming up at the Apiary. Hope to see you there.

David Morris
Editor

GETTING A SWARM OUT OF A WALL



An article in of Beecraft gave a way of using a modified nuke box to filter swarmed bees out of a wall. It involved fitting two Porter escapes onto the lid to ensure that bees would exit through the box, but could not get back into the wall. The system seemed over complicated so I made a simpler version which worked a treat.

I made a nuke box out of some redundant WBC parts (hence the peculiar shape!) and fitted a Porter escape into one side. (On reflection, perhaps two Porters would be a wise precaution against blockage?). Round the periphery of that side I glued upholstery foam about 2” thick. Into the box I put a frame of brood and 4 frames of foundation. The box was then pressed tight against the wall, making sure that no bees could escape round the foam. Having come out through the box, the bees soon got used to a new entrance.

GETTING A SWARM OUT OF A WALL (Cont).

The article said that bees emerging through the box would raise a queen. – they didn’t! After a week I introduced a laying queen. After another week the foundation had been drawn & largely filled with stores, and was covered with bees. I removed 3 of the frames, plus bees, and replaced with more foundation. Again, they drew it out & filled it, and again I replaced it.

The Beecraft article said that the full extraction period would be 6 weeks, to give time for brood in the wall to hatch & fly. There was no way of enticing the swarm queen out, so eventually the eager young colony in the box was taken away and the exit hole had to be sealed.

This experience was submitted by David Berkley last year but I have held it over to await the new swarming season ! Many thanks David

This poem appeared in the ‘Australasian Beekeeper’ and has been attributed to John Guilfoyle.

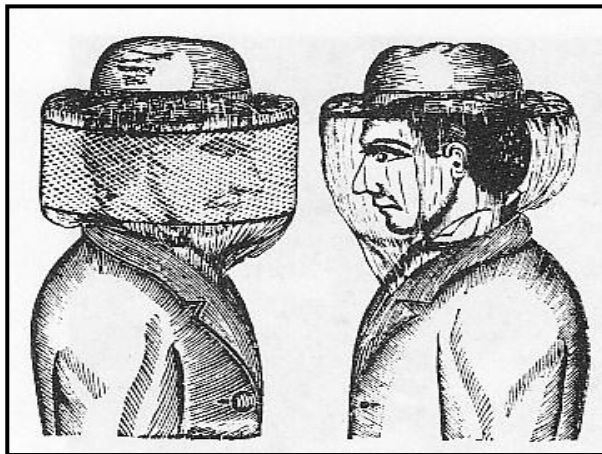
The prices are low and sales are slow;
My extractor’s worn out and my truck won’t go;
I’ll sell the whole thing for what it will bring.
I’m finished with bees. I’m through.
I’m sick of the lifting, the extracting, the shifting,
And the seasons just don’t run to form;
It’s too hard to toss, it’s just a dead loss;
Hey! Quick get a box! There’s a swarm.

Extracting Equipment for Hire

An Extractor and settling tank can be hired by contacting
Jason Wallis on 01823 667338

There is a £5 charge per item borrowed and the loan time is 3 days. If items are not returned within that time, there will be a further charge of £5 per item per day. A £25 deposit will be required against damage.

VEILS a further selection from the past.



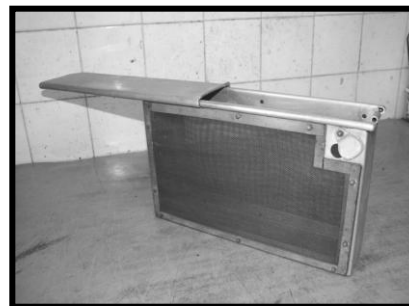
Early style protection. On the left a screened type similar to today's round veil. Fastened on top to a hat and tucked into a collar. On the right, a sheer materials was lighter weight and easier to see through.

Below styles for women were made from wire screen and pasteboard.

From 'Bee Culture' 1996



What is this?



You will recall that I asked if anybody could enlighten us upon this particular piece of equipment. There were no answers forthcoming so alas, I am none the wiser. Ed

Snippets from the March Committee meeting

In view of the difficulty in obtaining funding, there will need to be a review of the proposals for the new premises at the Apiary.

12 colonies and 7 nucs at the apiary, appear to have got through the winter. Thanks were recorded to Malcolm Drakeford who has given the apiary a good tidy up.

Plans are in hand for the Waggle Dance on 2nd July and the annual Christmas event.

Concern was expressed over the delay in the publishing of the SBKA Year Book.

Taunton Flower Show looks forward to our presence again this year.

A new gate will be purchased for the 'overflow' car park.

Anne Pike will be taking over the post of Publicity Officer.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome more new members who have joined us in 2011.

Mr S.Georgiev
Burnham on Sea

Mrs J Neal
Creech Heathfield

Mr Neil Galbraith
Ilminster

Jenny Sparks
Wellington

Mr Newstead
Wellington

David Trump
Wiveliscombe

Mr N Cross
Taunton

B.B.K.A. BASIC EXAM

As one of the largest Divisions in the county, it was disappointing last year that so few members attempted the BBKA Basic Exam. Open to members who have completed one year of beekeeping it is a straight forward practical and oral test with **no written element**.

The examiners are not out to catch candidates, in fact they are 'willing' examinees to pass.

Why not have a try this year. The exercise takes about an hour and upon passing, will give you more confidence with your beekeeping.

Contact either Simon Jones or myself for further details. **Ed**