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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 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

Saturday 16th July

PRESIDENT'S AFTERNOON

2.30pm Heatherton Park

We welcome **David Packham**, a new speaker/demonstrator to our apiary.
David hails from East Devon and is a seasonal bee inspector.

A good tea is guaranteed.

Beginners dates

Please note that the dates set aside for the beginners are now May 21st, June 25th and July 23rd
All members are welcome

BEE LINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TAUNTON & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS

June 2011

Number 71 Vol 10



Oil Seed Rape growing in Halse

Photo David Morris

The Vale of Taunton Deane, viewed from the surrounding hills this year, revealed an abundance of oil seed rape being grown. The warm weather during April enabled the bees to take full advantage of the situation and those who moved hives specifically to the crop have had a good return.

Now the fields have turned green and the bees have moved on to another source of nectar – let's hope it includes some Hawthorne this year. In my experience, a surplus from this crop can only be anticipated every four or five years as so many facets have to come together at exactly the right time. I regard it as the 'connoisseurs' honey' as it often wins the dark honey prizes at the shows helped of course, by the 'nutty' taste that lingers on the palate.

Ed

TAUNTON & COUNTY BEES AND HONEY SHOW

5th and 6th August at Vivary Park

To avoid entry numbers slipping, it is vital that as many of you as possible try to enter at least one class. We know that there has been some early honey extracted this year and it is often a case of 'just remembering' to put a few pots aside for the show bench. The novice classes in particular have been poorly supported recently, so here are a few pointers that should help for your honey to be viewed favourably by the judge.

- The most common honey is either light or medium. If in doubt enter both classes!
 - Extract only from sealed honey. If there is new comb, extract from this.
 - Filter thoroughly using two layers if possible.
 - Once in the ripener, tilt the back slightly as this will ensure no bubbles are trapped in the tap.
 - Allowing 24 hours for settling, bottle show honey first as its position at the bottom of the ripener will be the densest honey.
 - Warm thoroughly clean and dry jars to reduce the number of air bubbles. Also when filling, tilt the jar so the honey pours in down the side.
 - Overfill to ensure contents are not under weight after cleaning the surface. Remember to top up any jars with honey from the same batch.
 - Allow to settle in the jar before removing the excess air bubbles. This can be done with spoons and straws etc. Any bubbles at the base of the jar can often be dislodged with a sharp twist of the jar or by using a straw.
 - Always use new matching lids.
 - Place exhibit label as per schedule between the mould lines of the jar.
 - Do all this a few days before the show in order that an aroma is built up for when the judge removes the lid. Changing lids just before staging is not recommended. Aroma is lost and dust from the air often enters undetected. Judges should give allowances for 'travel spots' on the lid but these can be avoided by keeping the jars perfectly upright at all times.
 - There should be no signs of granulation and if present, must be eliminated slowly by storing the honey in a warm airing cupboard over a few days. Any rapid heating of honey will cause darkening and caramelling.
- The best of luck with your efforts. It worked for me! Ed

HIVE WATCH

If you look at your hive records for last year you will see that the oil seed rape crop flowered a fortnight earlier this year. This change has been reflected in other flowering shrubs and trees and we need to take note of this situation in the weeks ahead.

The bee literature will talk about the 'June Gap', a time when the forage available is reduced until the clover, rose-bay willow herb and blackberry provide us in our area, with the important main flow of the year in July.

In recent years the 'June Gap' has not been noticeably pronounced but this year could be different. Where an early crop of honey in particular has been taken, any stores left behind could be quickly diminished as the demands of the brood and the bees themselves has to be met.

It is a good idea to 'heft' your hives at this time of year on a regular basis. Any light hives should be given a rapid feed of the 50/50 thin syrup in the evening. That is 1 pint of water to 1 pound of sugar. Needless to say, nuclei should be watched for stores at all times.

If it rains in June and adds another set-back to the ability of the bees to forage don't despair! A wet June and a hot July is ideal for producing a bumper crop as long as we have ensured that we have enough bees to take full advantage. A warm June and a wet July could reflect those poor crops we had in 2008 and 2009. Editor

EDITORIAL

It is hoped that the long awaited 2011 Somerset B.K.A. Year book will be with our Full Members shortly. There is an explanation for its late arrival in the County Newsletter that is also included with this edition of 'BEELINES'. In the centre pages of the Year Book, you will find the schedule for this year's honey show. Copies can also be obtained from Neil Trood, the show secretary.

You will have noticed from the programme that the intention was to run two parallel groups of beginners for the practical sessions. The numbers indicating an interest were less than anticipated and so their needs can be met with half the planned sessions. Amended dates are on the 'future meetings' section. All members are welcomed to attend as the more helpers/tutors we have the better it is for the participants.

There has been a reminder to ensure all your hives are covered by BDI. We should add that if you are sharing an apiary, please be aware that both parties must be covered by Bee Disease Insurance. If only one party has BDI cover, the insurance on all the hives in that apiary is Null and void.

David Morris Editor

Extracting Equipment for Hire
An Extractor and settling tank can be hired by contacting
Jason Wallis on 01823 667338

Taunton and District Beekeepers

*WAGGLE DANCE AND
HOG ROAST*

Saturday 2nd July 2011 7.00 – 11.00pm

Neroche Village Hall
Bickenhall

Dancing to ‘Dyer Cummings’
(Ceilidh band and caller)

Drinks available

Prize Draw

All proceeds towards the new Heatherton
Park Apiary Clubhouse

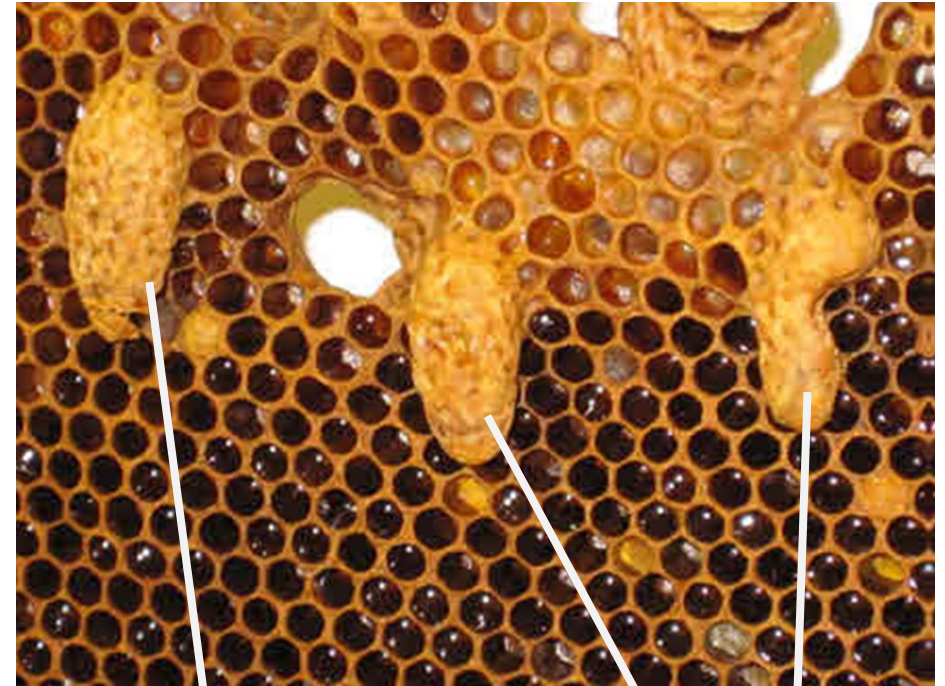
Ticket Price: £13-00

Admission by Ticket Only

Tickets available from:

Simon Jones Tel 01823 443737

Continuing the swarming theme



Left. A hatched queen cell. **Centre:** A sealed queen cell
-or is it a re-sealed queen cell? **Right:** A torn down queen cell

Thanks to Ludlow & District BKA via e bees

B.B.K.A. BASIC EXAM

Arrangements are being made to hold a **TRAINING DAY ON 28TH MAY** at the apiary, to prepare candidates for this straight forward practical and oral test. It is hoped that Taunton can have more members taking it this year. It is a good way of improving your beekeeping. In Somerset, the entry fee is refunded for those who pass the exam. Up to now, that has been everybody.

All those interested in learning more about the test and have kept bees for more than a year, please contact **SIMON ON 01823 443737** for further details

SWARM QUIZ

Now that the swarming season is with us again, see what you can remember about it in this lighthearted quiz. Easy one to start with.

1. When does an egg hatch? After 2, 3 or 4 days.
2. When is a queen cell sealed? After 7, 8 or 9 days.
3. When does the virgin queen emerge? After 15, 21 or 24 days.
4. Which bees emerge on the other days?
5. When does a swarm usually leave? a) Before any queen cells are sealed; b) When they are all sealed; c) When the first one is sealed.
6. If the first virgin to emerge is a) allowed to kill her rivals, what is her next important action?
b) If she is not allowed to kill them what will she do next?
7. True or False
 - a) A young queen never swarms.
 - b) The queen decides when the swarm leaves
 - c) Clipped queens cannot fly so the colony never swarms
 - d) There will be drones in the hive before swarming starts
 - e) A swarm can be placed anywhere in its own apiary without much loss of flying bees
8. Which of the following best describes swarming preparations?
 - a) Six or less good queen cells, on the face of the comb
 - b) A dozen or so queen cells of different sizes, on the face of the comb
 - c) A dozen or so good queen cells, mainly around the edges of the comb
9. What are the other queen cells?
10. Name three conditions that might trigger swarming
11. How often should you inspect the colony in spring to control swarming?
12. What are you looking for?
13. How may a colony be divided up for swarm control?
14. You are going on holiday for three weeks in May. Which of the following might stop swarming?
 - a) Kill the queen
 - b) Divide the colony in two
 - c) Put a queen excluder over the entrance
 - d) Give three brood boxes and three supersWhich is best? *Answers on another page.*

COMMITTEE SNIPETS

- The Association has received a thank you note from the new Chair of Somerset Beekeepers, Jackie Mosedale, for the part we played in the arrangements for a successful County AGM.

- A raffle on the day undertaken by David Pearce raised £87 towards the building fund. Many thanks David and to those of you who donated prizes.

- The Auction made a profit this year of £776. Payments to those who had submitted items for sale amounted to £3,819. This is obviously a worthwhile event for all concerned.

- Membership numbers have topped the 200 mark, the first time for many years. Of the 207 members, 129 are full members. This indicates we are gaining more members than we lose.

- The lease on the extra space at the Apiary will be renewed up to 2019.

Ed

ANSWERS TO SWARM QUIZ

1. 3 days
2. 8 days
3. 15 days
4. 21- worker. 24 - drone
5. C
6. a) a mating fight b) cast
7. a-F, b-F, c-F, d-T, e-T
8. C
9. a) supercedure
b) emergency
10. Overcrowding, old queen
Temperature, weather and others!
11. Every 7/8 days
12. Swarm preparations – queen cells
13. Separate one of Queen, Brood, Flying Bees from the other two.
14. All of them will but b) is probably the best.

*Our thanks to the Harrogate and Rippon B.K.A. via e bees
I can assure you swarming is no different down here in Somerset than in Yorkshire ! Ed*

