

Quantock Quest

The newsletter of



September 2011

Dates for your diary

AGM Friday 18th November

Quiz night at Comwich Friday 2nd December

Oxaylic Acid treatment Saturday 17th December

From the Editor

I hope you have all had a successful Summer with plenty of honey and healthy bees.

I have enjoyed putting the Quantock Quest together but now feel that it is time for someone else to take over, so:

New Editor Required

If you are reasonably competent on a computer and involved with beekeeping, please give some thought to taking on this job. It is not difficult and you will be supported by the committee.

Please contact Ken if you are interested.

Thank you

Chris Porteus

Bridgwater Flower and Honey Show

This year there was an additional Novices class added to the Honey Competition. Entries were lower than last year, so if you have a few jars left over from this season and you are proud of them, why not keep them back for next years show ?

County Honey Show at Vivary Park

The County Honey Show is usually well supported. This year the 'County Classes' were very low in entries. The closed entries part that is for Taunton members only did fare better, but overall the entries were down. If you have any suggestions about how the Honey Shows can attract more entries please let us know.

Past Events

This year has been another good one for the QKBA.

The Hive loan option was taken up in full with 6 new beekeepers having hands on experience with their 'own bees' They now have the opportunity to purchase their bees and hives at very reasonable cost and take them to their own apiaries

Thanks go to Mary and her team of 'helpers'



Here's one new beekeeper looking closely for eggs in the cells.

Next year we will again purchase hives in the Thornes Sale ready to start again.

There has been a full programme of apiary meetings and a very enjoyable BBQ at Ken and Trish's. Many thanks to everyone who has hosted these events.

Brymore Open Day was as usual an enjoyable event and the QBKA stand attracted interest from many visitors as well as every storm fly in the county.

The Brymore Apiary

A poor year for honey, but this is mainly due to the number of nucleus hives (8) that were made up for Rent-a-hive and the Brymore boys. The House Apiary hive yielded 32lb and the school hives 44lb which is shared equally between the bee club and the school. Each boy gets an equal share of the club honey.

Forthcoming Events

The new beginners classes start at Brymore on Tuesday 4th October.

County Lunch at the Olive Mill Sunday 30 October

Do you fancy Lunch with the other beekeepers in Somerset ? Last year a few of us went and enjoyed the meal and the company very much. Why not give it a try? Give the family cook the day off !
Contact Ken

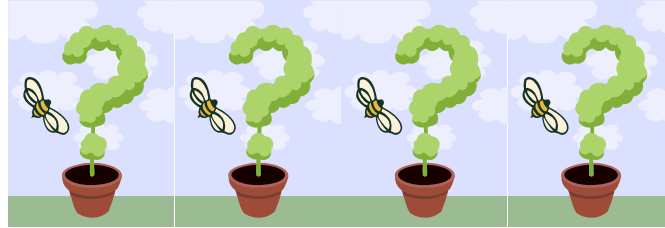
QBKA AGM at Spaxton Village Hall on Friday 18th November

The speaker will be **Gerald Fisher** who will talk about
"The changing face of Beekeeping"

Gerald is a gifted speaker who has been the Chairman and latterly the President of Somerset Beekeeper association

Saturday 17th December Winter Oxalic Acid Treatment

at Brymore. This is a 'must' if you want to keep healthy bees.



Quantock Beekeepers Quiz Night

Following last year's much enjoyed skittles evening, the Quantock Beekeepers will be holding another special social event on

Friday 2nd December 2011, 7:30pm, at

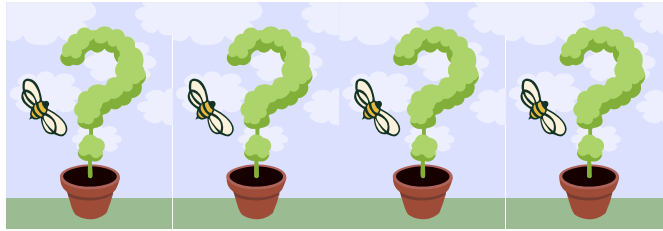
The Anchor Inn, Combwich.

A hot supper plus a Fun Quiz Night. Prizes for top teams and for the best "honey based dessert".

Bring your favourite home made honey pudding/cake to enter the competition.

Tickets £6.50 per person, everyone welcome.

Please contact Robert Palmer on 01278 653464



Autumn 2011 Beginners Course. 7.30 pm at Brymore

Tuesday 4 Oct - Session 1
Tuesday 18 Oct - Session 3
Tuesday 15 Nov – Session 5

Tuesday 11 Oct - Session 2
Tuesday 8 Nov – Session 4
Tuesday 22 Nov Last Session

This programme will be run by a team of speakers and includes :
Roy Francis, Fred Jones, Peter Malim, Robert Palmer,
Dave Porteus and Mary Rowe.

Looking Ahead to 2012

In the planning stage is a visit to a commercial apiary and Beekeeping Education Centre at Ottery St. Mary

Further details later.

Teddy Bears Picnic

Following the success of the TBP last year, the National Trust is keen to host the event again next year.

They are unable to make a time available at weekends so we are in negotiation with them about an appropriate weekday date.

The full programme of events will be available early next year.

It will include a Continuation Course, a Practical Course and the Rent-a-hive scheme. Visits to members areas and other events

If you have any suggestions for next year please get in touch with Ken or any committee member who will pass on your suggestion.

As Seen on TV

Beekeeping attracts quite a lot of interest in the media but how many times have Quantock Beekeepers featured in or contributed to TV programmes in the last year or so?

First in May 2010 the Points West camera crew came to one of our apiary meetings at Peter Malim's house and interviewed various beekeepers giving a good overview of what was going on.

Last December we were approached by a 'props' man who was looking for help with one of the Casualty storylines: a teenager who was into boxing was getting arthritis in his hands and was going to a Holby City beekeeper to get stung, to reduce the arthritis! So in January (when the snow was thick on the ground) a transit van turned up at Ken's house to collect all the equipment needed to turn part of the top of a multi storey car park into the city apiary, and honey jars, an extractor, smokers, hive tools and other small items to give a realistic feel to one of the rooms in the bee keeper's flat. Two days later the transit returned all the equipment and the Division was given a generous donation by the TV company for our help. All this for about 30 seconds of air time!

In May this year we were again approached by a TV company who were filming episodes of 'Four in a Bed' for Channel 4. One of the B&B hosts who lived locally wanted to entertain her guests by giving them an afternoon of bee-keeping! So 7 B&B hosts and 6 camera crew and producers were all kitted out in white bee suits and were shown through some hives by Ken and Nick. We are still waiting for the episode to be transmitted so keep watching. The latest information is that it is likely to be shown in November.

The September edition of the BBC Wildlife magazine featured an article on honey bees and one of the accompanying photographs was of two Quantock beekeepers looking through a bee hive. It is impossible to recognise them with their veils on, but our QBKA logo can be seen on the beesuit.

The old adage says from small beginnings great things grow. Who knows what might happen next year!

Trish Edwards

Like all good Quantock beekeepers Lou Lewsley is putting his partner first !

Most of our members will not know Lou, but he has been with us since we started. His wife was stung recently and had a serious allergic reaction. He contacted us the same day, and by the evening we had helped him move his bees away from home to Spaxton. Lou has decided to give his wife priority over his bees and is selling all of his equipment, including a rather nice WBC hive with bees, bee suits, veils, smoker, extractor, jars, etc. The hive has 3 'lifts' of red cedar and an additional white one. He is selling what amounts to be a complete beginners kit with bees. The hive can be seen at Ken's home apiary in Spaxton, but get in touch with Lou on 01278 410891 if you are interested.



Should any member have such an emergency, the action to take is to get in touch with a committee member who will know of someone that can help. If it is urgent we usually respond the same day. It has happened occasionally over the past 5 years.

Bee Books

There are two very good books about beekeeping that have been published this year.

- The Green Guide called '**Keeping Bees**' - £9.95
- The Haynes '**Bee Manual**' - £19.99

Our Chairman Nick Wills has managed to negotiate the **Keeping Bees** for us to offer it to you for £4.00 and the **Haynes Manual** for £12.50

Both are good books and are written by Claire Warring (the editor of the Beecraft publication).

The Haynes Manual is excellent and gives step by step, clear information on most beekeeping procedures. Well written and illustrated, this book would act as a very good resource for most beekeepers. You would not need any other book in your early stages as a beekeeper. The Green Guide is a well written overview that gives a good introduction to beekeeping.

If you would like a copy ask Nick at any of the meetings or phone him on 01278 671781. His email address is willsn@btinternet.com

They will be on display at the Beginners Course.

Winter preparation

Don't forget that most colonies need 40 to 45 lbs (20 kg) of stores to see them through the winter. The bees cluster in the autumn and find it difficult to process the syrup if they are fed too late and the syrup can then ferment and cause diarrhea and mould in the winter.

Fondant can be used in an emergency but the bees have to find water and then lick the fondant to digest it. How would you like to start a meal and find that you had to lick it first to digest it?

Varroa Treatment

We have checked this out with the Regional Bee Disease Inspector. Treat your bees about now (no later) with half a dose of any of the varroa treatments that are on the market. This will reduce the mite population but not clear the mites completely. Doing this gives less interference to the bees as they prepare for winter.

Then in late **December or early January** treat with an oxalic acid solution. This will give you a very high knockdown when the mite are vulnerable. Use only a fresh solution as it can deteriorate in 6 weeks. At our oxalic acid day we will show you how to administer the treatment and sell you an applicator and sufficient solution to treat all of your hives for £1 only.

We are finding that the varroa count in our area stays low because of this. If you believe that you have no varroa in your hives you must be the luckiest beekeeper in the UK or need to go to Specsavers !

Varroa is endemic.

QBKA Logo

If you want a sew-on QBKA Logo you can get one from Ken for £4.

We also have an arrangement with Jual Clothing at North Newton, tel 01278 664091. We have paid the set-up charges and they have always given us good service. Give them a call and you can drop in and order whatever you need (sweatshirt, bee suit, shirt, lab coat etc) at their catalogue price and they will add the logo at no extra charge.



Congratulations for succeeding in their exams

Joseph Bourke-Trotham	Junior Exam
David Bennett	Basic Assesment
Perdita Bourke-Trotham	Basic Assessment
Dawn de Fazio	Basic Assessment
Don Macbeth	Basic Assessment
Ros Morse	Basic Assessment
Ken Edwards	Master Beekeeper

There are other exams which are conducted later in the season and we are hoping to report further success in the next Newsletter.

In particular Joseph is to be congratulated because he gained all of his knowledge through the Rent-a-hive programme and was an individual entry i.e. not through a school.

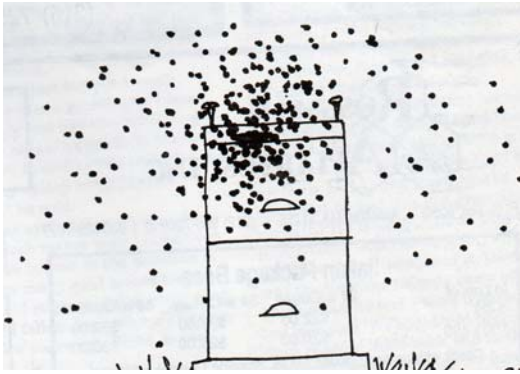
We had similar success last year so the skill level of beekeeping in QBKA is advancing well.

We hope for more next year, and in particular further successes for the Junior exam by the Brymore boys.

If anyone is interested in starting to study any of the modules, husbandry exam, or microscopy please get in touch with Ken and he can put you in touch with other interested beekeepers to form a study group or get individual coaching.

**Many thanks to the staff of Brymore School
for their support in general and especially for printing this
newsletter.**

Our special relationship with Brymore School contributes (very much) to the success of our group of beekeepers. **Because it is a residential school** it is accountable to **Ofsted** for the protection of all of its students at all times and to account for all people who visit the premises.



Help and advice are always available to members. In particular the following have offered their ears to anyone who is new to beekeeping or thinking of starting.

Nick Wills	671781	Mike Stenhouse	734633
Fred Jones	663305	Mike Sealey	445158
Dave Porteus	439385	Roy Francis	01643 821085

Officers contact numbers are on the programme.

There is always a wealth of information on the web site.

There are many excellent web sites about beekeeping, including the SBKA. Derek (one of our committee members) has found one produced by the Dean Forest beekeepers which has links to a variety of bee related videos. He found them very interesting and thinks others may as well. If you 'google' Dean Forest beekeepers you will find the link to the videos.

www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk