



The Quantock Quest

Issue 15
December 2017

A Division of Somerset Beekeepers Association



Time—there is never enough of it! Yet, as a child, that same clock could drag its hands so slowly around the dial—or even stopped, would the child declare, when a long-awaited treat was imminent, such as a holiday, or a visit to a favourite aunt, or, most special of all—the birthday! So how is it that now, that same clock with the same 24 hours, just whizzes forward at an alarming rate of knots, the day is over before it seems to have begun, the weekends almost seem to merge into each other and yet another year has passed by in a blink.

Much like the beekeeping year, I suspect, when, no sooner has all the extracting equipment and supers have been cleaned and put away, and the candles made for Christmas, than it's time to start it all again!

I guess holding on to time is about as easy as clutching an angry bee.... Jackie



If this issue of the Quantock Quest has been posted to you, it means that we do not have a current email address for you! If you have one, please pass it on — to quest@windytor.myzen.co.uk

Subs will be Due

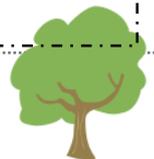
Your membership will need to be renewed in January. Put the date in your diary to make sure your insurance stays up to date, you continue to be part of our lovely group and you will still get your Quest!



Don't forget to weigh!

Although there is not a lot to do at this time of the year we still need to keep a weather eye on the hives and heft them from time to time. For a successful overwintering a hive needs to weigh around 20kg. If the hive is light treat them to some fondant.

And, have you fitted mouse-guards yet?



Dates for your Diary



To be announced early 2018.

Coming in 2018

Daytime Drop In Sessions incorporating practical hive work.

February Lecture Day—we have tickets for just £5 (see Ken)

News from the Apiary

One of the last teaching sessions demonstrated the annual Winter Closedown in the Apiary October and later in the month we looked at handling scrap wax and foundation making in a lively Saturday afternoon session. The microscopy classes culminated in the final exam being taken at the Apiary, with several Quantock members taking part. The results will be published in the next Quest.

The next Beginners course began in November with 20 prospective beekeepers. The classes take place indoors at Brymore Academy at the moment and will culminate in the Spring with practical work on the hives.

Good luck with wintering your bees

Asian Hornet News



You will probably be aware that an Asian Hornet was discovered in an apiary in Woolacombe, Devon. The nest was located and destroyed, and there have been no further sightings in the area.

A Government-funded nine-month pilot project being carried out in Jersey and France has been underway, where scientists are attaching specially-designed tags to Asian hornets, using radio waves and radar, in a bid to track the insets as they return to their nests; since April, 11 nests have been destroyed in Jersey. Results of the project are expected soon.

Identifying an Asian Hornet

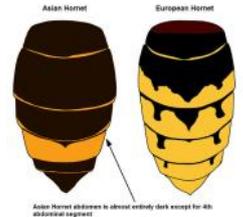
Asian Hornet Queens are up to 3cm (1.2") in length, workers are up to 2.5cm (1").

The body is dark brown or black, bordered with a fine yellow band. There is only one band on the abdomen, with the 4th abdominal segment almost entirely yellow-orange.

The legs are brown with yellow ends.

Head is black with orange-yellow face.

Source: National Bee Unit





Candle Making

If you have any silicon candle moulds you no longer use, we would love to have them!

All beekeepers end up with a pile of beeswax and many of us love to make candles for our own use, or to give to friends and family. Silicon moulds are much better than rubber, they last longer and are easier to peel from the set candle.

We would very much like to hold a stock of moulds at the Apiary which would be available for our members to borrow.

So if you have any unwanted silicon moulds, please share the joy and pass on to Quantock Beekeepers!

Cider with Barry

Back in October we were delighted to pay a visit to the home of Barry and Trish Hulatt at Berhill near Ashcott. Although the bees were still attending to their hives in the mild weather, we by-passed their activities in favour of the cider harvest!

We were able to watch a working cider press, and, even better, sample the delicious results! After attempting to identify a large range of cider apples and looking at orchard pollination we were able to take cider, apple juice and cider vinegar home—giving us very happy memories of our afternoon at Berhill.

Thank you, Barry and Trish, for your hospitality and education in the world of the cider apple—it was a lovely afternoon enjoyed by all.



Christmas Ideas

Don't forget that a jar of your own home-produced honey makes a great gift. And if you have the moulds, or can borrow some, beeswax candles are also a special and unique gift.



What to do in December?

When you have treated your hives with Oxalic Acid don't forget to record the details.

Now's the time to think about queen rearing next season, and if you are new to this part of beekeeping, December is an ideal time for research. Also, plan your queen replacement programme, using local bees, not foreign stock which can bring in disease.



BEES BITS

Bees do not hibernate, but cluster for warmth. They remain active all winter.