



Quantock Quest

The newsletter of the Quantock Bee Keepers Association (QBKA)

Issue 20

June 2019

2019 Rent a Hive gets off to a "Flying" start

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The 2019 Rent a Hive season got off to a good start with the prospective beekeepers assembling their Hives and then sterilizing them.

A demonstration of hive inspection was given using the indoor training Hive. During the next session they transferred their Nuclei to their newly assembled hives, and are now in the process of looking after their new colonies.



Fred demonstrating the art of Inspection

Have you got yours?

- * QBKA have been fortunate enough to acquire some Asian Hornet traps and attractant. These traps are FREE, and there is one for every member!
- * Make sure that you collect yours from the Barn on your next visit, if you have not already done so.
- * Monitoring for this threat is vitally important. So make sure that you have your trap and that you know what to do in the event of actually trapping one!



Time to hone those D.I.Y skills

During the course of the year they will be learning the basics, whilst being mentored, before taking their colonies home at the end of the season. Hopefully to become keen and dedicated Bee-keepers. QBKA are leaders in this method of learning, but we do need more experienced Bee-keepers to come along and assist at the Barn during RAH sessions. See the programme of events for dates of future sessions.



Mike Sealey supervises the sterilizing

New Newsletter Editor

Following the recent tragic passing of our former Newsletter Editor, Mrs Jackie Sealey, the QBKA Committee have appointed me as her successor. Her passing leaves us the poorer, and she will be very sadly missed. These really are big shoes to fill, and I sincerely hope that I can attain the same standards that she had set. But to do so, I need your help. Do you have an interesting story? Have you any advice, hints or tips that you would like to share with the other members of the QBKA "family"? If so, your newsletter editor would love to hear from you. Please send all material, with any photos, to me at billmonteith@talktalk.net I welcome your input. Don't forget, this is YOUR newsletter, but it needs YOU to make it interesting!

Bee Basics - Taking it further!

Last Summer, two of our members successfully passed their Basic Assessment both with a credit!

So, it is a huge well done to Tom Stanley & Gavin Stiggear who are seen here last November at the QBKA AGM after presentation of their certificates and badges.

If you have been keeping Bees for a year or two, and are considering taking your knowledge to the next level then why not consider taking the Bee Basic Assessment?

The Assessment is a combination of practical beekeeping skills and verbal questions, no writing involved. The study group for this year's Basic Assessment is well underway, but if you're interested for next year then information will be sent out in advance.

The Newsletter Editor is currently studying in this year's group and can wholeheartedly recommend it. It is excellent preparation for the assessment later on in the year.



Tom and Stanley receiving their well earned certificates

The study group takes you through all of the skills necessary to pass the Assessment, and it does so in an informal, friendly and gentle paced way. Topics covered are Bee lifecycle, swarm prevention, Bee diseases and general husbandry.

There is no obligation to take the assessment if you come to the study group. It's open to anyone to attend. To take the assessment you must have at least one year's experience of looking after your own bees and being a member of a division & therefore a member of the BBKA. It is the first step to becoming a Master Beekeeper!

Please contact Elaine Falkingham for information on 01278 741711 or email elaine@eazy-it.co.uk

Swarms 'R' Us!

Speaking as a "First Year" contact on the Swarm Register I must confess to being slightly taken aback by the sheer number of calls that I have fielded to date! The worst thing about it was that I had just lost a Swarm from my main hive, despite (as I thought) meticulous preparation and observation!

To date I have fielded a total of 14 calls reporting Swarms in the Bridgwater area. I have collected and passed on a number of Swarms but there were a few that I had to seek advice on, and a few that I was advised not to attempt collection! Two of the calls related to Solitary Bees inhabiting Bird boxes for the purpose of mating. It always sounds like you are passing the buck when you tell the host to leave them for a week or two and they will go of their own accord. Fortunately, the advice has proved to be accurate.

It would appear that the number of Swarms, and indeed the early start to the season, was precipitated by the unusually hot February. I noticed during my early season inspections that the



"It's been a busy year so far for Swarm Collectors!"

colonies seemed to be thriving but I was not expecting a Swarm in the fourth week of April! Especially as there were no signs of Swarm preparations. But as a wise old sage once said, "Bees don't read books!"

It has been an interesting learning experience, and I would urge anyone to sign up to the Swarm Register. It could kick start another Bee-keepers Apiary, or help you if, like me, you are silly enough to lose one! Just tick the box on next years membership form.

The Beekeeping Season

A look at the important tasks coming up in the months ahead.

June:

Make sure that your colonies have sufficient room

Add Supers as each new box on the hive fills with bees.

Continue regular inspections

Remove any Supers or frames that need extracting, but remember to replace with empty supers to prevent colony congestion!

The urge to Swarm will be diminishing (if you have taken successful measures!) and so the need for regular inspections is coming to an end.

Check there are sufficient reserves if you are affected by the "June Gap"

Make sure that a newly mated Queen is heading your main colony in order to prevent further Swarming risks.



July:

This is usually the main Honey month. Estimate how much Honey you have in your Supers.

When the Bees have stopped storing Honey freely in the Supers, remove most of your Honey crop if the cells are sealed.

Only add Supers if your bees need them. Remember, the Brood nest is starting to contract!

Be aware that the Bees could still be collecting nectar from crops such as Borage.

August:

Remove your Supers and extract the Honey crop.

Check that your colonies have sufficient food reserves in the brood box, and feed if necessary.

Make sure that your hives are "Bee Tight" and reduce the entrances to deter robbing.

Only open a colony if it is absolutely necessary.

Start your Varroa treatment if you are using Apiguard or similar treatments.



In the next Newsletter we will look at the main points to be aware of, leading into Autumn.

The newsletter of the Quantock Bee Keepers

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President : Mr G Fraser
Chairman : Mr Barry Hulatt
Secretary : Mr Ken Edwards
Treasurer : Mrs Alison Monteith



What's Coming Up—June to August

Wed 12 June—Drop In. 7.00 pm at the Apiary.

Sun 16 June—Microscopy for Beginners (5). 09.30 am to 1.00pm at the Apiary.

Wed 19 June— Preparing for the Heather. 3.00 pm at the Apiary. Note the revised date!

Sat 22 June—Bee Safari. 2.00 pm at Bush Cottage, Spaxton.

Sat 29 June—Brymore Open Day. 10.00 am to 5.00 pm.

Wed 10 July—Drop In. 7.00 pm at the Apiary.

Wed 24 July—Apiary Practical. 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm at the Apiary.

Wed 14 August—Drop In. 7.00 pm at the Apiary.

Sun 18 August—Microscopy for Beginners (5). 09.30 am to 1.00pm at the Apiary.

Wed 21 August—Apiary Practical. 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm at the Apiary.

Rent a Hive Sessions?

Saturday 08th June 2pm

Saturday 22nd June 2pm

Saturday 06th July 2pm

Saturday 20th July 2pm

*End of RAH. Teaching on how to feed your bees when you get them home

Saturday 3rd August 2pm

Saturday 17th August 2pm

*Saturday 31st August 2pm

Interested in becoming a Beekeeper? - Beginners Sessions

All Beginner sessions take place at Brymore School, starting at 7.30 PM

Tuesday November 05th

Tuesday November 12th

Tuesday November 19th

Tuesday November 26th

Tuesday December 03rd