



Quantock Quest

The newsletter of the Quantock Bee Keepers Association (QBKA)

Issue 25

November 2020

2020. What a year it has been! Winter is here. Are you ready?

When we raised our glasses on December 31st 2019 and the last refrains of “Auld Lang Syne” faded away, our thoughts may have turned to the 2020 Bee Keeping season and plan for the challenges of the forthcoming year. Well, as they say in Military circles, “No plan survives first contact with the Enemy”! COVID 19, Lockdowns 1 and 2, EFB putting the Apiary in a Lockdown of its own! Did anyone seriously foresee 2020 panning out the way it has? I suppose that we must simply put it down to “One of those things” and as we move towards the end of this year we must begin the planning and preparation for next year. At least we have more of an understanding of some of the “Curved Balls” that may well be chucked at us, and plan accordingly.



In this, the Winter issue of Quest we look at some of the things that we can do in the Apiary, as well as some ideas for Christmas presents. There are ideas for equipment manufacture as well as a new “For Sale” section for any member who wishes to dispose of any unwanted / surplus equipment. Plus, we feature news from the recent A.G.M. and some of the changes to the 2021 programme that has, of necessity, been amended to reflect our changed circumstances, as well as Committee appointments and changes. And finally, by way of reminder, the Apiary is still in a state of Lockdown as a result of the EFB outbreak. This will remain in force until the next round of Seasonal Bee Inspections can take place in Spring 2021.

Rest assured, the maintenance team will ensure that the buildings and colonies are protected over winter and that, should the inspections be positive in outcome, that we are ready to go in 2021! It only remains for myself, on behalf of the Newsletter team, (That’s me!) to wish you all a safe, peaceful and enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

Membership Matters (It really does!)

Alison Monteith, (Membership Secretary) writes:- Look out for the 2021 membership renewal email that will hit your inbox soon. Please renew by clicking on the link and checking the information is correct. Use the dropdown box to change the membership type and number of hives if required. It would be really useful if you could pay online rather than by cheque, where at all possible.

This email is very important, so please check your “Spam” inbox in case it has inadvertently gone into it! The link will take you directly to the BBKA E>Returns system. This system allows you to check the details that BBKA hold and allows you to renew your membership directly. The system will then generate your documents, the most important of which is your **BDI INSURANCE**.

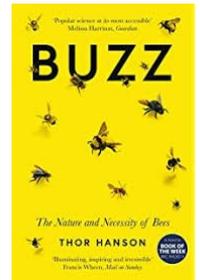
Some people will mistakenly think that, due to COVID, and the lack of “QBKA Apiary Action” that they may not bother to rejoin this year. Given the recent outbreak of EFB in the area and the consequent destruction of colonies then the BDI Insurance alone makes membership worthwhile. You are covered for loss and replacement should you be affected. Rejoin now. You know it makes sense!

The Chairman's Musings

Taking time out from the inevitable Cider tasting, our Chairman Barry Hulatt writes:

Has the beekeeping season come to an end? Does it ever? As the nights draw in you may have plans for making and repairing equipment, moulding candles, tidying up the shed, or attending 'virtual' meetings and lectures. Amongst all this, let's hope there's time to sample the mead and read a few interesting books.

In addition to the various 'how to' books, such as the Haynes Manual, there are several fascinating popular entomology texts dealing with both honey bees and the wider group of insects which comprise hymenoptera. Thor Hanson's *'BUZZ – the Nature and Necessity of Bees'*, for example, gives a personal and enthusiastic account of the evolution of bees from a species of solitary (and carnivorous) wasp in the age of dinosaurs 125 million years ago to the huge variety of insects which we today recognise as bees. Of particular interest is the exploration of the co-evolution of bees and flowering plants. We are encouraged to make our own observations on how different flowers appear to be adapted to different types of bee (and vice versa).



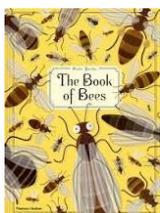
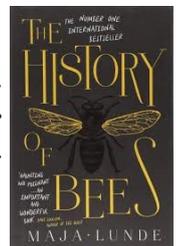
Bee Quest
Dave Goulson

Similar insights and enthusiasm can be found in the books by Dave Goulson, Professor of Biological Sciences at the University of Sussex. He founded the Bumblebee Conservation Trust which has been the leading light in pointing out the threats faced by all pollinating insects, not only in this country but world-wide. He makes it clear in *'The Garden Jungle: Or Gardening to Save the Planet'* that wildlife conservation should not only be concerned with rhinos and elephants, but can be practised much closer to home. (Basically, don't be too tidy in the garden and make room for insects. If we do not it will be us as well as the

rhinos and elephants which are under threat). Other really good reads from Dave Goulson include *'Bee Quest'* (remember David Attenborough's *Zoo Quest*?) which is an entertaining account of his expeditions in search of very rare bumblebees. And for everything bumblebee there is, of course, his best seller *'A Sting in the Tale'*.

If you have a Kindle or a similar facility on your computer or tablet it is worth noting that many beekeeping classics are available and free online. There is an 1806 translation of Francois Huber's *'New Observations on the Natural History of Bees'*, which provides remarkable and modern insights considering that Huber was actually blind for much of his life. Much practical advice can also be found in the works originally published in the 19th century in the U.S. by Quinby *'Mysteries of Bee-keeping Explained'*, and Langstroth *'On the Hive and the Honeybee'*. It is interesting to ponder on the advances which have, or have not, been made since those times.

And if you enjoy fiction there are several books which use beekeeping as a backdrop. Maja Lunde's *'The History of Bees'* has an interesting interweaving of three families involved with bees in the past, present and future. Lalline Paull won the women's Prize for Fiction with a highly imaginative novel *'The Bees'* based on a beehive. This has been described in the press as ambitious, frightening and gripping.



As a Christmas present for children who you would love to be fascinated by bees I can think of nothing better than *'The Book of Bees'* by Piotr Socha. This is a fun and beautifully graphic exploration of all things relating to bees and beekeeping. In fact, it is so informative and entertaining that you will probably not want to give it away!

Reviews or recommendations of the books mentioned above, or of any others which have interested you, would be most welcome for future editions of the newsletter.

Rent-a-Hive Update

Important Changes for the 2021 Season

COVID 19 has had a profound impact on the Rent a Hive scheme and has forced us to take a look at any potential provision in 2021. Please note that the following suggestions are entirely provisional and will be expanded on and briefed out when the picture is a bit clearer.

The first thing to note is that there will be **NO RENT A HIVE SCHEME** in 2021! This is because of space and resource limitations at the Apiary. Currently the 2020 batch of participants still have their colonies at the Apiary, and until such time as the EFB movement restriction is lifted they must remain there. This seriously limits space for new colonies at the start of the season, although the Management Team will ensure that there is a supply of Nuc's and Apideas to ensure some form of replacement stock should the need arise.



In order to ensure that the 2020 RAH'ers are still supported in the "hands on" department (much of which they missed due to COVID and EFB) we are putting a "Mentor" scheme in place, whereby each RAH'er is assigned a mentor to assist them on a one to one basis once their colonies have returned "home". These Mentors ideally would live locally to the new colony location and be available to assist by arrangement. If you feel that you have the skills and experience to guide a new Beekeeper during their early hive inspections then please make yourself known to a Committee member. You don't have to be a "Bee Guru", simply someone who is confident in their hive manipulation skills and to be able to guide and advise as required.

The RAH situation will be reviewed as the year progresses and the efficacy of the mentoring scheme becomes apparent. However, it is hoped that this popular (and rewarding) scheme can resume in a more normal fashion in 2022

Committee Changes / AGM

At the AGM conducted as a Zoom meeting the following officers and members of the committee were elected:

President	Gordon Frazer	
Chair	Barry Hulatt	hulatt.b@btinternet.com
Secretary	Ruth Walker	ruth@penelope-pitstop.co.uk
Treasurer / Membership	Alison Monteith	alisonmonteith@talktalk.net
Newsletter & Webmaster	Bill Monteith	billmonteith@talktalk.net
Education & Exams	Grahame Gould	gouldgrahame@gmail.com
Rentahive & Beginners	Sue Anderson	the.andersons@hotmail.com
Apiary Management	Ken Edwards, Bob Muckett, Mick Stenhouse, Don Macbeth	
Committee Members	Sarah Allen, Gary Best, Fred Jones, Adrian Keirl, Nick Wills, Gary Best.	

The Committee would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to those previous serving members of the Committee for their hard work, service and dedication to the QBKA and Beekeeping in general. Although no longer involved in the general management side of things we look forward to seeing you at the Apiary in the future.

Do you want to try something different in 2021?

How about experimenting with a different type of Hive? You probably use National Hives or WBC Hives and are used to the methods of Bee-Keeping that go with these systems. If you are of a more “Experimental” or “Natures Way” mindset then perhaps you would be interested in a system developed by a French Abbot called Abbe Emile Warré (1867—1951). He was convinced that there was a simpler and more economic way of Beekeeping. The Hive that he developed is known today as the Warré Hive. But what is it, and how does it work?

A Warre hive is much like the Top Bar Hive in so far that it is used mainly in cases where the beekeeper wants to interfere as little as possible in the colony and leave the bees to do their own thing. The Warré hive uses just the top bar part of a frame, much like a top bar hive and these are spaced out equally in small boxes which are stacked one on top of the other. As the Warré hive does not cater for a queen excluder, it makes taking off honey fairly difficult, especially considering the comb is wild and unwired, and can therefore become flimsy. Many Beekeepers choose this hive if they are intending to keep bees in a more natural style because it mimics the trunk of a tree, being tall and narrow. The bees can be left to their own devices up to a point and you can even choose to have observation panels in the sides of the boxes so you can see what is going on inside. For this hive, it is recommended that you have at least two people to manage it. This is because when the hive is getting full of comb and bees, you will need to insert a new box and this needs to be placed on the bottom of the hive, not on the top. It is therefore easier to manage if one person can lift the existing boxes off and the other can quickly slip the new one onto the stand at the bottom. As the hive will be tall and thin, you may find that you need to fasten it down, so it doesn't blow over in the wind. This may be particularly relevant if your site is in a windy position. One way to do this is to attach eyelets to the roof and thread through some cord so it can be pegged down.



EFB and You! Don't get caught out.

Please note that before seasonal inspections came to an end there were further reports of European Foulbrood in the area west of Bridgwater. It is by now too late to carry out thorough disease inspections on our own hives, but please ensure that you are completely familiar with the symptoms and procedures regarding EFB for early in the new season. These were outlined in a previous newsletter and are widely available in the bee keeping literature and also online. Make sure that the advice you follow is current and English. Some American websites may advocate totally inappropriate procedures, including suppression of disease symptoms using antibiotics, and these must definitely not be followed.

What's on (Everywhere)? A message from BIBBA

Dear Beekeeping colleague ,

A couple of years ago, we launched a free-to-use independent website to list beekeeping events. The link is <https://beekeeping.events/> The aim is to list as many events as possible in one place so that beekeepers didn't have to search through several websites to find out what is going on locally and nationally. With the advent of webinars, the traffic to the website has increased significantly in recent months. Please feel free to share the link with your local beekeepers and even to have your events listed on the site.

A DIY Cold Water Syrup creator!

Beekeepers are nothing if not inventive! Given the prices of some commercially available products, and the infrequency of use the economics of purchase are sometimes hard to justify. So Beekeepers often turn their hands to solving problems using their own inventive flair and, to quote Blue Peter, “Plastic bottles and sticky back plastic”!

A prime example of this has been sent to me by Nick Wills. One of our Committee members, Nick has quite a number of Colonies and as a result needs to make up autumn feeding syrup in larger quantities than most. For my three colonies I use warm water, a funnel, a 6 Pint plastic milk bottle and a large amount of vigorous shaking in order to make up one feed per colony. This would be a bit of a task for the amount of colonies that Nick has! So, he has created his own solution.



Nick has used a large plastic Carboy as a container. By cutting the top off and drilling some holes he has fitted a series of pipes, sourced from any Plumber's supply shop. On one end is a submersible pump, with the float switch held up with wire so that the pump runs regardless of liquid level. A large in line stop tap is fitted at the top of the loop, and a capped junction fitting is fitted just before it. Reference to the pictures on the left, and below shows the arrangement to good effect.

So, how does it work? You fill the Carboy with the required amount of water (dependent on your syrup strength) and switch it on at the mains socket. The pump runs and circulates the water around the loop, through the open stop tap, and returns it to the Carboy, thus creating a vigorous flow. Now, simply add the required amount of Sugar and leave it to run. The continuous pumping action thoroughly mixes the sugar and the water, ensuring that it is completely mixed and dissolved. But here is the clever bit. Once your syrup is mixed and the pump turned off you operate the stop tap, preventing the flow returning to the Carboy. You then take the cap off of the Junction Fitting, place a container next to the hole and switch the pump on. The syrup now pumps out of the carboy and in to the Container, ready to feed to your Bees!



The thing that I like about this is the beautiful simplicity of it, coupled with the low cost of producing it. The application of a bit of DIY knowhow and some cheap, readily available bits and bobs and there you have it. A neat solution to a repetitive and time consuming annual task! Many thanks to Nick for sharing this with us all. I am now off to get a copy of the Plumb Base catalogue!

It pays to keep your eyes open!

Nick has also sent a picture of one of his 2 year old “Clipped” Queens that attempted to swarm this Summer. Fortunately he was visiting the Hive that afternoon and saw the Queen on the floor outside the Hive. He rehomed her in a Nuc and there she remains, safe and well. A good spot that would have been more difficult had she not been marked! (Spot her in the picture, Right)



***** Equipment For Sale *****

This is a new feature for the Newsletter. A forum for QBKA Beekeepers to sell / exchange / seek equipment. If you have surplus equipment for sale or exchange then the best way for other Local Beekeepers to know is to offer it via this newsletter. Please send details of any items to the editor, using the email billmonteith@talktalk.net and it will appear in the next edition. Pictures are also useful. Include a general description and indication of condition and the price that you want.

Please note that the items for sale are offered by members and **NOT** the QBKA, unless otherwise stated. The QBKA (or its management) cannot be held responsible for items that are not fit for purpose or are mis advertised. These are private deals between the individuals concerned, not the QBKA. Please deal direct with the member.

Our first set of offerings in the “Members Christmas Bazaar” are:-

2 x Hives, 2 x Roofs, 5 x Supers, 2 x Brood Boxes, 2 x Floors.

Frames—made and unmade.

2 x Bee Suits—Small to Medium. New—unopened.

Gloves—Used

Various other bits and pieces.

All equipment is in good order.

Collect from Cannington — Contact Chris on 07788 185368 chris.ayers@live.com

1 stainless steel bucket	£20
Smoker	£15
3 x Nuc boxes	£20 each
Small fridge – can be used in car or in house electric	£15
3 x Trolleys for moving supers	£5 each
Various travelling screens	£3 each
(National) / floors / 2 Nuc crown boards	



2 tin plate roofs / Snelgrove boards / bags of spacers .

Collect from Cheddon (Taunton).— Contact Jenny or Sid Gammon on 01823 270465

Jenny also offers a Beesuit Veil Repair service. Contact her as above, or on 07788 407497

***** Honey For Sale ? *****

Do you sell honey and would like to appear in the search results on the SBKA website for website visitors looking for local honey? If so, please email Alisonmonteith@talktalk.net. If you do this then you are agreeing that your name, email address and phone number (as provided to the SBKA) will appear in any search results and your location will appear as a 'pin' on a map.

The newsletter of the Quantock Bee Keepers

Spaxton Rd Apiary,
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<https://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk/quantock.html>

President : Mr G Fraser
Chairman : Mr Barry Hulatt
Secretary : Mrs Ruth Walker
Treasurer / Membership: Mrs Alison Monteith



Joining QBKA?

If you are undertaking or have completed the Beginners Course, or you are an experienced Beekeeper but have yet to join QBKA then we strongly urge you to do so. (BDI Insurance is reason enough!) Joining could not be easier but you need to follow the steps below:-

Download and print the QBKA membership form from the QBKA section of the SBKA website -

<https://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk/quantock.html>

Fill in the form, ensuring that all sections are completed and follow the payment instructions. BACS is the preferred method. An email address (if you have one) is important

Scan and email, or post the original to the address details on the bottom of the form.

This is the one and only time you will use this form. Any subsequent renewals will be on line and will be via the BBKA E – Return system. The reason that this QBKA form is so important is because of the requirements of Data Protection. Without your consent, via this form, you cannot be enrolled on the BBKA system and will therefore miss out on regular Beekeeping updates and information as well as the other online benefits that come with membership.

If you have any questions about this process please contact the Membership Secretary directly.

And Finally!

Winter is upon us, and who knows what it (and early Spring) may bring! Remember the “Beast from the East”? We all have one Beekeeping aim in our hobby, and that is to ensure that our Colonies are safe and protected during this period. By now the Bees will be getting prepared to “overwinter” and are winding down their activities. Warmth within the Colony is as important as stores. Your Bees will appreciate the care and attention that you show them during this period. Make sure that your colonies are insulated where possible and that the Hives are weatherproof. The picture (Right) shows 2 Colonies that are well insulated and ready for winter.



Keep Landing Boards clear of snow! On days when Bees can conduct “Cleaning” flights they will struggle to get back into the hive unless their way is clear. Simple winter precautions like this are vital if our Colonies are to survive. Don’t forget that the end of December is also the time, when the Colonies are Broodless, to administer your Oxalic Acid treatment (by Liquid or Vapmite).

All that remains to be done is to relax and enjoy the fruits of your labours. A glass or three of Mead, lighting the scented Candles that you have made etc. Soon it will be Spring, and you wont have much time to relax then! Merry Xmas and a happy New Year to you all.