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tauntonbuzz

the newsletter of Taunton & District Beekeepers



It's been pretty buzzy here!

The last months have been pretty busy for us bee-keepers as colonies made the most of Spring sunshine and an abundance of forage.

But it hasn't been plain sailing for all – foulbrood has been found in a couple of locations in Somerset this season and I make no apologies for drawing your attention to the Somerset Bee Health Day on June 17 – more details inside.

And our President and bee farmer Chris Harries writes about discovering – and capturing! - his first swarm on April 2.

Meanwhile, membership secretary Lyndsay Stone reports that membership is up by a whopping 12 per cent! Welcome to all new members and do consider sharing your beekeeping experiences with us through Buzz.

Please send contributions and photos for the next issue by Sunday, June 11.

Anne Pike, editor
anne@ashford-media.co.uk



Keep up to date with what we're up to by following us on Facebook

Check out our Facebook page @TauntonDistrictBeekeepers for snippets of news from the apiary, events and beekeeping chat.

Useful contacts

Chairman - Peter Maben
T: 01823 433708
mail@maben.plus.com

Secretary - Barbara Drakeford
Chorlton
Lillesdon
North Curry
Taunton TA3 6BY
T: 01823 490811
drakeford@lillesdon.fsnet.co.uk

Treasurer Julie Whitmarsh
T: 01460 259549
tauntontreasurer@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

Membership - Lyndsay Stone
T: 01823 321054
lyndsayhurn@hotmail.com

Newsletter Editor - Anne Pike
Contributions welcome!
T: 01823 490170
anne@ashford-media.co.uk

Social Secretary - Mike Dillon
T: 01823 669619
mikedillonbees@gmail.com

Taunton Division of SBKA
Heatherton Teaching Apiary
Bradford on Tone
Taunton TA4 1EU

SBKA website
www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk

Report from the Chair

It was on the 17th November 1954, that the Chairman of Taunton Division announced to a Divisional Committee meeting that, 'Mr Harris had offered an apiary site at Heatherton Park and hutted classroom for Divisional use'. [From the history of "Heatherton Park 1955-2013" by David Morris.]

Not since the establishment of our new clubhouse in 2013 has my time and that of the committee been so taken up with one issue namely ensuring that the ownership of the land associated with our clubhouse is registered initially with the Land Registry and then Official Custodian (see later).

Your committee took this decision both because the original trustees (named on the deeds) from 1956 were not contactable (having passed away) and equally should the deeds be lost we would have had no proof of ownership for the future generations of Taunton Division. The ownership paper trail needed seriously updating!

Suffice to say after 16 months, approximately 120 emails, an untold number of telephone conversations and a monthly committee agenda item we are almost there...I hope!

The committee has taken legal advice and the ownership will be vested with the Official Custodian which is a corporation created by statute to hold land on behalf of charities such as ours. This will avoid any repeat of the 1956 scenario with either named trustees passing away or having to continually locate earlier trustees and update the Land Registry document.

On a lighter note I hope your colonies are strong and benefiting (?) from the early oilseed rape. My hives are sited in a 3.5 acre cider apple orchard in blossom but sadly they seem to prefer the rape. With a major flow on and copious brood, I sense that one of my colonies is already about to swarm when this was written in mid-April. Must stop writing and get out there!

Peter Maben - Chair
mail@maben.plus.com



Taunton Buzz – editorial committee

Barbara Drakeford
Chris Harries
Simon Jones
Peter Maben
Dave Parry
Anne Pike



Have you booked your place on the Somerset Bee Health Day – June 17?

If this date isn't in your calendar yet – please put it in! We're taking bookings for this important day now.

Simon Jones, who is a Taunton member as well as being the Regional Bee Inspector, is running the event with his team of Seasonal Bee Inspectors.

Together they will offer a series of presentations and practical workshops designed to keep our bees healthy.

Since our last newsletter, Simon has provided more detail about what will be going on.

The day kicks off with an hour long talk about pests and diseases followed by four workshops held in rotation:

- Apiary disease inspection together with practical methods of biosecurity to minimise spread of disease.
- Latest updates on the Asian Hornet together with practical approaches to monitoring and control.
- Comb workshop with examples of common and notifiable pests and diseases.
- Latest updates and practical use of approved Varroa treatment.

At the end of the day there will be a half hour session for questions and feedback.

Venue: West Buckland Village Hall, Silver Street, West Buckland, TA21 9NA (*adjacent to the playing field*) Apiary inspection will be at Heatherton Park, TA4 1EU

Date: Saturday 17th June, 2017

Timings: 9.00am to 4.30pm

Refreshments: Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available throughout the day. Please bring a packed lunch.

Parking: Free

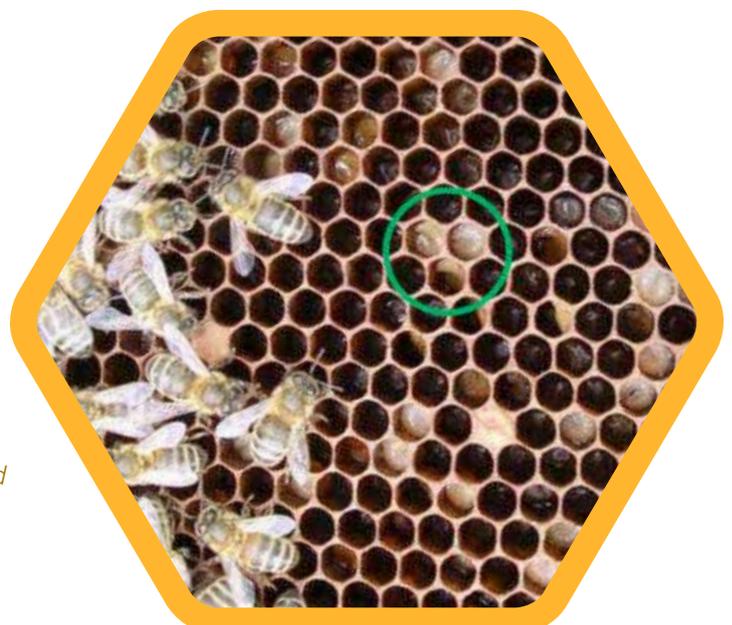
Total numbers will be restricted to 60 to maximise the benefits of the day and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to admit any members just turning up on the day. So, to avoid disappointment, reserve your place now!

Cost: £5.00

Contact: Mike Dillon mikedillonbees@gmail.com

EFB – severe infection and patchy brood pattern (example circled); photo from The National Bee Unit's Foulbrood Disease of Honey Bees and other common brood disorders.





Asian hornet traps

If you've been wrestling with old mineral water bottles and bent wire and still can't quite make your Asian hornet trap, then take a look at the new video published by the National Bee Unit on Youtube:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CR6MUekAjMo&t=2s>

Auction of second-hand beekeeping equipment

Chris Harries, our President and auctioneer, did his best to encourage buyers to raise their bids at this year's auction at the end of March. There was a varied selection of good, used beekeeping equipment available and some people went home with great bargains.

We had beekeepers from Dorset, North Devon and Cornwall coming to both buy and sell so the reputation of this event is spreading.

Thank you to all the members of Taunton Division who gave up their day to help to make the auction the success it was.

Barbara Drakeford

Skep making workshop – an update

Those of us who came together to learn Skep making from Mick Male all enjoyed our tuition. Mick's gentle instruction made for a relaxed, companionable and interesting couple of days. Yes – the skeps produced vary considerably in shape and size [we don't think the bees will really notice!] But we all enjoyed ourselves very much. Thank you to Mick for coming up from Chudleigh to show us the basics.

If other members would like to have a go, please let Barbara Drakeford know and we will try and set up another workshop in 2018.

Barbara Drakeford





Membership rises by 12 per cent!

Thank you to all those who have renewed their membership for 2017; we currently have 188 members including around 49 associate members and 8 partner members – an increase of about 12 per cent compared to last year!

Full members will all have received their BDI certificate of insurance from me; please remember to check your certificate to make sure that you have been correctly insured and keep it in a safe place. If you do mislay it, I can send you a copy at any time during the year. Bernard Diaper, BDI Claims Manager since 2004 reminds us on the BDI website www.beediseasesinsurance.co.uk that should you be unlucky enough to suspect that your bees are infected by a notifiable disease, the process of making a claim is simple.

Contact your local bee inspector who will inspect your bees and confirm the presence or absence of the symptoms of disease. Details of your local inspector can be found by entering your postcode in the search facility on the National Bee Unit's website.

If a notifiable disease is confirmed, the bee inspector will issue you with a claim form. All sections need to be completed before sending it, along with a copy of your insurance receipt for the current year, to the BDI Claims Manager. Claim applications must be submitted within one month of being completed by the bee inspector.

Don't forget that all colonies on a communal site have to be covered by BDI for the claim to be valid.

Here's to a healthy beekeeping year!

Lyndsay Stone – Membership Secretary

News from the Apiary

We are going into the new season with 14 hives and 2 nucs, having lost one hive over the winter. The hive inspection was delayed by the weather and the new beekeepers had to dodge rain before their first hive inspection with Simon Jones.

Simon found one hive contained two Queens, mother and daughter working on two adjacent frames. We looked at the hive a week later and both Queens were still in the hive living in harmony!?

Please be aware that there are a lot of Queen wasps around at the moment which could be a problem at the end of the season. Please also be aware that oil seed rape is coming into flower and that your bees will be very active if they are within range. The hives at the Apiary are near oilseed rape and between one week's inspection and the next, some of the hives have shown big changes with nectar and pollen being stored. We have had to add supers to six of the Apiary hives. We are hoping for a bumper honey crop!

Andrew Perry – Apiary manager





4/5
AUGUST
2017

TAUNTON HONEY SHOW 2017

The Taunton and County Honey Show is taking place at Vivary Park, Taunton on August 4 and 5. The organisation of the show is well underway with the same white tent in the same great location as last year.

We are hoping to build on the success of last year's show where we had 163 entries, extremely good when you remember that both 2015 and 2016 weren't good years for the bees and honey. The white tent saved us work in setting up (no battens and white plastic to hang) but we will still need helpers to set up, take down and help on the two days of the show. If you can, please get in touch with me (01823 276655), we still need helpers, the show is popular so it is a good atmosphere to be part of.

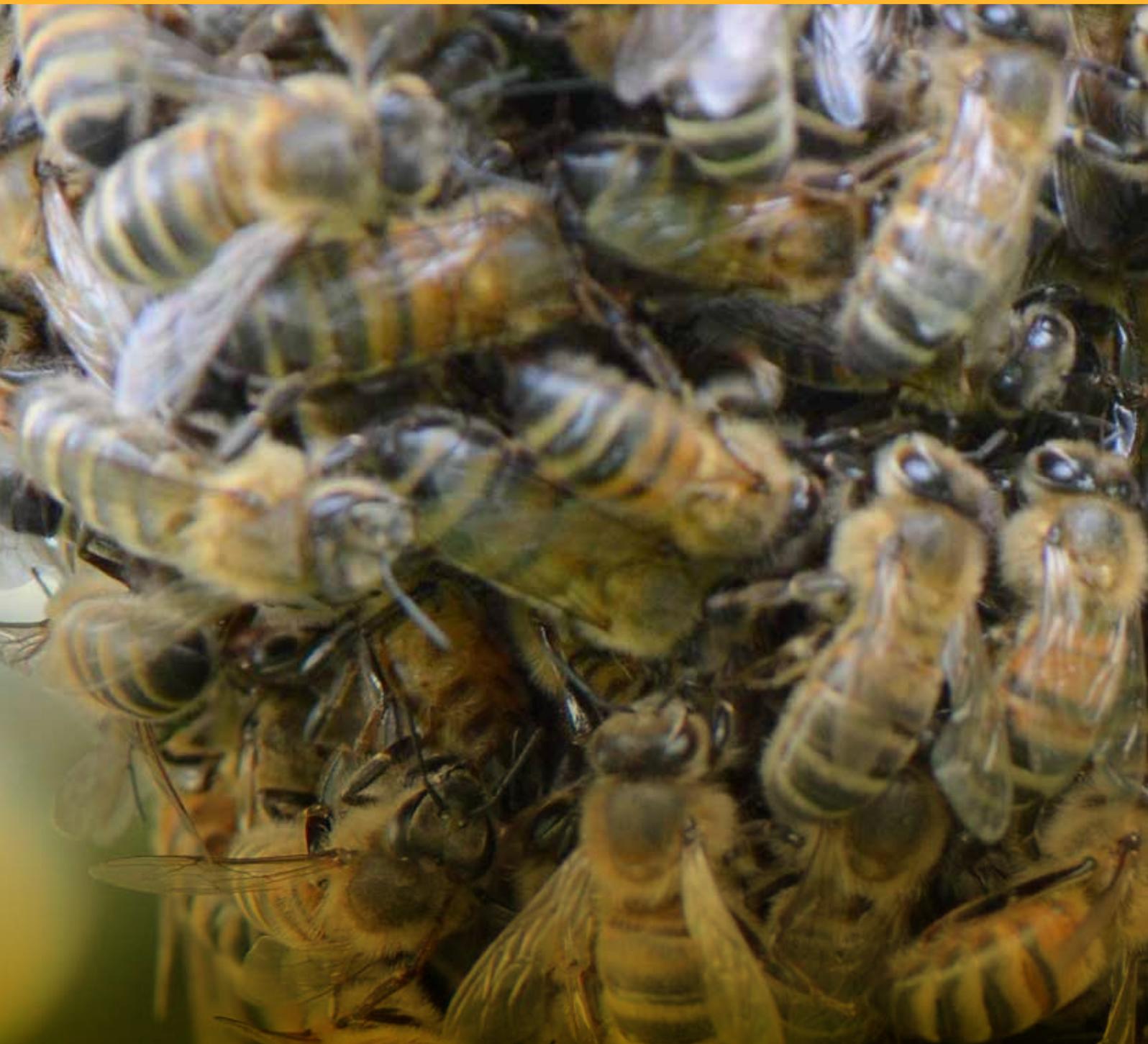
The same basic layout is being planned this year; it seemed to help aid the circulation of people around the exhibits. We are, however, reducing the central shop area and improving the school presentations with new vertical display boards. There will also be new display boards behind the cup display, the old ones were in need of retirement!

Outside the tent entrance the familiar heavy wooden porch and yellow notice is also being retired, this will make setting up easier with new, lighter banners planned to take their place.

The favourites of the show will all be there, I'm referring to the observation hive, the honey tasting, the candle rolling, the demonstration tent and of course all the wonderful displays of honey, wax, baking etc.

Dave Parry

Ed: For a great guide about how to prepare honey and wax for showing, take a look at the article written by Bernie Perkins, a honey show section steward at the Royal Bath and West Show, in SBKA's April newsletter.



**On April 2nd I blinked, spring arrived
and a swarm appeared!**

Supers are now filling up faster than we can put them on, and queen cells are appearing here and there. Back on March 31st I came across two queenless colonies, each with only 2-3 frames of bees, no eggs or brood, and no queen to be seen. Just over two weeks later, when I arrived to put nucs in those hives, I found each had a queen [was she laughing?], eggs and brood!



“ The busiest time of the beekeeping year is with us! ”

Swarm & Inspection

As May arrives colonies should be making the most of all the blossom around, rapidly filling brood boxes and supers. Don't forget to add extra supers before the previous one is full. As the honey flow really gets going, lots of room will be needed – both for the fresh nectar coming in, and also for the young bees moving up from the brood nest to avoid congestion.

If possible, have a spare hive made up with frames before your bees try to swarm.

It is also a good idea to keep a nuc box handy. If you should find queen cells, put a frame with a sealed queen cell in the nuc box together with extra frames of drawn comb or foundation, and shake in some extra bees. Keep an eye on their food situation and, hopefully, in a few weeks your new queen will be laying. More workers for vital pollination and the next honey flow!

Chris Harries

Our President and bee farmer at Sedgemoor Honey Farm

Waxy Corner



You will need:

- Night light cups
- Sustainers to hold the wick in place (for the size of night light I use 1" wick)
- Beeswax
- If you wish, use some citronella to add to the beeswax or any other perfume as preferred.
- A flat surface where the containers are not going to wobble about and an area where you can leave them to set.
- Put some newspaper under the cups so it takes up any spillage. (*See photograph*).

Night lights

It is a good idea to thread the candle wick through the total number of sustainers that you are going to use. I found that easier than doing one at a time, then cut the wick off below the sustainers to the length you require leaving enough above so you can light the wick (1 ¼ - 1 ½"). I find that waxing the wick beforehand makes it easier to handle.

Pull the sustainers back over the wick (*see photograph*) and draw them forward one at a time to use. Place it into the night light cup as near the middle as you can. You can adjust the position when you pour the beeswax.

Melt your beeswax. Pour it through some lint so that it has been cleaned. Add perfume or colouring if you wish. I prefer the beeswax colour and a few drops of citronella. Pour the wax into the small containers trying not to let it flow over the tops. At this time you can adjust the wick in the cup so that they are fairly central. Tweezers help.

When the wax has set use a glass jar to hold the night lights for safety. **DO NOT PUT** onto an area where it can catch fire or damage furniture /curtains with the heat from the cups (*see photograph*).





Calendar dates

WED - SAT, MAY 31-3 JUNE

SBKA at the Royal Bath & West Show

Volunteer stewards welcome

Contact: Ken Tredgett on 01372 464736
or tredg@talktalk.net

Location: The Royal Bath & West Showground near Shepton Mallet

SATURDAY JUNE 17

Somerset Bee Health Day

Time: 9am - 4.30pm

Tutors: South West Bee Inspectors

Location: The Apiary and West Buckland Village Hall

Cost: £5, pre-booking essential.

Contact: Mike Dillon
mikedillonbees@gmail.com

SATURDAY JULY 15

President's Day

Time: 2.30pm

This is a very special day in our annual calendar held in honour of this year's President Chris Harries. Enjoy a relaxed afternoon and a scrumptious tea!

Speaker: Graham Royle – 'Heath Robinson as a Bee Keeper'

Location: The Apiary.

From the archives

The exceptionally lovely start to Spring has prompted a rummage in the archives to see what was happening this time 10 years ago. Funnily enough, weather conditions were pretty similar.

NEWSLETTER OF THE TAUNTON & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS

April 2007 Number 38 Vol 6

As I write this, we are experiencing a very warm April. In the first week, some colleagues reported seeing queen cells during the first inspection of the season. A similar discovery was made at the Heatherton Park Apiary on 14th April when the hives were inspected for the first time. This meeting was the final session of our beginners course and it must surely be unique for beginners to see queen cells during their first contact with the bees.

*Not all of the hives were in this advanced state. The last few weeks have witnessed the demise of colonies that were going well in early March. It is a good idea to get the dead bees analysed to try and find the causes of the loss. Contact Simon Jones, who will be able to give you some guidance on the procedures to be followed.
David Morris, Editor*

And I couldn't resist included these sage words from the same edition written by Frank Lindsay, New Zealand Beekeepers' Quarterly: "Mastering beekeeping depends on two fundamental operations: (1) keeping a smoker going and using it correctly to control the bees and (2) re-queening a hive."

Beekeeping veil and suit repairs:

Ring Jenny on 07788407497
or 01823 270465

WANTED

Galmington area apiary

Do you know of a
suitable site for a
new apiary in the
Galmington area of
Taunton?

If you do, please
contact Derek Harrison
who is urgently looking
for a suitable site.

To contact Derek:
01823 326549
harrisonderek57@
yahoo.com



Classified adverts

If you want to buy or sell beekeeping equipment, you can do it here! We're offering free classified ads for Members and their families.

Email your advert to:
anne@ashford-media.co.uk

Remember caveat emptor – it's your responsibility to check out the goods/buyer! Plus, clean any beekeeping equipment thoroughly if you're selling or buying to prevent the spread of disease.