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Late
Summer
2017

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tauntonbuzz

the newsletter of Taunton & District Beekeepers



It's nearly show time!

Hopefully your beekeeping year is off to a good start; your spring honey has been harvested, your colonies are healthy and strong and your bees are making the most of what remains of the summer.

And, if you're full of the joys of beekeeping and have plenty of honey and wax, then take a look inside at the opportunities to put your product-of-the-hive skills to the test at the annual honey show in August. There's an update from Dave Parry, the Show Secretary, and a handy guide to producing prize-winning exhibits.

Please send contributions and photos for the next issue by mid-September.



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.

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Report from the Chair

2018 may seem a long way off to some but to your committee it is time to begin to consider next year's programme for you, the members. So... if you have any ideas that would like incorporated please let me know, perhaps you have read about or heard an interesting speaker or have a subject which you would like covered?

By the time you read this, "Bee Health Day" will have taken place and I hope a good number of you have benefited from this important event. Bee disease is always

on our minds and this season we have not been spared EFB in our area. It is always important that you sign up to BeeBase <http://www.nationalbeeunit.com> to ensure that our bee inspectors can notify you if there is an outbreak close to you. Invariably an inspector will then visit your colonies to check your bees.

Peter Maben - Chair
mail@maben.plus.com



Taunton Buzz – editorial committee

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



Your beekeeping club needs you!

Would you like to be more involved with the running of your division, but don't want to take on the commitment of joining the committee?

Well, we are drawing up a list of volunteers whom we can call on to assist, either a little or a lot, with our events. Putting your name down does not commit you to anything specific, but will mean you are happy for us to contact you when we need assistance. If you feel you are able to help on certain occasions that is great, but you are free to choose how much, or how little you participate.

TDBK needs to keep evolving to ensure its longevity and new faces and ideas are what we need. So please do put your name on our volunteers list and help make TDBK a brighter and livelier place.

To put your name down as a volunteer, contact Barbara Drakeford email@drakelilles.co.uk

Update from the apiary

The last few weeks have been all about Queen cells and swarms as the topic of conversation at the Apiary. The good weather has encouraged the bees to expand which has also encouraged them to think about moving home. During one of the beginners' sessions most of the hives we opened had Queen cells in them. This has meant splitting hives and starting nucs – at the last count we had 16 full hives, some with a number of supers added to them, and seven nucs. Some of the Queens have been taken away to be used in members' Queenless hives. The nucs will be offered to the new beekeepers when they are ready.

Unfortunately the recent deterioration in the weather over the last couple of weeks has meant that things have slowed down at the Apiary, making inspections difficult because of the cold winds and slowed down the expansion of those nucs we had created. Hopefully the weather will now settle down and beekeeping will become easier to predict.

Attached are photos of the nucs we have created and an image of hives that have a number of supers added whilst others have only one.

*Andrew Perry, Apiary manager
writing in mid-June.*



Apiary swarm on the same day as swarm prevention talk!

Thank you to David Berkley for sharing a timely/ untimely occurrence.

“As members gathered on 6th May at the apiary for a talk on prevention of swarming, we stood and watched a large swarm from the apiary disappearing into the distance! It was not made clear whether this was a deliberate visual aid to re-inforce the importance of the subject of the meeting!”

And we're not saying! Ed.



Bee Health Day

Fifty seven people from all around the South West came to West Buckland Village Hall and Heatherton Park Apiary were treated to a full day of interest and information from our Regional Bee Inspector, Simon Jones, and his team of Seasonal Bee Inspectors last month.

Simon led the team up at West Buckland – keeping the diseased combs sealed in a separate room – and giving talks on all sorts of bee disease scenarios. Megan Seymour and David Packham were busy in the Apiary, whilst Eleanor Burgess gave updates on the Asian Hornet situation in our meeting room.

Despite our apprehension about numbers of people crossing the busy A38 on a Saturday in June, all was well, and the change overs between the two venues didn't seem to cause a problem.

Course members all said how much they had enjoyed the day – and how much they had learned. 'A really good day!'

We would like to thank all the Taunton members who helped with the housekeeping and hosting roles – we couldn't have done it without you!

Barbara Drakeford

News In Brief

Share the buzz

If any of you know of someone who is interested in keeping bees but doesn't know where to start make a note of the date of this year's Taster Afternoon on Saturday, September 9 when we will be running a short introduction to what fascinates us all.

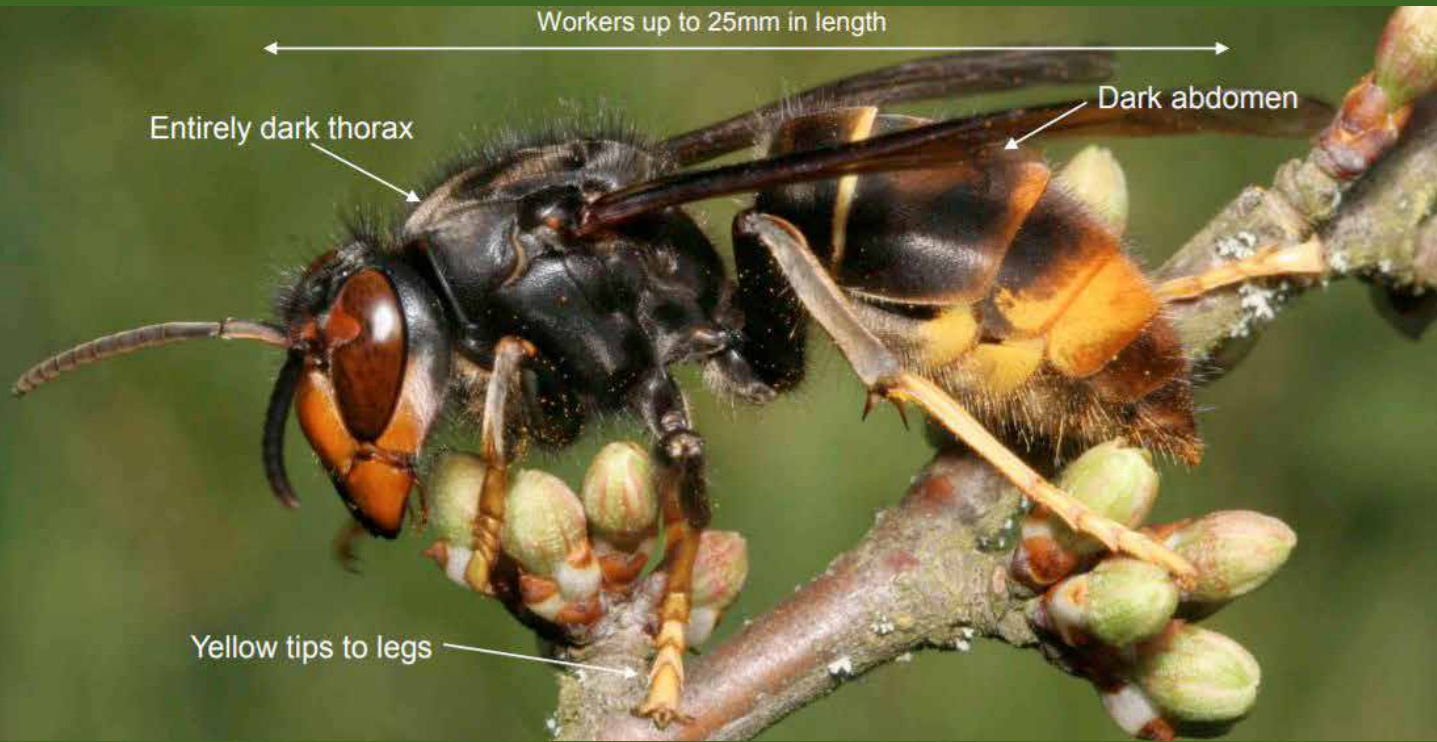
Attendees will be introduced to a hive of bees to see if they are content to be surrounded by a few thousand bees, as well as hearing experienced beekeepers talking about different aspects of the craft.

More details will be available nearer the time.

Barbara Drakeford



News In Brief



In search of Asian Hornet nests – opportunities by tracking individuals

By Dr Peter J. Kennedy, University of Exeter

The Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) was recorded for the first time in the UK on 17 September 2016. This non-native species is a voracious predator of honeybees and other Hymenoptera (>50% diet), and has been spreading through Europe since at least 2004. It is on the EU risk assessment list for invasive alien species, and has caused significant recorded damage to honeybee colonies and is considered a key threat to bees and the pollination services they provide.

There is an urgent need to identify whether the latest animal tracking technology systems can be used to track hornets back to their nests. Nests need to be destroyed to eradicate this threat to bees and other insect pollinators. If individual hornets could be tracked to their nests this would allow rapid destruction and prevent the spread of

hornets in the UK. Prof Juliet Osborne's research group at the University of Exeter's Environment & Sustainability Institute propose to evaluate the most promising animal tracking systems for this purpose, comparing their advantages and disadvantages, optimising tag design for use with hornets, and field testing the technology in France.

Defra have confirmed funding for the project but, as funds are limited, Prof Osborne's group are approaching south-west beekeeping associations for additional support to enable them to buy a few more consumables and extend their travel budget to enable them to conduct more extensive field tests in France. They thank you for your consideration of this request and hope to update you with their progress as the project develops.

Recently SBKA made a £500 donation to Prof Osborne's Asian hornet research work from monies donated by members. Dr Kennedy will be the guest speaker at SBKA's 2018 AGM – it's on March 10 at Wedmore Golf Club.

Wildflower seeds for Taunton apiary

Taunton has been given a 100g bag of wildflower seeds by Burts Bees to create an even richer habitat for the honeybees (and other pollinators!) in the Heatherton Park apiary.

Burts Bees, together with the BBKA, is on a mission to create more pollinator-friendly environments across the country.

The bag contains 26 different seed types, most of which are traditional British wildflowers, selected to provide a pollen or nectar rich diet for honeybees. The mix also has a few seeds from cultivated plants such as borage, which have been chosen because they provide a very rich source of pollen.

The seed planting campaign is an initiative under the BBKA's Adopt a Beehive scheme which raises funds for environmental and educational projects.



Taunton committee member Lynne Ingram (centre) with Suzy Perkins from Somerton and Barry Hulatt from Quantock with wildflower seeds donated by Burts Bees

David's success helped Somerset secure victory

Somerset beekeepers celebrated a sweet victory at the Royal Bath and West Show when they beat tough competition to take the prestigious Challenge Shield for gaining the most points.

David Pearce, Taunton committee member and veteran exhibitor, helped Somerset to an unbeatable points' total with a wide array of competition entries.

His outstanding selection of honeys, including a very unusual dark honey, gave him a three-trophy haul including the Somerset Perpetual Silver Cup for winning more points than any other Somerset member.

President of Somerset Beekeepers and Show Steward, Ken Tredgett, said: "Regaining the Royal Bath & West Challenge Shield demonstrates the high quality of beekeeping going on in the county. Wiltshire ran us a very close second but some of our exceptional beekeepers ensured victory was ours!"





We are organising the Taunton and County Honey Shows again this year, as part of the Taunton Flower Show, writes Dave Parry, Show Secretary.

The venue will be Vivary Park, Taunton (the same great spot as last year) and the dates to note are August 4 and 5. This year the show will also be the County Show, so entries are welcomed from all Somerset divisions.

If you visited (or took part in) the 2016 show you will have noticed the white tent with the new layout, this is remaining but we are tweaking the layout to further improve the appearance.

During the weekend there will be a glass-fronted

observation hive where you can see bees at work and try and spot the queen surrounded by her workers and drones. It is always a popular display with lots to watch, try watching a particular worker out and see what she does.

There will be displays of beekeeping, hives and other bee keeping equipment, candle making, frames of honey, bottles of mead, and of course lots honey, including some to taste.

Jars of honey and some cut comb will be available to purchase from the shop - while stocks last!

We will be on hand to chat about bees and answer any questions that visitors may have.



Taunton Honey Show 2017

Staging of entries takes place before the show, either on the Thursday evening 6-8 pm or before 7.30 am on the Friday. There is no need to pay to enter the show ground to bring in your exhibits. Entry to the Flower show is much reduced after 4 pm on Saturday so have a look around before picking up your exhibits after 6 pm.

Total prize money exceeds £100

Entries close on Wednesday, July 26

Taunton Beekeepers run taster days and beekeeping courses every year, if you would like to learn about keeping bees or just experience handling bees please ask.

If you would like to be part of the show, help is always very welcome. The tent will be erected for us but we need help to set up display tables etc. on the Saturday afternoon before the show. Please contact Dave Parry on 01823 276655 if you could help with this, or on the Sunday after the show when everything will need dismantling again. Over the two days of the show help is also required in the tent, for the candle rolling, honey tasting, running the shop and talking 'bees'. Over the years we have modified the displays

with lighter materials used, so less hard work is involved in the setting up but we still need help.

Please consider competing in the honey show - it's a chance to see your jars of honey, wax, mead or baking etc. displayed alongside the best, or maybe yours will be judged to be the best in its class! There are lots of classes to enter (not just honey!), just look at the schedule and how to enter at <http://www.somersetbeekeepers.org.uk/tauntonhoney.html>

It's all good fun! There is a lot to learn from entering and we would like as many entries as possible, 163 entries last year to beat.

Preparing Honey for Show

If you are a newbie, or have never entered a honey show before and don't know quite where to begin, the following advice from Bernie Perkins, a Somerset beekeeper, competitor and honey show steward at the Royal Bath & West Show, should come in handy.

Run honey - There are three classes of run honey, light, medium and dark. Light honey in this area tends to be the most common followed by medium. Dark Honey tends to be quite rare and it may therefore be necessary to examine individual combs held up to a strong light source to ascertain its likely colour. As honey can vary in colour from extremely pale to almost black I would advise you to try and sort your combs into different colours so that you can extract them separately.

Points to follow:

1. If possible extract from new comb that is fully sealed
2. Filter thoroughly through a fine filter cloth into your settling tank.
3. Tilt settling tank forwards slightly, this will reduce the collection of air bubbles in the tap.
4. Leave the settling tank to stand for at least 24 hours this will allow bubbles and impurities to float to the top forming a slight scum on the surface of the honey.
5. Wash and dry your honey jars, then warm the jars prior to filling as this will reduce the formation of unwanted bubbles
6. When filling your jars tilt them slightly to allow the honey to run down the side of the jar, again this will help reduce air bubbles that can be fiddly to remove later.
7. Always over fill jars, this will give you a slight excess that can be skimmed off if required to remove any final imperfections and still maintain the required weights.
8. Allow honey to settle in the jars before removing any further bubbles that may appear.

9. Bubbles may be removed by use of a spoon or even a warm knitting needle.

10. Once you have completed step 9 replace your lids ensuring they are spotlessly clean and leave sealed. Don't be tempted to open again until judging takes place as the first thing the judge will do on removal of the lid is to smell the aroma of the honey that has built up in the jar since sealing it. Also you risk allowing dust particles onto the surface of the honey.

Finally, a day or so before the show if you find your honey has lost some of its sparkle, put the jars into a warming cabinet to clear it. (We use an old fridge with a light bulb in the bottom) or you can stand the jars of honey in hot water.

Granulated/Set honey - On initial bottling following the steps for run honey, ensuring removal of all air bubbles as these cannot be removed once the honey is set. Obviously honey will not granulate overnight to the extent required for showing so you will need to establish which of your honey is suitable well in advance of the show and jar it in plenty of time to allow it to fully set. The time that honey takes to granulate can vary dramatically from a few days to several weeks or months, so you should allow yourself plenty of time. It is also advisable to prepare more jars of granulated honey than you require so that you have a selection to choose from as the end result can vary from a completely even colour to slight or even completely frosted appearance. (Slight frosting is acceptable for showing purposes)

Creamed honey - Creamed honey is achieved by mashing and blending until you are left with a completely smooth and creamy consistency, the honey should not have coarse granulations remaining once fully creamed. Allow creamed honey to stand for at least 24 hours before putting into jars this will allow air bubbles to rise to the surface.

Comb Honey

Frames - New frames that are freshly drawn this year are best for this class as the wax and cappings will be a nice pale white to lemony colour. Older frames are darker in colour and less attractive. The normal requirement for this class is one shallow frame suitable for extraction. The comb should be fully drawn out edge to edge and every cell filled with extractable run honey that is fully capped. You should check the frame by holding it in front of a bright light. This will enable you to check that there is no pollen or other contamination such as wax moth larva as you will lose points for these. Frames should be as clean as possible, remove any wax or propolis from the top and side bars by using a scraper or Stanley knife blade being careful not to damage the comb or yourself. Once complete display in a frame display case.

Cut comb - Once again cut comb should be freshly drawn, containing run honey and be fully capped. Unlike frames for extraction the foundation should be unwired. If you use wide

spacing you will achieve a thicker comb that will as far as possible fill a cut comb container. You will need to make yourself a template to enable you to cut the comb out in the shape of your container. Alternatively you can purchase a cutter specifically for the job. However, if you choose to use a knife you will get a cleaner cut if you heat it first.

Chunk honey - As with the cut comb you will need to make yourself a template. The chunk of honey should ideally be large enough to fit tightly from the bottom of your honey jar to the neck, the comb cells should be pointing up as found in hive. Once you have positioned the comb in the jar, slowly fill with run honey allowing for air to escape. Whilst chunk honey can be fiddly the results can be extremely attractive combining the advantages of runny honey and honey comb all in a jar. It is also very popular with customers.



Wax

Wax a subject dear to my heart and I could fill many pages with tips and techniques. The key tips I would give you on wax are as follows:-

1. Colour is one of the most important attributes for good show winning wax, it can vary in colour from almost white to black depending on your source. Generally speaking, judges prefer a pale primrose/lemon colour (muddy beige or coloured wax rarely wins prizes) the best coloured wax will normally come from wax cappings. When you are extracting the honey look at the colour of the cappings, try to separate off the different colours and save them.
2. Wash the cappings to remove any residual honey using cold or warm water, not too hot as you don't want at this stage the wax to melt.
3. If you have one, I find the best method for melting wax is a double saucepan. Pour boiling water into the bottom pan and place your top pan containing the wax on top. Place pan on a low heat allowing the water to simmer gently and wax to melt in the top pan.
4. Straining. Once the wax is fully melted pour it through a very fine piece of straining cloth (I use an old pair of my wife's tights as these can be thrown away once used) into a jug that has been warmed in the oven. Return the jug to the oven until you are ready to pour. Note: The oven should be on the lowest heat setting possible to maintain the wax's molten state.

You should now have perfectly clean wax of the correct colour this can be used for making candles wax blocks or larger wax cakes. One final note all equipment used for wax should be kept solely for this purpose as it is extremely difficult to remove traces of wax from jugs and pans once they have been used for this purpose, rendering them useless for any other use.

Reproduced by kind permission of Bernie Perkins.



Waxy Corner - Jenny Gammon

Fruit Pie

Find yourself a foil dish! I am sure you have grabbed yourself one from things you have bought. You will need a couple of sheets of dark red/brown wax depending what fruit you want to copy and a sheet of natural unwired.

Cut yourself 1 ¼" strips and using a 2" wick make a rolled candle to fit into the container. The larger the container the more strips you will obviously need. Cut the last strip about 1" wide – so you get a slope at the edge.

You will need some natural coloured wax – cut them into fine strips and use them to make a pattern – see picture. Make sure that you allow the candle wick to come through the middle of two of the strips. I found using pins to hold the wax in place does help. See picture.

Cut ½" strips and fold around the edge of the "fruit pie" to finish off. See picture.

Jenny is a long standing Taunton member and author of Waxy Corner published by Northern Bee Books



Cook up a prize winning cake!

Honey and Banana Tea Bread

This edition's recipe is taken from the Taunton Honey Show schedule.

Ingredients

225g / 8 oz self-raising flour
225g / 8 oz peeled and mashed bananas
¼ level teaspoon (2g) freshly grated nutmeg
100g / 4 oz sultanas
100g / 4 oz butter /margarine
6 tablespoons of HONEY
100g / 4 oz caster sugar
2 eggs
Grated rind of one lemon

Method

Pre-heat oven to 160 C /325F Gas mark 3.
Grease a 2lb loaf tin and line the base. Place the flour, nutmeg and butter into a large bowl and rub together to form bread-like crumbs. Add the mashed banana, sugar, lemon rind eggs and honey into the flour mixture and beat until well combined. Stir in the sultanas. Place into the prepared tin and level the surface. Bake in pre-heated oven for 1¼ hours.



Calendar dates

Saturday July 29

GETTING READY FOR TAUNTON FLOWER SHOW!

Time: 1pm
Help needed!
Location: The Apiary

Friday & Saturday, August 4 & 5

TAUNTON FLOWER SHOW

Our "Bees and Honey" marquee is one of the most popular at Taunton Flower Show. We stage the Somerset Honey Show in addition to our own Honey Show. Help is required!
Location: Vivary Park, Taunton

Wednesday August 9

CLEARING & FEEDING

Time: 6pm
Everyone welcome and help required!
Location: The Apiary

Friday August 11

REMOVING SUPERS

Time: 6pm
Everyone welcome!
Location: The Apiary

Saturday August 12

FIRST VARROA TREATMENT

Time: 2.30pm
Everyone welcome!
Location: The Apiary

Saturday August 26

SECOND VARROA TREATMENT

Time: 2.30pm
Everyone welcome!
Location: The Apiary

Wednesday August 30

EXTRACTION DAY – BRIEF THEORY SESSION

Tutor: David Pearce
Time: 7.30pm
Location: The Apiary

Saturday September 2

EXTRACTION DAY - HOSTED BY DAVID PEARCE IN HIS WELL-EQUIPPED EXTRACTING ROOM AT HIS HOME

Time: from 10am
T 01984 623851
Haddeo, Bathealton, TA4 2AG



Saturday September 16

FIRST FEED

Time 6pm

Everyone welcome!

Location: The Apiary

Saturday September 23

SECOND FEED

Time 6pm

Everyone welcome!

Location: The Apiary

Saturday September 30

**CLEAN UP THE EQUIPMENT
& PUT IT AWAY**

Everyone welcome and help required!

Time 2pm

Location: The Apiary

From the archives

This article published 11 years ago is as relevant today as then. Good luck if you're called out to more swarms!

'A SWARM OF BEES IN JULY, ISN'T WORTH A FLY'.

Don't you believe it! Whilst it is true, the swarm will not bring us any surplus honey, (and that was the reason for the saying at the time of skep beekeeping), it is a valuable resource.

Nurtured by feeding sufficiently and over-wintering, it should reap rewards next year. If it is an old queen in the swarm there is a good chance the colony will supercede her before the autumn.

Or, it could be used to boost a colony that has struggled all season by uniting after destroying the weak queen. By boosting the colony numbers, the colony will have a better chance of coming through the winter.

If you have a colony that has 'laying workers' or a 'drone laying' queen, a swarm at this time of year could provide an easy solution.

Uniting is best done by placing a sheet of newspaper over the queen excluder of 'queen right colony'. Make a few perforations in the paper and place the queenless colony on the top although I have successfully carried out the operation in reverse.

Two things to bear in mind re the swarm are a) remember the swarm could have come from a progeny that is prone to swarming and b) it needs to be isolated for a time to ensure no serious disease problems have come with the colony.

Written by David Morris in Bee Lines 2006

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

Second hand veil

Veiling checked and replaced as necessary.
Size medium £25 o.n.o
Tel: 07788407497



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.