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July
2019

tauntonbuzz

the newsletter of Taunton & District Beekeepers

Inside this issue...

- Get ready for show-time!
- The Asian hornet team in action
- Tips for the apiary
- Dates for the diary



Letter from the Chair

Before I started writing this, I looked back to my last Chair's Blurb – and notice that I ended with '*Until the next issue, here's wishing you more glorious weather, and very happy bees*'. I am so sorry – I think I may have jinxed the weather by saying that! Yet again I am sitting here wrapped up warm with the rain pouring down outside – although it appears that there is some hope of warm weather in the next few days. (I hope so as I'm working at Glastonbury Festival again this year!)

It has been a tricky year for the bees, as the early warmth gave way to cooler weather, wind and rain. There have been many swarms, and more recently reports of starvation, especially where a spring crop of honey was removed. Keep an eye on your bees and if the cold and wet continues feed if necessary.

I said I'd report back on my Flow Hive. It looked so promising as it filled up with honey – sadly they have eaten it all. I'm hoping however that with the promised warm weather and the brambles in bloom it will fill up again. It's a good thing that beekeepers are great optimists.

I'm going to end with the same thoughts as before *Until the next issue, here's wishing you more glorious weather, and very happy bees* – but this time I hope it comes true.

With best wishes

Lynne

lynneeci@hotmail.co.uk

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Editor's Letter



This is very much our show issue – it's our honey show, which we stage with the county honey show, early in August as part of Taunton Flower Show – and we want as many members as possible to be a part of this celebration of all things honeybee.

Inside *Buzz* are some top tips for preparing entries from experienced honey show exhibitor Andy Willis from Hampshire, a recipe to whet your appetite from the show schedule and honey show entries secretary Jenny Gammon devotes Waxy Corner to beeswax polish, class 27.

Meanwhile, members of our Asian hornet action team have been hard at work spreading the word at the Royal Bath & West Show and responding to suspected sightings. Lynne, our Chair and SBKA AHAT coordinator tells us what's happening.

If you have any stories and photos you'd like to share, do send them in! The deadline for our next issue is September 15.

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.

Our cover shot is of a honeybee collecting nectar from an allium and was taken by Anne Pike using an iPhone X.

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Taunton Asian Hornet Action Team (AHAT)



In response to the growing threat from Asian Hornets, Somerset has set up an Asian Hornet Action Team, part of a national network of AHATs. The Somerset AHAT comprises representatives from each division. The Taunton team includes the following members:

Lynne Ingram

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If you spot an Asian (yellow legged) hornet, take a photo and report it on the Asian Hornet Watch app or on alert@nss.gov.uk. If you are struggling to get a photo or are unsure if it is an Asian hornet then contact one of the Taunton AHAT team who will do their best to help you.

News in Brief

Pests & diseases day

Seasonal bee inspector and Taunton member, Eleanor Burgess, was involved in the Read the Comb event run by the bee inspectors and South East Division. Although held in Castle Cary, the day packed with activities attracted some Taunton members. This comb provided plenty to talk about including starvation.



Photo credits: Doug Lowe & Anne Pike

An afternoon in an apple orchard

A highlight of the Division's beekeeping year is a visit to one of President Chris Harries' apiaries. Situated in a floriferous orchard on the outskirts of Taunton, members enjoyed a relaxed afternoon looking at some of Chris's colonies, getting a glimpse of life as a bee farmer and enjoying a splendid tea courtesy of Chris's wife June.



Recent events

Bee-lovers were attracted to our taster afternoon held at the apiary last month. Participants were given an overview of what's involved in keeping bees and finished the session in bee suits looking inside a hive.

Daisy Headley from the Bumblebee Conservation Trust talked about the plight of this much loved insect and the Trust's efforts to halt their decline. In

the last 60 years bumblebee populations in the UK have crashed and two species have become extinct. The Trust is working to increase public understanding of bumblebee ecology and conservation and the quality and quantity of bumblebee habitat. Back in May, SW Regional Bee Inspector, and Taunton member, Simon Jones explained one of his methods for making up a nuc.

More silverware

Taunton Division's David Pearce was awarded the trophy for innovative equipment for his ingenious queen-rearing hive at the Royal Bath & West Show.

The cup was presented by Viscountess Weymouth who also gave prize-winners goody bags from Longleat.



Asian hornet update

As the weather warms up and the days lengthen, Asian hornet workers are emerging and taking over some of the jobs of foraging and nest building from the queen. This is the start of a period of rapid growth in terms of the number of hornets in each nest, and the size of the nests.



Above are photos from the Asian hornet roadshow, launched at the Royal Bath & West Show. Our own equipment officer, David Pearce, designed and made a hive muzzle as one of the ways to protect colonies from these voracious invaders. David's pictured with Taunton Chair and AHAT coordinator, Lynne.



The map shows where Taunton beekeepers have already positioned MONITORING traps.

In mid to late July about 70 per cent of the hornet colonies will relocate into high trees. The workers choose a nest site, and begin making a new (secondary) nest. Eventually the queen will join them, but for about a month or so the two nests will run in parallel while the brood in the original primary nest hatches out. The nests that were found in Fowey, Cornwall last year were an example of this happening as the two nests were from the same queen.

The secondary nests continue to grow and some have been found to have measured almost a metre from top to bottom. In Britain, however, the nests that have been found were a lot smaller. In secondary nests the entrance is in the side, and generally facing south east. The 'porches' that can be seen on the outside of the nests are not entrances or for ventilation, but are where the hornets are extending the nest. They scrape off the papier-mâché from the inside of the nest to make more room, and then apply it to the outside. The sides of the nest have many layers of papier-mâché with air gaps in between, and this provides great insulation to the brood inside. It is at this period when there are lots of mouths to feed that you may spot hornets hawking your bees. They are foraging for protein to feed to their young, and in return the adults will get a sweet substance from the older larvae.

You may wish to put the trap you were given up to monitor for these worker hornets. It is important that any traps are used for MONITORING only. As beekeepers we do not want to contribute to the global decline in insects.

- Traps need to be checked DAILY.
- Inside the trap that you have been given, you can use Suterra wasp attractant (available from the divisional apiary), on either some screwed up kitchen roll or a small piece of thin foam. This prevents any insects that enter the trap from drowning in fluid and gives them some sustenance until they are released

Instead of a trap you can use a flower pot saucer (or similar) with kitchen roll or foam and Suterra. A stone in the saucer gives insects something to perch on. Again, this will need to be monitored regularly, and the Suterra topped up. Hornets get used to the position of a food source and will return regularly. This gives you the ideal opportunity to take a photo, and report your sighting on the Asian Hornet Watch app. If you need advice or assistance contact asianhornet@somersetbeekeepers.org.uk. The map shows where Taunton beekeepers have already positioned MONITORING traps. If you are a full member and haven't collected your trap yet then come along to President's day (July 13, 2.30pm) at the apiary, to get yours.

Members of the Taunton Asian Hornet Action Team formed part of the Asian Hornet Roadshow at the Royal Bath & West Show. Team members spoke to tens of thousands of members of the public, and were able to show real samples of Asian and European hornets, and compare them with wasps and bees. The roadshow will make its next appearance in the Bees and Honey tent at the Taunton Flower Show. Come along and see us.

Lynne Ingram, SBKA AHAT Co-ordinator



How to win prizes at the Honey Show!

The Taunton Honey Show is fast approaching and there is silverware a-plenty, lots of kudos and more than £100 in prize money up for grabs..

The Show takes place on August 2 and 3 as part of Taunton Flower Show at Vivary Park, Taunton, and entries close on Wednesday, July 24.

Entries are staged on Thursday, August 1 between 6-8 pm. There is no need to pay to enter the showground to bring in your exhibits. Entry to the Flower Show is much reduced after 4 pm on Saturday so give yourself time to have a look around before picking

up your exhibits after 6 pm. Taunton Flower Show will offer you a free one-day ticket if you spend £10 or more on entries (you can combine honey show entries with other classes)

And here's how to give yourself the best chance of winning a prize taken from an article written by Andy Willis from Hampshire BKA:

Extracting Honey

- All equipment spotlessly clean
- Spin super combs starting with the palest ending with the darkest
- Keep extracted batches separate
- Super combs with some pollen cells will give a cloudy honey – no good for showing
- Allow to stand in a warm place for several days before jarring
- Strain show honey through normal course and fine strainers and then finally through a very fine strainer, i.e. butter muslin
- The best frames are not extracted but put in display cases and kept at room temperature

Jars and Jarring

- Use only one manufacturer's jars
- Sort jars before washing and filling. Show jars have no flaws!
- Over fill show jars, 4 – 6 of each batch
- Don't get air into the honey while jarring
- Keep show jars separate (don't sell them!)

Settling and storing your show jars of honey

- Stand on a sunny window sill for two weeks – runny honey
- Store out of direct light at room temperature for rest of time
- Set honey/honey seeded to set should be stored in a cool dark place to reduce frosting

Show Preparation

- Read Schedule and enter as many classes as you can.
- Double enter as many classes as possible
- Practice the recipes for cakes and adjust liquid / cooking Temp / Time as necessary.
- Allow plenty of time to do your show preparations, about two weeks before the show
- Practice for the wax classes well in advance (up to a month)
- Read the National Honey Show publications for useful tips on preparing for a honey show
- Warm all liquid honeys and skim each jar
- Wipe clean the thread of each jar and replace the lid if required. (do this at least 12-24 hours before the show)
- Polish/buff up jars and handle only by the lid.
- Place show labels on jars level and in the right place on the jar (use template) at the required height stipulated in the schedule
- Prepared jars placed in a carrying box, separated by paper or thin bubble wrap.

Honey Classes

- Choose clean bright honey with good density 17-18.5% water, use a refractometer
- Should be no air bubbles in the honey or on the surface of the honey
- Shine a torch through the honey jars to look for bubbles and contaminants
- Use plastic drinking straws to extract anything not wanted
- Top up jars so all contain more than 1lb i.e. no gap under the lid visible from the side
- Make sure it's the right honey for the class i.e. pale, medium or dark (use grading glasses)
- Make sure you have the right number of matching jars for the class – normally 2 but can be 3 or 5 or 6
- Read the schedule
- Set honey should be set, no movement in the jar
- Look for specks on the bottom and top of set honey, there should be none
- Any frosting should not be unsightly
- Set honey should be pale (not white or shades of brown)

Comb Classes

- Comb should be as white as possible with no travel stain
- There should be no pollen or wax moth
- The honey must be liquid with no trace of granulation
- The frame should be as fully capped as you can get it, smooth and one type of cell



Wax classes

- Wax needs to be as clean as possible (use wax purification the Andy method found on S&DBKA website)
- Make sure it's the correct weight – use accurate scales.
- Follow guidelines in National Honey Show publication precisely.
- Use a cooling oven to set a large tablet of wax, with a hot glass plate on top and the container in a water bath
- Load the oven with oven ware/pots to hold the heat, get to 90c
- Use washing up liquid and distilled water as releasing agent from mould
- Use pale, bright, clean, scented, wax from cappings – the best is heather or ivy cappings
- Candles must burn properly and not be ornate. Wicks must be pre-soaked/dipped before moulding

Photography and display

- Look out for unusual but stunning things to photograph or display
- Choose something that will catch the judge's eye and stand out from the other exhibits
- Pictures must be sharply in focus with nothing cut off or out of shot
- Colours of background should enhance not distract from the picture
- Use your artistic skills/licence to excel in these classes as it's the most flexible class in the whole show
- Read the schedule regarding subject and size limitations
- Everything displayed must be in top condition and look good from several angles

Cooking classes

- Use best quality ingredients only – weigh precisely
- Enter two cakes in to the recipe class
- Must look and taste good
- Use strong flavoured honey i.e. heather to improve flavours
- Read the schedule!
- Make fruit cakes several days to a week before the show to allow the flavour to develop

And, of course, you have to be in it to win it!

Ginger Flapjacks

Recipe

This recipe for ginger flapjacks is taken from this year's honey show schedule.

175g/ 6 oz margarine

1 tblsp ground ginger

140g/ 5 oz honey

225g/ 8 ozs quick cooking oats.



Method

Place honey and margarine in a large saucepan and heat gently until the margarine has melted. Stir in the ginger and oats and mix well. Turn mixture into a greased tin (a shallow one 11" x 7") and bake at 375F, Gas mark 7 for 25-30 mins.

Leave to cool in the tin. Cut into fingers.

Why not try class 27 at the County & Taunton Honey Shows held on August 2 & 3?

Beeswax Polish by Jenny Gammon

In the last edition of Buzz, I showed you how to make cream polish from Beeswax. This is now Beeswax polish. Both types of polish can be entered into class 27.

First, clean your wax

Note: Wax can catch fire. Also, keep children and pets away while you are using melted wax. Be careful you do not drop wax onto the cooker. It's terrible to get off!

Melt your wax in a double saucepan or in a small saucepan inside a larger saucepan. Make sure that the water in the lower pan comes up the sides of the smaller pan and does not just touch the bottom of it.

Make sure that your wax does not boil. Melt it slowly.

When melted

Take a Pyrex jug or any kitchen jug with a pouring lip and cover it with lint (you can purchase this at the chemist or online) with the fluffy side up. Fix the lint to the jug with clothes pegs.

Pour the melted wax through the lint. If you have a lot of wax, you may have to move the lint along, as it will get to the stage of not allowing the wax through.

You can now remove the smaller saucepan and put the jug into the hot water to keep the wax melted.

DO NOT LET IT BOIL.

Beeswax polish recipe:

8 oz Beeswax/1 pint Pure Turpentine (It is better to use pure turpentine instead of the substitute)

Warm the turps. And then mix in the beeswax. Make sure the mixture has melted (do not boil) and then pour into containers. Place the lid onto the container, but do not tighten. After a while you will find that the beeswax polish has set. When cool tighten the lid.

Do not use honey bottles, someone may pick up and think it is honey.

Please remember that Turpentine can also catch fire very easily and that there will be a lot of fumes.

You must have ventilation in the room when heating turpentine.

If you find that the polish is too soft for your liking, reheat and add more wax.





Photo credit: Little Silver Photography

The apiary in July and August

by Master Beekeeper
Lynne Ingram

The last couple of months have seen many beekeepers busy with swarms and more swarms! The changeable weather has seen the bees alternately building up in the warm weather, and then trapped inside the hives by days of rain.

The early spring harvest gave us all hope for a good season, but the bramble is out now (for many the main summer crop) but it's cold and it hasn't really stopped raining. As I said in my introduction beekeepers are great optimists so I'm still keeping my fingers firmly crossed for a good July and August.

When you can get to your hives for inspections, keep an eye out for swarm cells, and make sure that they have enough room for all that honey that is going to come in. If you are going on holiday try and do a good inspection before you go and add an extra super to give them plenty of room.

The Healthy Bees day was well attended, and a roaring success. It is up to all of us to keep an eye on our bees' health. Somerset has high levels of European Foul Brood, and there have been reports of outbreaks in the Taunton area, so make sure that you know the signs to look out for as you inspect your colonies. Check in the EFB booklet that came with your Year Book this year. Look carefully at the unsealed brood, and call your bee inspector if you see larvae that are:

- discoloured
- in unusual positions
- that appear slumped or 'melted down' with a loss of segmentation.

You may only have one cell in your colony that is suspect, but that could be an indicator of EFB, so take a photo, close up your hive and call your inspector.

Simon Jones 07775 119459

Eleanor Burgess 07775 119465

Meanwhile, it's time to start thinking about varroa treatments. The winter bees will start being produced in August, and it is important that they go into the winter free of varroa. So, once you have removed your honey, you can apply your chosen varroa treatment. The only treatment where you can leave the honey on is MAQS, as there is a naturally occurring level of formic acid in honey. If you choose other treatments, read the instructions carefully, as treatment methods and lengths vary. It is important to use any treatment for the correct amount of time in order to prevent the build-up of resistance.

Wishing you all a great summer



Calendar dates

Saturday, July 13

President's Afternoon

Time: 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Location: The Apiary

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

'From Buckfast to Buckingham Palace'

Join Bee Craft deputy editor Richard Rickitt for an entertaining trip around the UK, visiting some of the top modern-day beekeepers as well as sites of historical beekeeping interest.

As the title suggests, the talk begins at Buckfast Abbey and ends at Buckingham Palace, but there are many and varied locations in between - ranging from the bees on the roof of Manchester cathedral to hives in the militarized zone of Salisbury Plain. There are beekeepers who keep their bees in skeps and those who keep them in enormous glasshouses for the commercial pollination of fruit. Along the way we visit the country parish of Charles Butler – author of *The Feminine Monarchy*, rediscover the site of the first recorded drone congregation areas, and uncover the apiary location of one of Victorian Britain's preeminent beekeeping experts.

A fast-moving and entertaining talk that will be enjoyed by beekeepers at all levels of experience and knowledge.



Saturday, July 27

Taunton Flower Show - getting ready!

Time: 1pm

Location: The Apiary

It takes a team to get ready for our biggest public event of the year - Taunton Flower Show! Come and lend a hand getting everything we need to stage our popular Bees & Honey Feature which includes the Taunton and County Honey Shows. It's hard work - BUT it's fun!



Friday & Saturday, August 2 & 3

Taunton Flower Show

Time: all or part of the day

Location: Taunton Flower Show, Vivary Park

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!

Contact Barbara Drakeford: email@drakelilles.co.uk



picture credit Vita Bee Health



Wednesday, August 7
Clearing & feeding
Time: 7pm – 8pm
Location: The Apiary

Everyone welcome and help required!



Friday, August 9
Removing supers
Time: 7pm-8pm
Location: The Apiary

Everyone welcome!



Saturday, August 10
First varroa treatment
Time: 2.30pm-4pm
Location: The Apiary

Everyone welcome!
Tutor: Simon Jones



Saturday, August 24
Second varroa treatment
Time: 2.30pm-4pm
Location: The Apiary

Everyone welcome!



Wednesday, August 28
Extraction day – brief theory session
Time: 7.30pm
Location: The Apiary

David Pearce will give the run-down on how to extract honey from the comb.
Everyone welcome!



Saturday, August 31
Extraction Day
Time: all day

This is the day when we extract all the honey from our teaching apiary. The day is hosted by David Pearce who invites us to use his well-equipped extracting room at his home. Please let David know if you're coming: T 01984 623851



Saturday, September 14
First feed!
Time: 7pm-8pm
Location: The Apiary

Come and help the apiary team give the bees sugar syrup to help them through the winter.
Everyone welcome!



Calendar dates

Thursday, September 19

Beauty & the Bees

Time: 7.30pm

Location: The Apiary

Claire Barker from Hive Originals had always dreamt of having and running her own business but it wasn't until she was made redundant from a retail director role that she decided to follow the dream. Whilst there are many beekeepers that produce a range of honey goods, she decided to use her many years of retailing and marketing experience to develop a brand of natural skincare products using the honey and beeswax from her own hives.

After a year of investment and extensive development, Hive Originals was officially launched in August 2013. All her formulas and recipes are unique – they have all been tried and tested on her friends and family to perfect them and they have also been tested in the cosmetic laboratories to comply with all the European Cosmetic Legislation.

Claire will talk about running a beauty company where bees provide the most important ingredients. And there's sure to be plenty of bee chat, too!



Photo by Lynne Ingram using an iPhone



Beekeeping veil repairs

Tel: 01823 270465

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.