

East Lancs BKA Weekly Hive Opening Report 17th – 20th June 2018

Sunday's Apiary Session was another big turnout with Darren Helliwell and Luke Drabble guiding 8 relative novices with Janet Murray giving helpful advice and encouragement. Adding to that Ken Isherwood, Pat Smith, Anne Marie Parker and myself, meant that the apiary was quite busy and caused quite a few problems for the flying bees trying to get their loads of nectar and pollen back to their colonies.

Three hives were given particular attention.

Hive A1

This hive was inspected by Luke Drabble, with Janet's guidance. It took quite a while and illustrates just what a problem it can be for bees who live in a training apiary, when they need to get back in the hive. It is perhaps not surprising that the queen wasn't found in this hive, though I believe she was there, as she probably had the good sense to stay in the bottom of the brood box.

Hive A3

Hive A3 was also inspected by Luke Drabble, and the general view was that it was running out of room, and so a super was placed (with a queen excluder underneath) to give them more room for stores.

Hive A10

Hive A10 was thought to have swarmed sometime around the Spring Bank Holiday so it was decided to see if they had hatched a new queen.

Darren Helliwell's approach to finding the queen was to scrutinise each frame carefully, holding it by the lugs over the brood box so that, if she dropped off then it was into the box and not on the floor. He then looked around the frame, working inwards in concentric circles until he found her. We didn't mark her at this early stage. Marking a young queen can affect her composure, cause her to stop laying, and her behaviour may then cause a worker bee to sting her. It's best to leave it until she's more settled - maybe until the autumn.

It was remarked that some of the brood frames need replacing.

To be done

The rest of the hives were not examined at the Apiary Session, but on my follow-up, I made a note of the current configuration of each hive as we need to start supering up to allow stores to be built up.

A1 (Yellow Queen) - Brood - QE - Super (empty) - **Need to add frames to this super**

A1A (Has Virgin Queen from A10) - Double Brood - QE - Super - **Check usage in Double Brood and possibly reduce**

A3 - (Queen not seen) Brood - QE - Super - **May need frame of eggs if queen not found at next inspection**

A3A - Double Brood - **Check for Virgin Queen, consider downsizing brood and adding QE and super**

A3B - Nuc Brood - **Check for Virgin Queen then wait until colony grows before moving to full size hive**

A10 - Brood - QE - Super - Super - **Monitor progress of new Queen, replace older frames**

D1 - (White Queen) - Double Brood - **Check usage in Double Brood and possibly reduce. Add QE and super**

D1A - Brood - **Check for Virgin Queen and then add QE and super**

C2 (Swarm) Nuc Brood - **Looking a bit full so may need moving to a full size hive. Check for Virgin Queen and add QE and super**

NOTE 1: C1 was the swarm collected by Ken Isherwood in the park as has now been taken away by Ken.

NOTE 2: Assuming the queen is still in A1, then we have three queen-right colonies at the moment - A1, D1 and A10.

Dave Parker
Apiary Manager