The Phil Askam System

Basically Demaree vertical split with a twist.

Some nice YouTube clips of the standard processes

Demaree

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQ6CE8nCbHQ

Snelgrove

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ky0nTQfyPSs

Pagden

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCReKLV6CB4

Demaree according to Dave Cushman

http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/demaree.html

The vertical split can be used for:

- Swarm control
  - With Queen Cells
  - Without Queen cells
- Queen Raising

Image from Barnsley Beekeepers showing a Phil Askham system.

Essentially the method splits the colony into different boxes but keeps the colony together as a working unit which can continue to produce and store honey.

There are many variations:

- Demaree – Only requires additional brood box and queen excluder
- Snelgrove- Additional brood box and Snelgrove Board
- Horseley- Additional brood box and Horsley board
- Phil Askham – Additional brood box and Askam board

The principle of increasing honey production.

All systems designed to maintain or improve honey production are based on this principle that the more bees in a colony the more that are available for foraging and honey production. The balancing act is to maintain high numbers of bees without triggering the sense of over crowding which can trigger the swarming instinct.

Ideal weather conditions over long periods mean that bees are rarely confined to the hive and so do not become overcrowded or at a loose end. If a period of unsuitable weather follows a period of good weather, then the swarming instinct is likely to be triggered. Thus 2018 in the UK low swarming and high honey yields. This is unusual

Splitting a colony is often a reactive process however it is achieved, aimed at preventing swarming once the colony is showing signs of swarming, including producing queen cells.

Phil uses this method to attempt to reduce swarming but mainly to maintain the colony and honey production, he uses it in a proactive way splitting all his colonies before the swarming instinct has been triggered and on all his colonies at the same time.

The Askam board is an adapted crown board, similar to the Horseley but without the ability to close off access to the bees, just using a simple closable opening to create an additional entrance.

Method:

At the appropriate time (Mid June?), when all colonies have 2 or more suppers on, a new brood box with drawn comb for each hive is prepared. Queen excluders or other boards are prepared.

At the apiary.

- Supers placed to one side
- Brood box placed to another side on the roof
- New box with drawn comb placed on original site
- One comb removed
- Queen found in old box
- Queen and one frame without queen cells removed to new box and placed in space.
- Queen excluder returned
- Supers returned
- Askam Board placed on top door closed
- Original brood box with all remaining bees and brood returned.
    - Combs checked for queen cells.
- Roof returned

- After 7 -8 days (?) old brood box examined for queen cells which are removed. (destroyed or harvested if required)
- Repeat in 3 days after which time there should be no viable eggs or larvae left to become queen cells.

Because the colony has been split into two units, those foragers looking after the queen, and those in the top looking after the brood they are well dispersed. As the brood hatches the number of bees in the top will dwindled and the process can be repeated.

In addition to using his board he also uses floors with a solid sloping floor tapering from 12.5mm at the front to 6.5mm at the back. The water and rubbish tends to come out of the entrance and not collect, but it also means the entrance does not require an entrance block, is easy to defend.

Notice the stand has a landing board attached this allows a mouse guard to be slotted into the gap between the floor and stand.