



Bee Talk

Newsletter of The Blackburn and East Lancashire Branch of
The Lancashire & North West Beekeepers Association

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/alan.huxley>

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December 2006

Registered Charity

What's in this issue of Bee Talk

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A sample, two sided sheet is enclosed with this copy of beetalk. You can read about it on page 2,

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Editorial

Looking at the minutes of the A G M held on the 8th Nov, it seems there was just about the normal turnout and a lot of nattering but we did get through a lot of business. Another rehash of Holden Clough; Committee members meeting before the normal Monthly meeting to get up to date and keep in touch; proposals for a proper education programme; hosting the County convention - It just goes on and on.

IAN MOLYNEUX

Of our last few meetings the one that sticks in the mind is one given by Ian Molyneux. A brilliant talk, very well received by every one that I spoke to.

DISTRIBUTION

In the last issue you were told how "Bee Talk" was compiled. Now let me tell you about the printing and distribution.

Ken Gaiger provides the name and address of the person who is to receive it. Michael Birt make around 90 copies from the Master pages, staples them into booklets, addresses and posts them, easy when you know how.

There must be some one out there who fancies their chances at learning how to make a magazine if so speak up - we want your help.

JACK ARMISTEAD

Jack was 92 in August this year, but as I write this on November 22nd, Dear old Jack is in Burnley General. Seems he is not eating - not even honey. I know he has a bucket full in his garage I extracted it for him some weeks ago, because, of course, Jack is still beekeeping. We all live in hopes that the doctors find the cause of the problem and that he gets well soon.

Jack started beekeeping when he was about 18 or 19 after reading a book on the subject. He enjoyed it so much he ordered a beekeeping kit from Taylors of Welling at a cost of £8, Jack tells me that if the book had been on goats he might have been a goatherd now.

DECEMBER 2006

All this started with Tom Jarvis showing me a photo from the Wharfedale beekeepers magazine of the oldest English beekeeper at 91 he was using skeps with big earthenware pots on top to keep the rain off,

THE WEBSITE

Can we remind you that we have a web page run by Michael Birt .The address is always on the front page of Bee Talk. The website is full of information and well worth a look at. There are links to other interesting bee pages as well as an archive of past Bee Talk magazines. Do take a look

NEWS FROM HOLDEN CLOUGH

APIARY MANAGERS

David Rayner Phone 01200 426898

Paul Aldred Phone. 01772 330159

We are trying a new system this year for Holden Clough. The idea is to have the two managers, who will have complete control of the apiary. Nothing is to be done in the apiary without their approval.

The really new thing is that there will be no Sunday demonstrations. These will, in effect, be replaced by a new education programme - details on page 11.

**Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year from**

**The two old codgers who
edit Beetalk for you**

Bill & Arthur



Ken Gaiger has acquired Oxalic Acid in 35g pots. so you have no need to measure it out - this is the amount needed to make 1 litre of treatment - sufficient for ten or twenty hives.

Price and details on page 10 in 'Member's services'

VARROA TEST SHEET.

The two sided test sheet to be found in this issue, is intended to be used in conjunction with a mesh floor board and a varroa collection insert. Side 'B' is used to record the Daily Drop. Side 'A' of the sheet is used for the test and results.

The sheet stems from a talk given at the honey show where members asked for the varroa graph to be printed in Bee Talk.

GETTING THROUGH THE YEAR

We have gone one better by printing the total sheet (which I have used for about four years). The whole object of the exercise is to try and get through the year without treating the stock more than once, and that at the end of the year, about November, using Oxalic acid.

Using Bayvarol strips requires some explanation. The strips can be used for test purposes up to ten times if kept in the original packaging, and something like 90% of the mites on the bees will be killed in the first 24 hrs. Very often strips put in for 3 days will drop the mite infestation sufficiently to get through to November and the acid treatment.

Out of my twelve stocks, I have only had two this year that required to be tested with Bayvarol strips, and none that needed the full six week treatment.

MITE RESISTANCE

Using strips for three days seems a bit contentious and there is some concern that it may cause mite resistance. My own feeling is that this method will actually show up mite resistance.

If you have to do the test because the Daily Drop indicates that the infestation is too high and then you don't get much mite fall on the first day of the test, this suggests there is a good chance you have resistant mites.

Bill A.

P.S. It has been suggested to me that it might be a good idea to put Bayvarol strips into a newly hived swarm for 3 days to get rid of any mites the bees may be carrying.

The varroa bee mite has already spread throughout the North Island of New Zealand, and the number of bee hives has dropped. Fewer bees means pollination of crops and orchards could be a problem in the future. However, the South Island is free of varroa, which allows it to supply some hives to North Island beekeepers to meet pollination contracts.

Keeping the South varroa free is crucial. The Varroa Agency's role is to help prevent the varroa bee mite from entering the South Island with its Varroa Pest Management Strategy - a mix of border control, surveillance, and education programmes to encourage New Zealanders to do everything possible to prevent live bees from entering the South Island. Bees, along with some used beekeeping equipment are banned from the South Island, and other goods being transported, like logs and bulk grapes, need permits to ensure stray bees or swarms don't become "hitchhikers" on loads travelling across the Cook Strait. South Island hives are inspected annually to monitor for varroa, with such early warning systems essential for a varroa eradication programme if need be.

The south has remained varroa free through such vigilance since 2000, and it is possible for it to remain that way. Every one of us has a role in preventing the spread of unwanted pests.

The Internet June 2006



If we have more than two stocks of bees, then keeping records is very necessary if we expect to obtain honey from them.

The logo is circular with a dark background. At the top, the words "HIS MASTER'S VOICE" are written in a semi-circle. In the center, there is a white silhouette of a dog sitting and facing left towards a gramophone. Below the dog, the words "APALOSA BLUES" are printed. Further down, smaller text reads "RECORDED BY THE APALOSA MUSIC COMPANY". At the bottom, there is a small circular emblem containing a star and some illegible text.

It can be difficult when a swarm has issued, (or with an artificial swarm for that matter) to keep firmly fixed in your mind that there is a Swarm and a Parent stock.

It is good practise to identify the new queen in the parent stock even though she may only be a queen cell at this stage. It may be 'Counting your chickens' but better to be safe than sorry.

Store in tightly covered tins.

BOB LEMON

Norfolk - in the early summer of 1935 a swarm of honey bees swirls up into a clear blue sky, intent on finding a new home. A group of village children rushes in pursuit with 5 year old Bob Lemon banging a large back door key on the coal shovel for all he's worth. Eventually Bob's father retrieves the bees from a nearby tree and rehouses them in an improvised hive made out of a date box from the grocer.

START 'EM YOUNG

By the summer of 1936, Bob, now 6, is becoming a veteran bee handler. Wearing his dad's old trilby trimmed with 'tulle', like a lady's funeral hat, Bob is allowed to handle the bees. Still inexperienced enough to be afraid of stings, he finds an old pair of woolly socks to protect his hands and learns a valuable lesson about appropriate protective clothing. Better to allow the bees to crawl naturally and be unafraid than to trap them by the ankles, unable to fly away, inducing terror in both bee and handler!



By 1942, Bob has become an experienced beekeeper. Lying on his stomach on the ground and wearing on his head a 'poke' made of a dampened corn sack, he is watching the movements of the bees from beneath a handy Perspex aircraft canopy. Rescued from a ditch after a crash involving a fighter bomber, the canopy provides the ideal hive observation post, complete with gun sights, until the men from the Ministry take it away.

TWO BOB A JAR

In the prewar years when Bob Lemon was introduced to beekeeping at his Father's knee, practices were rather different from the way we do things today. Honey was a prized commodity costing two shillings a jar (or two and six if you were posh enough to afford comb). The same price as a box of cartridges and a pint of vinegar. (Translated into modern prices, a pound of honey should cost at least £6.)

HOME MADE KIT

Villagers would keep hives in the garden and extract the honey produced throughout the summer. They possessed few commercially produced pieces of equipment and relied on improvisation and inventiveness. And of course, folk wisdom, Bob's father kept 4 or 5 stock hives. He invested in the sturdy WBC hives, though he considered them rather 'newfangled' in the 1930s. A hive could be bought for a matter of shillings, which was a considerable expense, though it looks like a bargain 75 years on, when the price might be £300. The rest of his equipment was mostly home made. The honey would not be removed from the stock hives as these were to be the source of regular swarms throughout the summer.

It was important not to lose the swarm when it emerged - hence the hue and cry involving 'tanging' with a key and shovel to warn neighbours that bees were on the loose and that rival apiarists should stand clear. The racket was also believed by some to encourage the bees to enter a hive.

BUTTER BOX

Once captured, the swarm would be placed in a wooden box (previously containing dates or butter) on a level surface such as a sawn-off section of tree trunk. There would be an entrance for the bees to come and go and a peg placed inside to give the bees a base on which to build comb since moveable frames were not in general use. Finally, to keep the bees dry and cosy, an insulating piece of sacking or tarpaulin would be put on top with a slate roofing tile to hold everything in place.

STAIR RODS

When the bees in the stock hive needed feeding the syrup would be introduced through the side of the hive and into channels improvised from stair irons. During the years of sugar rationing the inspector would be challenged to find out for himself how many hives were occupied. If he was unwilling to peer inside, he just had to assume all were occupied and allow the appropriate ration of sugar.

BRIMSTONE

At the end of the season, Bob and his father would harvest the honey by a method still used in many parts of the world. First, the bees had to be removed from the comb in an apocalyptic cloud of brimstone.

After dark an 18 inch hole was dug near the hive and sticks placed across it. In the bottom of the hole was brown paper sprinkled with flowers of sulphur. The date box was placed over the hole and the paper lit to create an acrid, deadly smoke. To prevent the smoke escaping, a damp sack was put on top.

By morning there would be a hole full of dead bees and comb ready to extract. Since the honey was not in frames, rotating drum extractors were not used. Instead all the honey-bearing comb was mashed up in a large baker's trough, wax and honey together.

SULPHUROUS FRAGRANCE

Many beekeepers had a special 'extension' on a south facing wall of the house. In the heat-trapping brick built 'honey shed' without windows and with a tightly-fitting door, the honey would be sieved through mutton cloth or flour bags. As the collecting jars filled up, Bob would ladle the honey into 1 lb. jam jars and seal them with cellophane covers and a rubber band. The honey in those days had a sulphurous fragrance for which the older generation of beekeepers feel some nostalgia. I wonder if there are any of those old jars at the back of someone's pantry, still perfectly edible, with a distinctive flavour of the 1940s?

SEVENTY SIX

In the early summer of 2006, Bob Lemon is 76 and about to move house. He has been sifting through heaps of well-used equipment accumulated over decades of beekeeping, from Bakelite feeders to conical straw hats. Since the 1930s he has seen many changes and we new beekeepers benefit from his 70 years of experience and wisdom.

By Min Dinning. CBKS Newsletter

THE AMAZING BEE

It's 11 am on a hot mid-February Auckland morning. For the past few days, as I've been sifting through my encyclopedic file of bee research, I've noticed bees collecting nectar from the dandelions in my neglected garden.

CROWING OF A COCK

They are always there at about the same time of day, and I now know why: some flowers produce nectar and pollen at different times of the day and the bees know when to come and collect their haul. Since they usually forage close to home "As far as the crowing of a cock or sound of a church bell" according to the ancient laws of Ireland. So I know that someone in my neighbourhood has a beehive.

For the few days the dandelions are flowering they will be visited only by bees working dandelion flowers, for each bee works only one type of flower at a time. It's a remarkable reciprocal arrangement between the bees and the flowers.



By visiting only one type of flower at a time the bees become expert gatherers from that flower, and in return the flowers will be pollinated with pollen from one of their own kind.

SIXTY TIMES FIVE HUNDRED

Each of these bees' honey stomachs are the size of a pinhead. To make one teaspoon of honey she will have to fill her honey stomach 60 times. And to fill it just once she may have to visit up to 500 flowers. Yet sometimes a hive of bees will be able to produce up to 2 kg in a day.

***From The Wellington Bee Keepers Ass.
New Zealand***

THE HONEY SHOW 2006

The 2006 show took place at Castle Cement, Clitheroe, and our Judge was Mr. Dennis Atkinson from Garstang, who was delighted at the quality of the exhibits, and encouraged all participants to submit exhibits at the County Show.

Our Guest Judge was Mrs. Saipin Birt who along with husband Michael have been enthusiastic supporters for many years.

There were 57 exhibits from 18 entrants.

THE RESULTS CLASS

1 Light Honey	Brian Jackson
2 Medium/Dark	John Zamorski
3 Heather	John Zamorski
4 Soft / Granulated	Phil Ainsworth
5 Novice	Annette Hawkins
6 Frame of Bees wax	Bob Fulton
7 Bees wax Cake	John Zamorski
8 Honey Cake	Wynne Holmes
9 Honey Fudge	Brian Jackson
10 Honey Desert	Brian Jackson
11 Mead	Fiona Wells
12 Photographic Print	John Zamorski
13 Wax Craft	John Zamorski

THE CHALLENGE CUP

was awarded to John. Zamorski for the most points in the show.

THE BEST EXHIBIT

for the Ken Preedy Memorial Cup was for the Honey Desert exhibited by Brian Jackson.

On your behalf I would like to thank all the Exhibitors for the effort put into showing the exhibits and for their enthusiasm.

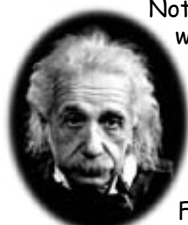
Special thanks must go to John Zamorski for arranging the use of the excellent facilities at Castle Cement, and to Lynne Zamosrski and the others who helped with setting up the rooms, preparing the refreshments and also for tidying up after us all, once we had finished.

Caroline Coughlin.

Three cheers for Caroline what a splendid job she did. She did not let it run on to long, and that is not easy to do . Especially as it was her first time at the job.

There was a bit of confusion about bottle tops for the mead exhibits. Mr. Atkinson allowed us to get away with it this time, however there is a correct stopper for the job and Bob Fulton can supply them . So mead fans, there is your solution. Ed.

WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF BEING A BEEKEEPER?



Not being a beekeeper I can only apply a bit of homespun philosophy to work out what it is that makes you take up this hobby. Having spoken to quite a few of you, I'm fairly sure it isn't financial reward. Oh, no doubt selling a few jars of honey helps towards paying for all the bits and pieces you need to run your apiary but I think it's one of those hobbies, pastimes or spare time activities that we do without any real thought of material gain.

For that reason I think it's a bit special.

In today's World almost everything is looked at in monetary terms and the philosophy seems to be restricted to "How much is there in it for me?".

It may sound a bit 'Twee' but I think doing what you do because you like bees or because you find the way the hive is run and the way the bee society works fascinating, gives a reward that can't be counted in Pounds, Euros or any other material way. In fact it's doing it for doing its sake and I think that's good.

Arthur (Asst. Ed)



93LBS OF HONEY PER HIVE THE USUAL THING

This year I obtained 260lbs of honey from 3 hives, and did not have to feed them for winter as they were chock-a-block full of stores.

THIS IS WHAT I DID.

It all started at the beginning of August 2005. I took off the supers on the 5th and let the bees have what was left of the Balsam, Willow Herb, Heather and whatever else there was for them. It's a great temptation to leave the supers on as there is a good honey flow coming in off these crops, but to me there's more about beekeeping than just getting honey. Getting heather honey on top of the Summer crop is disastrous causing a lot of unnecessary work having to press the heather out, Cleaning the frames, fitting new foundation and so on. Also I don't want a mix of heather and flower honey. It also saves getting sugar to feed which is costly and also it's unnatural for them. I am a few miles from the heather but the bees get there if they want to.

LUCK

If I'm lucky there's no need to feed them either, and they are bringing in what is natural for them. The bees should build up with a good flow coming in and by the time the flow is finished I should, with luck, have a good hive of winter bees that should come through the winter well and thus build up early the following spring. I treat them for Varroa in November in the usual way, with oxalic acid regardless of whether I have Varroa or not. Using the open mesh floors, I restrict the entrances and that should be it for the winter.

If all has gone well the bees will come through the winter strong, so I am now ready to do the curry method of swarm control

THE CURRY

On or about the 10th of May I did the Curry method which most of our members should know how to do. With the old queen in the bottom box I put on 3 supers then the curry board and let them get on with the job fairly confident that was it, and that they would not swarm again.

I then did the usual thing with the Top box according to Ivor Curry and by early June had a queen mated and laying. On this top box I added a couple of supers.

What I had now was 2 queens and 2 lots of bees working on one stand producing bees and bringing in honey. So it was like having 6 hives but only on 3 stands.

Where the Curry method is geared up for



going to the heather I geared myself up for going to the Balsam and Willow herb so I reunited the stocks back a few weeks earlier than the Curry method suggests. In the end I had 6 supers full on one hive which gave 100 lbs and the other 2 had 4 full supers and a little bit in the 3rd which gave 80lbs each. The bees were strong before I reunited them but very strong when united and the result was plenty of winter bees, lots of stores, as they had plenty to go at, lots for me making us all happy girls and one happy boy. Whether it works next year is another thing but I will give it a try.

Anyway have a lovely Christmas and all the very best for the New Year. You keep warm and I will try to keep cool. See you all in April

*Michael Birt and Saipin
Banglamung Thailand*

What's the three words you never want to hear while making love? "Honey, I'm home."

ARTIFICIAL SWARM WITHOUT FINDING THE QUEEN.

1. Move the parent stock with the queen cells to one side
2. In its place put a floor. On top of this place:
 - a) a queen excluder
 - b) then a clean brood box
3. Alongside, put frames of foundation ready to put in after we have shaken bees into this box..
4. Shake and brush all the bees from the parent stock into the new hive.
5. Place the shaken frames into a clean brood box in the order that they were removed from the parent stock.
6. At the same time destroy **ALL** the queen cells as you go, **WITH THE EXCEPTION** of two good looking unsealed cells. These are going to be used to raise into queens.



QUEEN EXCLUDER

If we can select two cells on two separate frames, so much the better. Don't shake the combs with the selected queen cells on just brush them, because shaking will damage the immature Queens we have selected.

7. On top of this new shaken swarm fit another queen excluder
 - a) then the supers
 - b) then the box containing the frames of brood from the parent stock from which we have just shaken the bees
 - c) fit the cover board
 - d) add a feeder with syrup
 - e) fit the roof.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW ?

The nurse bees will go up to the brood within minutes and re-form the parent stock complete with two Queen cells, but without a Queen.

ISOLATED

This stock is isolated from the swarm by the super and the queen excluder and will take care of the queen cells. In the bottom box is the shaken swarm with the Queen and a queen excluder which prevents any attempt by the Queen and bees to abscond and a super for feed.

We have food for the bees in the top and bottom boxes.

IN FOUR DAYS TIME

1. Move the queen excluder, super and parent stock to one side.
2. Go through the shaken swarm to see if we can find the queen or signs of a queen (eggs) If we do:
 - a) remove the queen excluder we placed between the floor and the brood box.
 - b) replace the queen excluder and super
 - c) Destroy one of the queen cells left in the parent stock, (See the last paragraph)
 - d) and all new queen cells raised in the last four days (or use the spare queen cell elsewhere).

CURRY AGAIN!

The parent stock can now be separated from the swarm, with a ventilated board (Horsley board or Curry board) or moved to some other part of the apiary as another stock. Keep feeding both swarm and parent.

NO QUEEN

If no queen or sign of a queen (eggs) is found in the swarm, then give one of the queen cells from the parent stock, at the same time check the parent stock for new queen cells started in the last four days and destroy them, give some empty frames or foundation if possible

Bill Ainsworth

RECIPES



INVERTED SUGAR RECIPE

Inverted sugar is said to be less distressing to the bees than straight forward syrup.

2lbs Sugar

1 Salt spoon of tartaric acid or citric acid

1 Pint water

Bring to the boil and simmer for 20 min.

From Annette Hawkins.

I read somewhere, that sugar can be inverted using a fermentation method and that it is even less distressing to the bees. I have no idea where I read it. Can anyone help? Ed.

ANIMAL ANTIBIOTIC FOUND IN HONEY

The Independent (UK), 2/2/2006

Traces of an antibiotic were found in honey sold in the UK, according to a Which? report. Tests showed residues of tylosin in three out of 20 jars. The antibiotic is licensed to treat animals but not bees. The consumer organisation said the antibiotic posed no health threat, but that honey should be a pure food!

CANDY FOR WINTER FEED

1 pint of water at 234° F

5 lbs Sugar

Put water in to a heavy pan so the heat will be distributed evenly. Add sugar gradually then heat to 234°F (112°C). Watch it for boiling up the side of pan at around 100°C. Small bubbles are produced up to 100°C and there is a danger of it boiling over like milk.

After this small bubble period is over, the bubbles become larger and the syrup starts to clear. There is less likelihood of it boiling over now.

When you reach 234°F (112°C) keep boiling for 3 min. Take off the heat, cool it down in a bath of cold water (just speeds things up) stirring the while. When the clear syrup starts to go cloudy pour it into a mould.

You have made Candy

PROPOLIS OINTMENT

Ingredients.

1 tsp (4g) almond oil

1 tsp (4g) olive oil

1 tsp (4g) wheat germ oil.

1/3rd ounce(10g) ounce of cocoa butter

1/3rd ounce (10g) of bees wax

1/5th ounce(5g) of propolis.

(This should be clean but not processed in any way).

Mix all the ingredients in a bain-marie and keep stirring constantly. Any propolis that won't mix will settle to the bottom of the container and can be used another time.

When well mixed, pour into cylindrical moulds to form a stick. (e.g. old lipstick containers etc.).

Use on minor skin cracks and irritations, and cold sores.

Remember that propolis can cause allergic reactions in some.



Notices

INFORMATION ABOUT 'BEETALK'

Planned Publication Dates: March 2006,
June 2006, September 2006, December
2006

**LATEST TIME FOR COPY - 2 WEEKS
BEFORE THE MONTH OF PUBLICATION.**

Please contact Bill Ainsworth, 296 Scotland
Road Nelson BB9 7YS Telephone 01282
614015 .

MEMBERS SERVICES
Bayvoral £3. per pack of 4
strips
Thymol crystals £2.20 per 100g
Apiguard £3.50 Per Treat-
ment

Oxalic Acid .60p per 35g pot
(With instructions)

Beekopers quarterly Annual sub-
scription from the publisher is £24
- from our treasurer only £16.00 with
a slight profit to our society.
Talk to Ken Gaiger phone. 01282
778887.

Library. There is an extensive range of
bee books etc. that may be borrowed.
Our librarian, David Rayner brings
some with him to our meetings. Con-
tact him on 01200 426898 for special
requests.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONTACT DETAILS

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David Bush	01200 427661
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Bill Ainsworth	
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Tom Jarvis	01282 862129
Helen Howarth	
Burnley & Padiham	01282 778887
Ken Gaiger	

**For all swarm collectors in the County,
ring John Zamorski who has the list
01200 427661**

Annual subscriptions to THE BEEKEEPER'S QUARTERLY are due so payment of £16 would be appreciated. CHEQUES SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO L. & N.W.B.K.A. AND SENT TO KEN GAIGER, 2 HIGHAM ROAD, PADHAM, BURNLEY BB12 9AP
Telephone 01282 778887

NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Subscriptions for the 2007 season were due in November. The new full membership rate will be £15 and £2 for each additional family member. Associate membership is £5.00. At the 2006 AGM it was agreed that the basic subscription will be increased to £16 in 2008. Prompt payment would be a big help and reduce the number of reminders.
The rates for Bee Disease Insurance (B.D.I.) Are:-
First 3 hives are covered by subscription
up to 5 hives £2.00 extra up to 10 hives £5.25 extra
up to 15 hives £7.75 extra up to 20 hives £9.50 extra
up to 25 hives £11.10 extra Above 25 hives See Treasurer
Please forward your subscriptions whilst its fresh in your mind, it will save me a lot of trouble. Also early renewal is necessary to assure you have the public liability (third party) insurance which is included in your subscription

EDUCATION

Education classes for all beekeepers are being planned for the coming year. They will be held at the West Bradford Village Hall (Nr Clitheroe). They will be held on Sundays starting on February 25th and running for about six weeks.

The course will cost in the region of £50 at the end of which you will, if you wish, be able to take an exam for the BBKA's Basic Husbandry Certificate at a further £10.

David Rayner is our Librarian and Education Officer. He can be reached on 01200 426898. Please ring him for further information and to book your place on the course.

David has also arranged the Lancashire Beekeeper's Convention for 2007. This is also to be held at West Bradford Village Hall on October 20th (9am to 5pm). All the details will be available nearer the date. For more details - have a word with David on 01200 426898.

NEXT MEETING WED 28TH MARCH 7 30 PM ANNUAL DINNER

At THE HILLCREST TEA ROOMS, MITTON.

If you haven't been before, do put your name down - it's a real good do. We will try to remind you nearer the date but just in case, why not ring John Zamorski now and reserve a place and get a menu.

You can contact John on 01200 427661

LETTER FROM BRIDGET

I should have known better – but you know how it goes – maybe I'll get away with it. I've studied beekeeping for long enough now to know that it ain't necessarily so....

DON'T FEED THE BEES!

I'd got all my extracted supers in the house, and with visitors arriving any time soon, the boxes just had to go back on the bees. It was early in the morning, cool dull weather, and yes, I know, you shouldn't feed bees unless it's in the evening or there is a risk of robbing. However, they weren't doing much flying so....having crept out and given the supers back to three colonies, in separate places around the garden, I went inside to get ready for my friends' arrival.

WHAT'S UP?

About an hour later, my husband, John, who reacts badly to stings, came in and said "what's the matter with the bees?" To which I replied, somewhat uneasily, "Why? What are they doing?"

"They're all over the place...."

ROBBERS

Oh my! I've experienced colonies robbing each other often during my beekeeping life, and had to deal with it, but it was always the bees which had started it on their own. Having always been very responsible about my beekeeping, I try not to break the rules, so I didn't really know what robbing would entail if it was induced by the beekeeper. Let me tell you – there



were bees looking for honey everywhere – trying to get into the house, looking in the garage, woodshed.....and every colony entrance was awash with bees, frantically rushing in and out! – and not just the ones with the wet supers, they were all very upset. I'm sure I could hear them saying "Hey, girls, there's gold in them thar hills.."

NEIGHBOURS !

We live on a tiny country road, but our local commune looks after its community very well, so the little potholes which had appeared after the last rain were being mended. When the public works lorry took off in a hurry without doing the patch the other side of the woodshed, I realised we really did have a problem. Maybe they wouldn't know the bees were over on our side...and what about the lady next door who will be fetching her little boy from school at 3pm - - - they walk past the woodshed....

ANXIETY

There was nothing I could do except warn everyone and sit it out hoping the bees would calm down soon. I was paralysed with anxiety, unable to settle to anything, peering out every few minutes to see if there was a change. "I think there are a few less" "No, still frantic activity". On top of that, the humiliation of knowing that I should have known better. Eventually normality returned to the hives and the panic was over. It took about three hours. The longest three hours of my life.

So never feed your bees or give back supers unless it's in the evening, folks; and the moral of the tale? You may learn far more from your mistakes than from reading a book – but don't try it at home!

Best wishes Bridget Beattie

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WHY BEES ABIDE BY THE LAW

Effective "law enforcement" rather than altruism prevents insects behaving selfishly, scientists have found.

WORKER'S BABIES

It has never been fully understood why most worker bees and wasps take care of the offspring of their queens rather than having their own despite having fully functioning ovaries.

Researchers who studied the behaviour of nine species of wasp and one species of honeybee found the proportion of female workers that laid eggs varied between the groups from 0.1 per cent to 40 per cent.

EFFECTIVE POLICING

They found that the insect groups with the most effective policing - the killing of worker-laid eggs by other workers or the mother queen - had the lowest proportion of workers laying eggs.



Prof Francis Ratnieks, of the Laboratory of Entomology at the University of Leuven in Belgium, whose work is published today in the journal *Nature*, said: "Our results show that in modern-day insect societies it is mainly social sanctions that

reduce the numbers of workers that act selfishly.

ANTI SOCIAL

"They provide evidence for something that has proved notoriously hard to demonstrate in human society: that better law enforcement can lead to fewer individuals acting anti-socially."

Daily Telegraph

A computer beat me at chess once.
But, it was no match for me at kick boxing.

CHRISTMAS

The time has arrived yet again for me to put pen to paper and so reach out to all members of Bee Talk.

The weather has played an



important part in our bee-keeping operations this year with a cold wet late start, then a hot dry mid-season and now a prolonged back end.

The plants did not know what to do and still don't, which in turn affected the bees themselves.

From the various reports I have heard, the amount of honey taken has been a variable amount depending upon where you live.

Troubles still occur with regard to queen rearing, queens absconding and superseding when they shouldn't. To date there seems to be no clear cut answer to these problems.

All in all everyone seems contented and provided we have enough honey for our morning toast or to add to our whisky nightcap, the year will have been a success.

So may I now offer you all a very sincere Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year of good bee-keeping through out 2007

Greetings to you all

Brian Jackson (Chairman).

"Well," said Pooh, "what I like best -- " and then he had to stop and think. Because although Eating Honey was a very good thing to do, there was a moment just before you began to eat it which was better than when you were, but he didn't know what it was called"

VAPORIZATION

It's nearly the end of another season with the bees, but there is still the important job of treating them for varroa. This year I'm leaving it later than usual as I'm about to try out the new method of vaporization of Oxalic acid. This means the bees are not disturbed as much as with the trickle method or spray. I will let you know how it goes in my next jottings.

Oxalic acid seems to be the main defence here in Italy against varroa. Hard chemical use is very much discouraged and a strong move towards 'Organic Farming' is taking place which of course includes honey. The main treatments recommended are 'Api Life Var' after the supers are taken off in August and then oxalic acid later on when the queen has stopped laying. Hopefully this then gets the majority of the little horrors.

ACACIA TREES

This year the Regional Agricultural Magazine's report, rings true with their summing up of the year, which was "great losses last Winter. Especially in the North West of the region (i.e. me) followed by a promising Spring". Then due to the extremely dry conditions in Summer

resulting in a poor harvest, although the honey gathered was of a very good quality. People living in areas where there are plenty of acacia trees doing best of all.

I have been cultivating acacia trees locally as they grow easily and are

a bit of a "weed tree" really. Not far away down in the valley they grow in abundance but I suspect it is a bit far for my bees to fly.

CHICKEN FEED

Being such a hot dry Summer again I did wonder if I should make some drinking

troughs for the bees or leave them to find there own sources. I have a small stream which passes about 50 metres away, (it can become a raging torrent at times) but it is spring fed so never dries up completely even in the driest of Summers. I know the bees use this a lot especially where the green algae grows.

They presumably get their "Vits. and Mins." from this. As for their B vits. they prefer my bucket were I soak stale bread everyday for the chickens. I get given a lot of bread for the animals. Italians don't like waste in general and as the bread goes rock hard very quickly here it is saved and passed on to people with animals. This I find very use full to bulk out the animal food.

The bees centred onto the bucket in Spring and from then on it was sometimes difficult to get at the bread for the amount of bees there.



They even had a night shift going as bees were always there even at dawn. May be the answer

is to have two buckets, one especially for them next year. People visiting would be a bit perturbed at a bucket full of bees near the house and would often ask why they were there, to which I would reply "bees getting 'B' vitamins".

HEALTH AUTHORITY

This year again I have had to submit a sample of honey to the local Health Authority for analysis. It is screened for purity and antibiotics etc.. All this is compulsory when selling honey and not without a fee of course. After all it is only right that the consumer is getting a genuine product but I do have a sneaky feeling it's easy to pick on the small producer rather than the big concerns.

AUTUMN

Anyway apart from all that, this Autumn has been splendid. All the trees in their Autumn colours, high temperatures and lots of misty mornings.



Very 'Turnerish' before the Sun burns the vapours away.

MUSHROOMS

Plenty of 'Porcini' mushrooms about and many plants like roses thinking it was Spring again. The bees had a good do on the Ivy a couple of weeks ago and have now settled down. I have been busy preparing for Winter as I know from experience it can change very quickly.

Trusting you have all had a good season with the bees. And wishing you all the very best for 2007.

Tante Saute Jeni.

The queen Honey Bee may lay 600-800 or even 1,500 eggs each day during her three or four year lifetime.

This daily egg production may equal her own weight. She is constantly fed and groomed by attendant worker bees.

HOT AIR UNCAPPING.

Peter Llewellyn, our Member in Cumbria has brought to our attention at meetings in the past that a hot air gun the sort used for stripping paint, is a wonderful tool for uncapping honey combs. No one seemed to take a great deal of notice. So at our July meeting he appeared waving a gun under our noses, we had to take notice.



GIVE IT A TRY

I agreed to give it a try and went out and bought one, it cost me £16, but I'm told they can be obtained cheaper.

I had almost finished extraction, so could only try it out on two supers, but here is my findings.

It worked marvellously on normal cappings the ones with an air gap between the capping and the honey, the capping just melted and ran back into the cell wall. But it's not as good on the greasy cappings - it works but not just as well. Just be careful where you uncap with the gun, the hot air blows bits of wax about and being half molten they tend to stick.

It takes longer to extract from the frames. I ran an electric extractor for 5 min. or more, that is a long long time if you are winding a handle at a fair speed.

PROS.

1. Quick, very much so.
2. No blocking of the filters with wax.
3. No wax cappings at all to deal with.
4. No equipment associated with capping and the cleaning thereof.
5. A lot less messy.

CONS.

1. You need a gun.
2. It will be hard work with a hand extractor unless using a tangential one.
3. Extraction will not be quite as efficient so extracted combs should be fed back to the bees and not put away wet.

I shall try again next year, that's for sure.

Bill

SITING THE APIARY

The first consideration, once you have decided to keep bees is, where to keep them.

There are certain factors that must be taken into account and other factors which should be considered if the best results are to be achieved.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PLACE

Most important is that bees should have sufficient space in front of the hive to allow them freedom of flight.

Don't place them in the middle of a thick and overhanging wood. Don't let the grass grow tall in front of their entrance.



A board placed on the ground will keep the immediate vicinity clear.

Don't put them in such a position that they have to bombard your neighbour's garden on every flight. If you are using a fairly well populated area, or if there are farm animals about, a hedge or a fence around the apiary is a good idea. It both protects the hive from interference and also, by forcing the bees to elevate their flight path, it protects passers-by from the danger of being stung. In law, you are responsible for your bees' actions!

SHELTER

Your bees leave the hive only when it is warm enough, so don't discourage them by placing the hive in a very windy spot, hidden from the morning sun. A sheltered position on a south facing slope is ideal. The entrance of the hive should face towards the sun and away from the cold East winds.

Remember, in a warm hive bees start early and finish late, especially in spring and autumn which are critical times for the success of the colony.

RIISING DAMP

The worst hindrance is damp. It will quickly rot your equipment. More catastrophic is the effect of damp upon the bees. Firstly they must struggle day and night to maintain a suitable atmosphere within the hive, thus they are continually wasting energy and accumulating stress.

Such a hive will be short of honey, short of temper, and sooner or later will become diseased. For these reasons, don't put your hive in that vacant patch of the garden that isn't fit for anything else. If nothing will grow there, certainly your bees aren't going to flourish there.

If you are planning to keep just one or two hives then you don't have to worry much about sources of nectar and pollen. Bees will happily forage for two miles and if pushed will travel ten. Most areas have sufficient nectar-producing vegetation within that range. However, as your apiary grows in size the availability of nectar and pollen becomes a real consideration and of course if the bees only fly 100 metres on each trip much energy and time is saved.

THE PROCRASTINATOR'S CREED:

1. I believe that if anything is worth doing, it would have been done already.
2. I will never rush into a job without a lifetime of consideration.
3. I truly believe that all deadlines are unreasonable regardless of the amount of time given.
4. If at first I don't succeed, there is always next year.
5. I shall always decide not to decide, unless of course I decide to change my mind.
6. I shall always begin, start, initiate, take the first step, and/or write the first word, when I get around to it.
7. I will never put off until tomorrow, what I can forget about forever.

MEDIHONEY

Wound specialists at the University Children's Clinic, emphasise that changing medihoney dressings is less painful, since the poultices are easier to remove without damaging the newly formed layers of skin. Some wounds often smell unpleasant—an enormous strain on the patient. Yet honey helps here too by reducing the smell. "Even wounds which consistently refused to heal for years can, in our experience, be brought under control with medihoney—and this frequently happens within a few weeks," Kai Sofka says.

GERMAN HOSPITALS

In the meantime two dozen hospitals in Germany are using honey in their treatment of wounds. Despite all the success there have hitherto been very few reliable clinical studies of its effectiveness. In conjunction with colleagues from Düsseldorf, Hamburg and Berlin, the Bonn medical staff now want to remedy this.

With the Woundpecker Data Bank, which they have developed themselves, they will be recording and evaluating over 100 courses of disease over the next few months. The next step planned is comparative studies with other therapeutic methods such as the very expensive cationic silver dressings.

MRSA

"These too are an effective anti-bacterial method" says Dr. Arne Simon. "However, it is not yet clear whether the silver released from some dressings may lead to side-effects among children." It has already been proved that medihoney even puts paid to multi-resistant germs such as MRSA. In this respect medihoney is neck and neck in the race to beat the antibiotic mupirocin, currently the local MRSA antibiotic of choice.

This is shown by a study recently published by researchers in Australia. In one point medihoney was even superior to its rival: the bacteria did not develop any resistance to the natural product during the course of treatment.

HYDROGEN PEROXIDE

It is also known today why honey has an antiseptic effect: when producing honey, bees add an enzyme called glucose-oxidase. This enzyme ensures that small amounts of hydrogen peroxide, an effective antiseptic, are constantly being formed from the sugar in the honey. The advantage over the hydrogen peroxide from the chemist's is that small concentrations are sufficient to kill the germs, as it is constantly being produced. As a rule much larger quantities of hydrogen peroxide would have to be used, as hydrogen peroxide loses its potency over time. However, in large concentrations it not only damages the bacteria, but also the skin cells.

MANUKA

Furthermore, medihoney consists of two different types of honey: one which forms a comparatively large amount of hydrogen peroxide, and another known as "lepto-spermum honey". Leptospermum is a species of tree which occurs in New Zealand and Australia. (Manuka in NZ and jelly bush in Australia. Ed). Honey from these trees has a particularly strong anti-bacterial effect, even in a 10% dilution. "It is not yet known exactly why this is," Dr. Arne Simon says. "Probably it is a mix of phenol-type substances which come from the plant and make life particularly difficult for the bacteria in the wound."

USING HONEY

Substitute honey for sugar in a cake. Use the same weight measure of the sweetener but reduce the liquid in the recipe by one quarter. For example, you would use 3/4 cup of milk instead of one cup. Reduce recommended cooking temperature by 150C.

Add honey to plain cuts of meat to make exotic dishes. When basted with honey, vegetables will always be exciting if tossed in honey and butter.

Add honey to creamed cheese as a spread, use it on grapefruit or as a topping for ice cream for extra goodness and flavour. Use it in your tea or coffee, cordial or cocktails.

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HMF

Most beekeepers know of the existence of HMF and will have been warned that too much of it in their honey is a bad thing. In this fact file we look at exactly what it is, how it is formed, what uses it has and how we can avoid it. The basic thing to remember is that heating honey will generally cause a rise in the amount of HMF present and that there is a law against too much HMF if you want to sell the honey. So be careful.

HYDROXYMETHYLFURFURAL also called HMF, is a compound that results from the breakdown of simple sugars (such as glucose or fructose) at pH 5 or lower. HMF occurs naturally in honey, especially in warm climates.

New honey contains 1 to 5 mg/kg HMF. When honey is being stored at 20°C the HMF content will raise $\pm$ 1 mg/kg per month.

Only fructose will become HMF. So the rise is dependent on the kind of honey!!

Heating the honey will raise HMF contents rapidly.

The longer and/or hotter it is heated, the higher the HMF will become.

Table of the time to produce 30 ppm HMF

Temperature in °C

30 °C	150-250	Days
40 °C	20-50	Days
50 °C	4.5-9	Days
60 °C	1-2.5	Days
70 °C	5-14	Hours

Honey deteriorates with ageing and/or heating and with this the HMF increases. Adulteration of honey with invert sugar raises the level of HMF considerably. Thus the quantity of HMF in a batch of honey is a good indicator of its quality. HMF is used as an indicator of heat and storage changes in honey. HMF is formed by the breakdown of fructose in the presence of an acid. This means that if you decide to feed your bees invert sugar syrup (recommended) rather than straight sugar syrup, ensure that the

inversion process is carried out using yeast, not acid. You could be poisoning your bees instead of giving them a boost).

HMF's occurrence and accumulation in honey is variable depending on honey type. While today HMF is used as an indicator of heating or storage at elevated temperatures, it was first used (as early as 1908) as an indicator of the adulteration of honey with invert syrups (syrups of glucose and fructose). Cane sugar (sucrose) can be "inverted" by heating with a food acid, and this process creates HMF. However it was quickly realized that heated natural honey also had higher levels of HMF and therefore the interest switched from being an indicator of adulteration, to that of an indicator of heating and storage changes. It should be noted however that high levels of HMF (greater than 100 mg/kg) can still be an indicator of adulteration with inverted sugars.

HMF is not a harmful substance to humans in levels found in food. Many sugar type products (e.g. Golden Syrup, Molasses etc.) have levels of HMF that are 10-100 times that of honey. Many food items sweetened with high fructose corn syrups, e.g. carbonated soft drinks, can have levels of HMF between 100 and 1,000 mg/kg. Fresh natural honey can have varying levels of HMF. Normally this is below 1 mg/kg but levels soon start to rise with ambient temperatures above 20°C. It should be noted that temperatures in the beehive can rise to over 40°C during summer months (when the main honey crop is in progress). It is usual for HMF to be below 10 mg/kg in fresh extracted honey. Levels higher than this may indicate excessive heating during the extraction process.

Many countries impose maximum levels for HMF. The Codex level is currently set at 80 mg/kg, but was set at 40mg/kg for many years, a level still used in Germany, the World's largest importer. This twofold difference in imposed levels shows that HMF is not a simple subject and that many anomalies arise throughout the varied honey world.

Scrapings

WE OFTEN READ OR HEAR THAT :

1. Wasp sting venom is alkaline and so it can be neutralised with vinegar and this then reduces the pain
2. Bee sting venom is acidic and so it can be neutralised with bicarbonate of soda and this reaction reduces the pain.

Are either of these statements true?

The facts are that:

Bee venom contains formic acid (also known as methanoic acid) but this is not the single active ingredient that causes the pain from a bee sting

Wasp stings are alkali but once again the venom has so many active ingredients that it is very unlikely that it is the alkali alone that is the single active ingredient that causes the pain

Neutralising a sting with either vinegar or bicarbonate of soda is unlikely to be effective because:

- 1) The venom from wasps and bees is injected under the skin and after a few minutes spreads deep into the tissues. Sloshing vinegar or bicarbonate of soda onto the skin surface is unlikely to even get near the venom so no "neutralisation" is likely to take place anyway.
- 2) A wasp or bee sting is between 5 and 50 micrograms of fluid - this is a tiny amount of fluid - a little pinhead or the size of this full stop . - and it is hard to believe how pouring comparatively huge volumes of unknown strength vinegar or rubbing lumps of bicarbonate of soda near the venom is going to produce a perfectly neutral ph which neutralises the sting and stops it hurting.

So, we confidently state that vinegar and bicarbonate of soda have no real physical effect on how much a sting hurts except to say that rubbing a wound distracts the mind from the immediate pain and

Rubbing a wound promotes the release of endorphins which reduces the pain, and

if you believe something is going to work, then it often will because the mind can play curious tricks!

If anyone, young or old, has something to add on this subject then let me know as I am willing to be corrected as long as there is some scientific evidence somewhere.

There appears to be no scientific evidence whatsoever to prove the scientific hypothesis that alkali reduces the pain of bee stings and acids reduces the pain of wasp stings.



DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in any of the articles in 'Bee Talk' represent the personal opinions of the contributors and in no way should they be regarded as the official opinions or views of the 'Lancashire & North West Beekeepers Association' nor of our local Branch of this association 'The Blackburn & East Lancashire Branch'



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Ask Bob !

All of us get stuck at some time or another and need a bit of information or advice about our bees or beekeeping in General.

Bob Fulton who is a very experienced beekeeper is more than willing to help you in any way he can.

Give him ring; go and see him at his apiary or he will even try to come to see you.

Bob has ordered twelve new Black Queens for 2007 and says he is happy for anyone to take their new virgin queens (In nucs) to his apiary for mating.

Bob lives at The Mound, Pole Lane, Darwen, Blackburn BB3 3LD and you can contact him by phone on 01254 772780

