



Beetalk

Newsletter of The Blackburn and East Lancashire Branch of
The Lancashire & North West Beekeepers Association
December 2012 www.blackburnbeekeepers.com Registered Charity

COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONTACT DETAILS for 2013 SEASON

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Brian Jackson. Vice Chairman	01535 634503		bmjackson1@talktalk.net
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Karen Ramsbottom. Member	01254722514		john.rammy@ntlworld.com
Alistair McLean. Member	07815049283		AlistairMcLean@ymail.com
Ellen Howarth. Member.			helen@waltonhowarth.co.uk
Steve Ganner. Member	07954585019.		cathcook@blueyonder.co.uk
Michael Birt. Web Master/Beetalk Editor			webmaster@blackburnbeekeepers.com
DELEGATES TO THE CENTRAL COUNCIL			
Philip Ainsworth. Hon. Treas.	0771 3161480	email	philipainsworth@btconnect.com
Vici Winstanley. Hon.Sec.	07827292844	email	vicicoaffee@yahoo.co.uk

MEMBERS SERVICES

Bayvoral - Apiguard - Oxalic Acid -
Thymol - Fumidi'B'

These Chemicals for treating bees can be obtained from:
David Bush Phone 01200 - 428152
Dave will have them available at beekeeper's meetings.

LIBRARY

There is an extensive range of books on all
aspects of beekeeping that can be borrowed from the
Association library.
Please contact

Brian Jackson on 01535 634503

MEMBERSHIP

REGISTERED MEMBER. Subscription for the 2013 season will be £30.00

PARTNER MEMBER. This is for partners of registered members living in the same household wishing to keep bees and includes full insurance cover. However they will not receive their own copy of BBKA news. Subscription will be £20.00

COUNTRY MEMBER. This is for people who do not keep bees, but wish to receive BBKA news and attend branch meetings etc. This class of member does not include any insurance cover. Subscription will be £12.00

IMPORTANT INSURANCE NOTICE

Under the new constitution, prompt payment is essential. Basically, payment will be required by the 31st December each year as insurance is now based on the current years membership. New and lapsed members insurance cover will not start until six weeks after paying their subscription.
For insurance purposes subs will need to be promptly, otherwise you will not have third party insurance
SUBS SHOULD BE PAID TO PHILIP AINSWORTH HON. TREASURER Phone 07713161480
Address ::::: Phil Ainsworth Riverside Cottage Potters :Lane Samlesbury Preston PR5 0UE

Association Swarm Catchers.
For the 2013 season

A small charge is made to collect swarms to cover expenses which is up to the discretion of the individual collector.

BLACKBURN, DARWEN, ACCRINGTON, MELLOR, PRESTON and
ROSSENDALE
AREAS

Karen Ramsbottom.
Telephone 01254722514
E-mail:: john.rammy@ntlworld.com

CLITHEROE AND SURROUNDING AREAS

[John Zamorski](mailto:John.Zamorski@wanadoo.co.uk)
Telephone **01200-427661**
E Mail:::: john@johnzamorski.wanadoo.co.uk

[David Bush,](mailto:david.bush2@talktalk.net)
Telephone **01200 428152**
Email :::david.bush2@talktalk.net

BURNLEY, NELSON AND SURROUNDING AREAS

Alistair McLean 07815049283 AlistairMcLean@ymail.com

Victoria Winstanley. 01282-701692 vicicoaffee@yahoo.co.uk

Ellen Howarth. helen@waltonhowarth.co.uk

Please feel free to ring any of the above in your area and they will do their best to sort out the problem.

Swarm collectors will not come out to Bumble Bees and Wasps
problems

FUTURE BRANCH MEETINGS

Sunday January 20th 2013 2pm

Samlesbury War Memorial Hall, Cuerdale Lane, Salmesbury, Preston PR5 0XD

Apiary Hygiene and Disease with John Zamorski and also

Samlesbury Apiary update with Steve Ganner.

Sunday February 24th 2013 2pm

Towneley Hall, Burnley. Towneley Hall Burnley BB113RQ

Preparation for Season, Microscopy update.

Friday March 22nd 2013 7pm for 7-30 pm

Calf's Head, Worston, Clitheroe BB7 1QA

Annual Dinner

We will, where possible open hives so bring along your protective clothing just in case.

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'

For Sale **Protective Clothing**

1. Cotton Bee Protective Boiler Suits all sizes a bargain at £20 each
2. Net Veils that need to be fitted onto a hat at £3 each
3. Box of thin but very strong gloves at £3 for a box of 50 pairs

These are available by ringing Bob Fulton on 01254-772780

3. Available from Early March 2012 Fitted Veil at £15.
- All in all if you buy the protective Suit, Veil and Gloves you will have yourself fully protected at a cost of £35 compared to something like £85 to £100 from other suppliers.

Sugar and Candy

20 kilo Buckets at £12

10 Kilo Buckets at £6

1 Kilo Bags at 60p

Candy Sticks at 30p per stick

These are available by ringing David Bush on

01200-428152

UK Honey Labelling Regulations

Below is our simple advice on honey labelling. For more detailed information - go to the website of the Food Standards Agency. www.food.gov.uk

- 1. The Word **HONEY**'s required.*
- 2. The weight must be on the label - we will ensure it is the legal size and format.*
- 3. You can specify the area where the honey is produced. For example, Lincolnshire, Forest of Dean, Scottish Borders.*
- 4. You can specify the type of honey. For example, Heather, Borage. The honey must be at least 75% of that particular type.*
- 5. If you are selling the honey, you must have your name and address on the label. It does not need to be complete but you should be able to be found from the information.*
- 6. If you are selling the honey through a third party, you must have a lot number.*
- 7. New for 2003 You must have a best before date on the jar. We suggest 2-5 years from now.*
- 8. New for 2003 You must have a country of origin on the jar. For example - Produce of England, Product of Scotland, Harvested in Wales. Adding the country to the end of your address is not acceptable.*

E H Thorne (Beehives) Ltd disclaims all responsibility for all consequences of any person acting on, or refraining from acting in reliance on, information contained above.

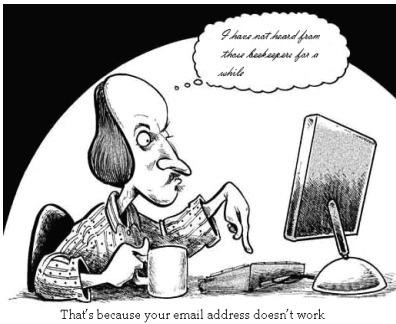
From EH Thorne's online catalogue 2010 - other sources are available



What's in the Honey Pot

A few snippets of news and information that may be of use to you

Editorial



Our membership secretary reports that several members' email addresses no longer work and emails are bounced straight back at him by the "mailer-daemon". If you've been feeling neglected by your Association lately, please check that we have your correct email address. You can rectify this problem, if it applies to you, by emailing

This issue of Beetalk is a limited edition, the reason being only a few of our members send to me any articles, not sure why but if I do not receive anything I cannot put anything into YOUR Beetalk and have to fill in with articles not relating to our club. So please send me anything you have, it does not matter what as long as it's about yourself and beekeeping.

The AGM was very poorly attended with only a handful of members attending. We have over 120+ members and out of that we had less than 20 members at the AGM. Not sure why but it's a far cry from days gone by when we had maybe 40 members and 30+ plus at the AGM all having something to say and the ones that did not attend were either sick or had other very important business on the day. What the club needs is support. The committee works very hard on your behalf and needs the backing of the members and with so many new beekeepers joining it is more important than ever to have a healthy, active membership,

Apart from that, the season as you all know has been a complete washout with the bees not being able to bring in pollen for brood rearing and with us having to feed right throughout the year. Honey yield was expected down well over 60% on previous years and some members if they have not fed hard in autumn and have not kept candy on over the winter will most probably lose the bees over the winter. I have put on the website a way of feeding your bees throughout the winter and it can be found on the opening page.

Again the project with the black bee rearing at Towneley Hall was again hampered by the weather, but next year is another year where its hoped things will move forwards.

On a brighter note, the new apiary at Salmsbury Hall is well sorted out and it will next year be used, along with Towneley Hall as a training apiary where members can go along and get into the hives. This will be a great addition to the club especially for beginners and inexperienced beekeepers.

So there you are not too good a picture but again it's the members who make this and any other club a success so all I can say is get involved.

Have a great Christmas and all the very best for the New Year.

Michael

Meet some of the Committee for 2013



John Zamorski (Chairman)



Brian Jackson (Vice Chairman)



Vici Winstanley (Hon Secretary)



**Phil Ainsworth
(Hon Treasurer)**



**Caroline Coughlin
(Honey Show Secretary)**



**Janet Murray
Education Officer**



Bob Fulton. Committee Member



David Bush. Committee Member



Alistair McLean. Committee Member



Helen Howarth Committee Member



**Michael Birt.
(Webmaster and Beetalk Editor)**

Blackburn and East Lancashire Beekeepers Association

AGM Sunday 18th November 2012
Samlesbury Memorial Village Hall at 2.00pm

Summary of meeting

John opened the AGM and gave thanks for to the attendees
Apologies where given from Alistair McLean, Helen Howarth

The minutes from the AGM 2011 where reviewed by John Zamorski and proposed and seconded by Annette Hawkins and David Bush.

John went on to discuss the concern that committee has around that lack of practical experience of Bee Keeping and this is mainly due to the poor weather this year. Hopefully next year there are more opportunities for members to have practical experiences. We are looking for volunteers to support in the up keep of the branch apiary site please speak to Steve Ganner for more details.

The Chair, Secretary and Honey show report where presented and will be available on the website and December Beetalk.

Phil Ainsworth as the association Treasurer gave his report on the year. The expenses this year have increased due to supplying refreshments at monthly events and a rise in postage costs. Accounts were proposed and seconded by John Zamorski and Michael Birt.

Subscription fees agreed as;

£30 for full membership

£20 for partners

£12 for Country member

Proposed and seconded by Brian Jackson and John Kenwood

There was concern over insurance and what this actual covered and Phil Ainsworth confirmed he would look into this and send a copy of the insurance information to all members.

Michael Birt proposed a new membership category of associate member for £5 per year, this was agreed and we as a branch will look to incorporate this in the 2013-2014 registration form.

The committee members were agreed as follows

Chair	John Zamorski
Vice	Brian Jackson
Secretary	Vici Winstanley
Treasurer	Phil Ainsworth
Programme Sect.	Juli Scott
Honey Show Sec.	Caroline Coughlin
Education Officer	Janet Murray
Committee Members	Bob Fulton, David Bush, Steve Ganner, Helen Howarth, Alistair McLean

The role of Disease Liaison officer and Communication officer has been disbanded as these roles are no longer required or have been integrated into the roles agreed at the AGM.

Swarm collectors agreed as John Wilson, David Rayner, Steve Ganner and Vici Winstanley. Need to review the areas that still need to be covered and contact previous collectors to see if they wish to continue.

AOB

John Zamorski proposed that the role of Chair and Secretary will run for a maximum of 3 years once appointed in role. All attendees agreed.

Brian Jackson asked all members to review their book collection to see if there are any Branch Library books that need to be returned. If so please contact Brian to arrange collection.

It was discussed that we are top heavy with new bee keepers and need to considered how we manage this as well as keeping experience bee keepers engaged.

Janet Murray the newly appointed Education Secretary is looking at arranging studying groups for members who are planning to study any of the modules in 2013. The plan is to increase the number of members who are studying for and taking the basic bee keeping module.

John Zamorski thanked everyone who attended and closed the meeting

Chairman's Report 2012

This year has seen an amazing amount of strange weather. Mostly bad for the bees and beekeeper alike. A warm start then late frosts put paid to a lot of fruit crops like pears and plums. The bees had woken up and got to work only to be driven into clustering again after a couple of weeks. This resulted in cases of isolation starvation throughout Lancashire. Anyone who was not keeping a close eye on their colonies risked losing them. As the year progressed, the haphazard weather ruined plans for queen rearing and many unmated or poorly mated queens were reported. This resulted in a large number of laying worker colonies being found. Anyone who started a couple of years ago and produced a decent crop last year was now finding out that the next year can be totally different.

Meetings this year have been slightly down on numbers attending. The annual dinner had a disappointing number booking and we were unable to reach the figure promised to the venue. The only reason we had changed to a different venue was because we were limited to numbers at the place we have been using for years and even although we had only once ever filled it, a decision was taken to move elsewhere and we had even less people booking.

Towneley Hall and Samlesbury Memorial Hall have been the two main meeting places this year and this is planned to continue in 2013. Both these sites will have beehives available for members to work with next year. This hopefully should mean we can now concentrate on the practical side of Beekeeping which I am sure is what everyone wants. Details will be announced shortly on how these sites will be managed and how everyone can help.

The dates for the 2013 meetings have been finalised and we are in the progress of booking speakers and subjects. What we need is more input from the membership regarding the subjects you wish us to cover.

Please talk to a member of the committee if there is anything you would like including in the programme.

I would like to finish by thanking all the members of the committee who have tried very hard in a difficult year and I will need this support going forward. We have a lot of work to do next year because we are lagging behind other branches in the practical and

education sides of our hobby. I feel sure once we are able to get the two apiaries up and running we can sort this because we have some very capable trainers in our branch.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all and surely we must be in for a good season next year.

Thanks
John Zamorski

Secretaries Report 2012

It goes without saying that this has been a very difficult season for many, which has created issues with our apiary site at Salmsbury Hall and the queen rearing programme at Towneley Hall (Black Bee Project). We hope that efforts of David Rayner and Steve Ganner and all who have supported last year will be rewarded in 2013.

We as a committee at one stage even contemplated cancelling the Honey Show due to the lack of honey production for many of our members. However with a few modifications to the 'Honey Show Programme' we had a very successful event.

We also tried a live honey cooking demonstrate this year and for those who did attend it was a great show with tasting and wine. However it was a concern that only a handful of our members attended. We need everyone's input into making our monthly events successful. So please keep the feedback and suggestions coming.

I would like to say a big thank you to Dave Rayner, Annette Hawkins and Karen Ramsbottom who have taken the decision to step down from the committee. This has created an opportunity for other members to continue with supporting and building knowledge, skills and experience of our members.

Looking forward to 2013, may it be a bright one!!

Vici

Welcome to our new education officer



Hi all

Just to introduce myself, my name is Janet Murray and I am the new Education Officer for the Blackburn and East Lancs Beekeepers Assoc. I live in the Grindleton area, near Clitheroe and have been keeping bees for about 3 years. This year I decided to do the Basic Assessment - found it really fascinating and learned a lot I hadn't known before. Even taking the assessment was entertaining, my examiner was friendly and it was more like an informal chat about bees! From there I started studying for the Modules. Having talked to beekeepers who have been keeping bees for years, I understand that beekeeping is changing. The bees are facing many problems - pests, disease and poor weather to name but a few and we as beekeepers are kept on our toes. I know that the studying for the Basic helped me to help my bees and I would like to promote education in our branch. Although the exams are not compulsory - the information gained studying the courses is invaluable.

Currently we have a study group for Module 3 running from my home on a Wednesday evening and any are welcome to join us.

We are wanting to start a study group for Module 1. There is one starting in Leyland but for many of our members the travelling may be too far so if we can organise a group of 4 -5 people we could find a venue closer.

Also anyone wanting to study for the Basic assessments next year please contact me for details of courses available.

I can be contacted on 01200 440523 / 07981094697 or email at scrubbers2001@aol.com

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Janet

Annual Bar-Bee-Que

Pouring rain and wet grass. Great start to the annual BBQ which was supported by 27 loyal fans and 5 year old Sophie Rose. There was cover for John to cook under but as usual in Yorkshire the rain was coming sideways so he was pretty damp. This year the sausages and burgers were cooked without being burnt which was great. The onions and giant Greek beans all went. When people had finished their burgers and buns most retired inside to sample Margaret's great puddings which as usual were splendid. Many thanks for the work you put into that. Helen made the salads to go with the burgers and Bob brought along wine for us to sample. There were quite a few non drivers walking around with smiles on their faces so I think it must have gone down well. I was driving so did not partake.

Sophie discovered the water sprays for the BBQ were not being used so decided to chase Phil and Brian with them. I think Phil came off worst because he was wetter than the chef.





Steve Ganner has made 6 observation hives as shown in the photograph above.

Costing upwards of £200 from most bee equipment suppliers, Steve can let you have them at £90.00 which is less than half price making one an ideal xmas present or for your beekeeping equipment. Ideal for showing your sections at the honey show.

Profits made will be donated to the club

Also Steve can make Hives or supers if anyone is interested

Anyone interested can contact Steve on

07954585019. or e-mail :: cathcook@blueyonder.co.uk

Preston Guild



Every year the WI sets its objectives to raise awareness and sometimes initiate legislative change, i.e.: the Keep Britain Tidy campaign and famously the fund raising for cancer charities with the nude calendar. The resolution passed at the 2009 AGM was the SOS for Honey Bees campaign. In fact Martha Kearney a BBC journalist and keen beekeeper writes a blog on the WI website <http://www.thewi.org.uk/> and members continue to support the honey bee in many ways.

Preston Guild is a unique celebration of heritage, people, sports, trade, arts and culture. With a history stretching back over eight hundred years to 1179, when Henry II granted a charter which empowered the Burgesses of Preston to hold a Guild Merchant. 2012 was the first Guild in the 21st century. The picture attached is a float which has been adorned by the Hoghton WI which is for those of us the uninitiated a woman's organisation which started in Canada to give mutual support to the brave pioneers who faced all sorts of trials and tribulations in the fledgling pioneer days. The WI continues to provide support to members in all sorts of ways moving away from the jam and Jerusalem image with an education centre Denman College in Oxfordshire <http://www.denman.org.uk/> Perhaps in time there could be an education session set up at Denman College by a Southern bee club that is if no one has not already thought of it!

With thanks to our member Tony and Joan Houghton



Its been a bad year for Steve Ganner. Lets hope next year is better LOL

Tips for the month.

Once the hive is full after Autumn feeding and when the rain is persistent for days on end, as it has been, I put the queen excluder on the hive, then put another hive on top minus any bees. then put the feeder on with strong sugar syrup. The bees, because it is still warm, will continue to use the feed to fill and draw out the top box foundation. Why should they sit around 24 hours a day when they can be working.

In spring, when the colonies are building up, I will have lots of drawn out frames already full to replace those emptied over winter. The hive will be full of stores and so the supers can be put on very early for the honey. Alternatively the full frames can be used for early splits, or saved to give to swarms(also helps prevent swarms absconding once hived)

For those who are uniting before winter to help weaker colonies pull through, they can leave the top hive on and get the same result; full frames for next spring.

Also

For those who normally put the extracted wet supers back on their hives to be cleaned up, consider leaving them and store them wet. It's difficult for the wax moth to walk over and therefor lay eggs in the wax. It will stimulate the spring bees and encourage the queen to lay when she thinks there's an early honey flow. Also, the bees are more inclined to pass through the excluder early on.

Steve Ganner

2012 Honey Show Samlesbury Memorial Hall

I am sure Caroline will do her report on the exhibits and prizes awarded. Needless to say there was an excellent number of entries and it was really good to see the high standards that were shown.

However it was disappointing to see the numbers who attended the lecture given by Graham Royle NDB. For the 30 or so who did come, we were enthralled by his talent as a microscopist and by the amazing detail in his pictures. For those who had not done any studying for module 5 on anatomy they had a wonderful insight into the workings of a honeybee. Graham explained everything in everyday language to make sure everyone understood although he also used proper names but not in a way to baffle beginners. He captured everyone's attention and there was no background chit chat as happens at a few lectures. I think everyone who attended came away with a much better understanding of the insect we keep.

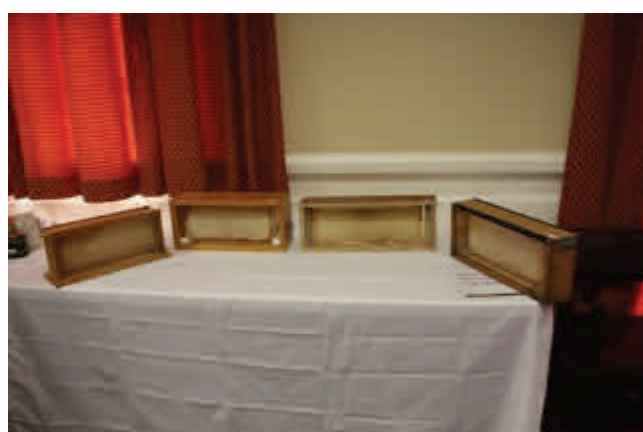
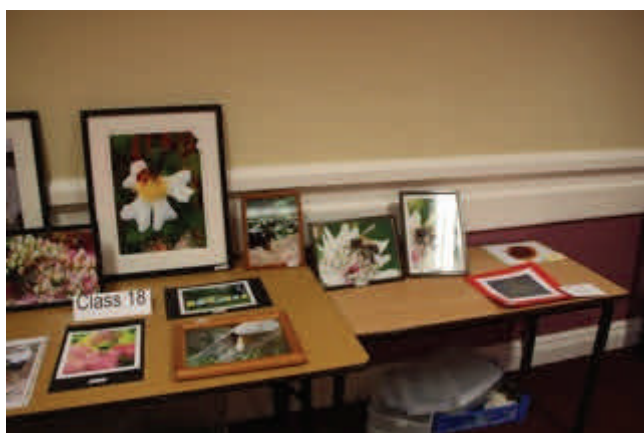
The number of people who have since emailed me wanting to learn more has been brilliant. Hopefully by the time this goes to print we will have at least one training course sorted.

I for one am looking forward to us booking Graham to come and speak to us again with one of his many and varied lectures.

John Zamorski



More Pictures of the honey show



Honey Show Results

Results not yet sent in.
Will maybe appear at another date

Gathering Honey Thai Style from the Giant Asian Honey Bee
(*Apis dorsata*)





Cooking with Honey 21st October 2012

Samlesbury Village War Memorial Hall was filled with the lovely smell of sticky ribs and other such delicious recipes using honey in them. It was such a shame that only 11 Blackburn members bothered to turn up. There was representation from other branches which boosted the numbers but it was still a very poor show.

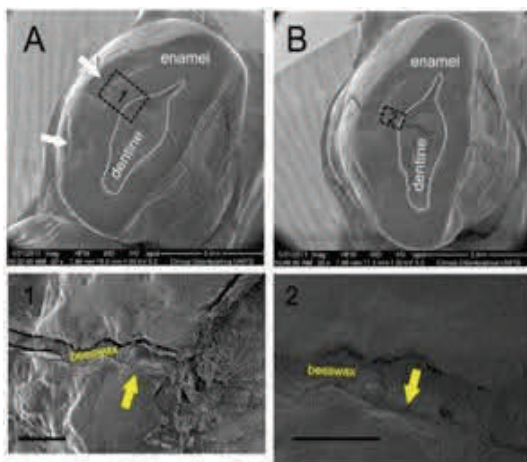
Those who came were treated to a selection of some succulent dishes both savoury and sweet cooked in front of us by Phillipa James who is the Lancashire Life Food Editor. Ably helped by her assistant Lynne, the tastings were passed round and comments made before the next dish was then prepared. Lots of useful tips were passed on and sample recipes taken home. There was plenty of wine and soft drinks and lots of tea and coffee to wash down the honey flapjacks at the end. Everyone commented at the end about how much they had enjoyed the day.

This was an extra meeting to our normal programme and obviously not about bees but it was about some useful tips on using the biggest product of the hive and I am glad I did not miss it.

Vici Winstanley



Beekeepers long ago found ways to deal with the pests of the honey bees. In this night-time apiary portrayal by Flemish artist Jan van der Straet, beekeepers use lanterns to attract and kill the nocturnal adult wax moths - circa 1590. At night the wax moths like to mate and lay eggs. Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella outlined the use of lantern light traps (bug zappers) for treating wax moth infestations circa 65-60 BC in his 'De re rustica' (Book IX). During the day beekeepers could go fishing... wax moth larvae make great fish bait: called wax worms or "waxies".



Ancient Dental Filling Was Made of Beeswax

'Beeswax as Dental Filling on a Neolithic Human Tooth'
by Bernardini, et al. 2012, PLoS ONE 7(9): e44904.
<http://www.plosone.org/article/info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0044904>

Possibly "the earliest known direct evidence of therapeutic-palliative dental filling" - and its from honey bees. Slovenia.



Ancient Dental Filling Was Made of Beeswax.

This is possibly "the earliest known direct evidence of therapeutic-palliative dental filling" - and its from honey bees in the Neolithic. This is from a human jaw uncovered in Slovenia.



John and his young helper, Sophie Rose getting stuck into the extraction of their honey

FOR THE BEGINNER

In the temperate zone (here), honey bees survive winter as a colony, and the queen begins egg laying in mid to late winter, to prepare for spring. This is most likely triggered by longer day length. She is the only fertile female, and deposits all the eggs from which the other bees are produced. Except for a brief mating period when she may make several flights to mate with drones, or if she leaves in later life with a swarm to establish a new colony, the queen rarely leaves the hive after the larvae have become full-grown bees. The queen deposits each egg in a cell prepared by the worker bees. The egg hatches into a small larva which is fed by 'nurse' bees (worker bees which maintain the interior of the colony). After about a week, the larva is sealed up in its cell by the nurse bees and begins the pupal stage. After another week, it will emerge an adult bee.

For the first 10 days of their lives, the female worker bees clean the hive and feed the larvae. After this, they begin building comb cells. On days 16 through 20, a worker receives nectar and pollen from older workers and stores it. After the 20th day, a worker leaves the hive and spends the remainder of its life as a forager. The population of a healthy hive in mid-summer can average between 40,000 and 80,000 bees. The larvae and pupae in a frame of honeycomb are referred to as frames of brood and are often sold (with adhering bees) by beekeepers to other beekeepers to start new beehives.(usually) 5 frames worth in spring to allow the colony time to build up for its first winter)

Both workers and queens are fed "royal jelly" during the first three days of the larval stage. Then workers are switched to a diet of pollen and nectar or diluted honey, while those intended for queens will continue to receive royal jelly. This causes the larva to develop to the pupa stage more quickly, while being also larger and fully developed sexually. Queen breeders consider good nutrition during the larval stage to be of critical importance to the quality of the queens raised, with good genetics and sufficient number of matings also being factors. During the larval and pupal stages, various parasites can attack the pupa/larva and destroy or damage it.e.g, varroa.

Queens are not raised in the typical horizontal brood cells of the honeycomb. The typical queen cell is specially constructed to be much larger, and has a vertical orientation. However, should the workers sense the old queen is weakening, they will produce emergency cells known as supersedure cells. These cells are made from a cell with an egg or very young larva. These cells protrude from the comb. As the queen finishes her larval feeding, and pupates, she moves into a head downward position, from which she will later chew her way out of the cell, often with the help of the workers. At pupation, the workers cap or seal the cell. Just prior to emerging from their cells, young queens can often be heard "piping". The purpose of this sound is not yet fully understood.

Worker bees are infertile females, but in some circumstances, generally only in times of severe stress or with the loss or injury or declining health of the queen, they may lay infertile eggs. However, since the worker bees are 'imperfect' females (not fully sexually developed), they do not mate with drones. Any fertile eggs they lay would be haploid, having only the genetic contribution of their mother, and in honey bees these haploid eggs will always develop into drones. Worker bees also secrete the wax used to build the hive, clean and maintain the hive, raise the young, guard the hive and forage for nectar and pollen.

In honey bees, the worker bees have a modified ovipositor called a stinger with which they can sting to defend the hive, but unlike other bees of any other genus (and even unlike the queens of their own species), the stinger is barbed. Contrary to popular belief, the bee will **NOT** always die soon after stinging: this misconception is based on the fact that a bee will usually die after stinging a human or other mammal. The sting and associated venom sac are modified so as to pull free of the body once lodged (autotomy), and the sting apparatus has its own musculature and ganglion which allow it to keep delivering venom once detached. This complex apparatus, including the barbs on the sting, is presumed to have evolved specifically in response to predation by vertebrates, as the barbs do not function (and the sting apparatus does not detach) unless the sting is embedded in elastic material. Even then, the barbs do not always "catch", so a bee may occasionally pull the sting free and either fly off unharmed, or sting again.

Drones are the male bees of the colony. Since they do not have ovipositors, they also do not have stingers. Drone honey bees do not forage for nectar or pollen. The primary purpose of a drone bee is to fertilise a new queen. Multiple drones will mate with any given queen in flight, and each will die immediately after mating; the process of insemination requires a lethally convulsive effort. Drone honey bees are haploid (having single, unpaired chromosomes) in their genetic structure and are descended only from their mother, the queen. They truly do not have a father. In essence, drones are the equivalent of flying gametes. In regions of temperate climate, the drones are generally expelled from the hive before winter and left to die of cold and starvation, since they are unable to forage, produce honey, or take care of themselves.

The average lifespan of the queen in most subspecies is three to four years. However, reports from the German/European black bee subspecies previously used for beekeeping, indicate the queen could live up to eight years. Because queens deplete their store of sperm, towards the end of their lives, they start laying more and more unfertilised eggs. Beekeepers therefore frequently change queens every year or every other year.

The lifespan of the workers varies drastically over the year in places with an extended winter. Workers born in the spring and summer will work hard and live only a few weeks, whereas those born in the autumn will stay inside for several months as the colony clusters. On average during the year, about one per cent of a colony's worker bees die naturally per day. Except for the queen, all of the colony's workers are therefore exchanged about every four months.

With thanks to Steve Ganner

Members Pictures



Lovely pictures sent in by some of our members. Please send any pictures you have taken and I will include them in future Editions. It would be lovely for the members to see . Just send them to webmaster@blackburnbeekeepers.com

After the Honey show schedule had been sent out this year, where one of the classes(Class 4) LING HEATHER honey was listed, I was asked by a couple of members what it was.This is my effort to describe it;

Ling Heather (Family ERICACE) (*Calluna vulgaris*) flowers during August/September. The pollen load is light grey in colour.

Ling heather honey is thixotropic (which means its natural state is a semi-solid liquid -jelly like) so using a centrifugal extractor is difficult in most cases. The honey can be made liquid through agitation. (Stirring)

To extract on a small scale you can use a press (like an apple press)- The easiest way is to put the cut comb into a fine muslin bag and then place in the press.

OR you can cut the comb into small blocks and jar it, filling the voids left with some of the honey extracted.

Pure pressed heather honey is identifiable by entrapped air bubbles in the jelly-like honey and has a distinctive strong smell and taste. It has a high water content (23%) , high protein and is amber in colour.

Ling Heather honey is a late crop which means it is unlikely that varroa treatment with apiguard or the likes will be possible.

Varroa treatment should therefore be by Oxalic Acid when queen ceases to lay.

After an unsuccessful attempt at getting a grant from Neal's Yard, a link provided by the BBKA, I have applied for a grant from The Lancashire County Council. Its title is;

The Green Partnership Awards (GPA)

The Partnership is committed to supporting local, community based initiatives. The group believe that by encouraging people to act locally in their own community they can improve Lancashire not only for today but also for the future. GPA assists groups to carry out projects to improve their local environment by providing funding and professional advice. Grants are available to all community groups and organisations in Lancashire and are awarded in the area of £500. It would be great if the application was successful. I have asked for money for education and training materials.

I have also applied to;
Botanical Society of The British Isles Research Grant. Whilst not exactly botanical, I thought I'd still give it a go!

Since the AGM I have been trying to make a glass sided observation hive, copied from the one I already have. It has 2 brood frames and a super.

If successful, I will make more.

If anyone is interested in buying one (don't have full costing's yet but it will be cheap) and would like to see it, tel me 07954585019 or

e mail me at cathcook@blueyonder.co.uk but put the word "bees" in the subject please

Money raised from the sales will go directly to the Blackburn club.

All the above with thanks to Steve Ganner

Here is another interesting theory if you get 5 minutes to listen to it. It's been in my Bookmarks for years and spotted it again yesterday.

Type in 'The Hibernation diet' You Tube. Whilst I have honey in my Horlicks or Ovaltine every night, I'd forgotten about this diet from Mike McInnes and his son Stuart.

This diet advocates the two things that most dieters avoid - eating at bedtime and avoiding the gym.

The hibernation diet promises to help people lose weight while they sleep.

The strategy, developed by an Edinburgh pharmacist and sports nutritionist, is said to be used by champion boxer Alex Arthur and endorsed by Olympic gold-winning cyclist Chris Hoy.

The diet, hailed as the new Atkins, advises eating a couple of teaspoons of honey before bedtime and training with weights instead of gruelling aerobic workouts.

While Mike McInnes and his son Stuart were helping athletes with nutrition, they discovered that eating fructose-rich food such as honey, helped burn fat and increase stamina.

These hormones are fuelled by fat, so rather than working to regulate blood sugar, when you eat honey before going to bed the body burns more fat.

"Take your liver to bed empty, and your body can't get to work with those hormones because it's desperately trying to sort out your blood glucose levels.

A good night's sleep is important to allow the hormones to get to work, so the diet advocates sleeping in total darkness, getting rid of electronic lights and thin curtains.

To further help your diet, you can also increase the amount of fat you burn by doing what is known as resistance exercise.

But instead of having to spend hours on the treadmill and in aerobics classes, this can be done with 15-minute weights sessions three times a week, according to the diet.

Unlike aerobic exercise, it only requires 15 minutes weight training a session to reap the benefits, Mr McInnes claims.

Chris Hoy goes to Mr McInnes for nutrition advice and started using fructose drinks to increase his endurance. Well he did alright didn't he?

Thanks again to Steve Ganner



"Next to come in was a bumble bee, a banjo buckled on his knee." Image from Frog Went A-Courtin', illustrations by Feodor Rojankovsky, retold by John M. Langstaff (1955). This story is based on a 400-year-old Scottish song:

Note that a lack of eggs in the brood chamber is not a reliable indicator of a lost queen. (And if there are no eggs in the brood chamber, are there any in the supers?)

Last year, most calls that I received were about 'lost' queens and in the vast majority of cases she was there, minding her own business. There are two common scenarios where honeybee queens might fly, firstly when a very young queen is being manipulated, and secondly, when a colony is ready for swarming. In both cases the queens are light enough to have a sufficiently high power-to-weight ratio to take off. Invariably a young non swarming fly-away queen will return after a period of time, say after 10 to 30 minutes.

If the manipulation occurs at the hive, the queen will try to return to the hive. If the manipulation occurs away from the hive (for example on a brood comb in an upturned roof well away from the hive whilst trying to mark the queen of an troublesome colony) the queen will return to the site of the manipulation.

If this occurs then leave everything exactly as it is, and wait. If you are vigilant you may well see the queen return. Check after 15-30 minutes and the queen will probably be moving around on the comb quite happily. If you move the equipment the queen may well be disorientated and get lost.

Occasionally when manipulating the queen she might appear to "die" although seemingly in good physical condition. Whilst it maybe that you have killed her, it is possible that she has for some reason simply feigned death.

Why this might happen I don't know. Maybe stress, maybe some defensive mechanism. Only the bees know.

In my experience the best thing to do is to put the queen in a Butler cage and put her back in the hive as quickly as possible. Leave for several days before further investigation. Unless I am forced to do otherwise, I leave "this year's queens" alone until the following spring by which time they will be fully hardened off and remarkably robust and heavy enough to be unable to fly. I then mark and clip. Clipping can safely be practised on drones. It needs only to be done on one wing, and only an outer portion.

For those beekeepers who lead busy lives I do believe that clipping is a very worthwhile exercise.

Clipping delays swarming, and if she goes (which won't be very far) she may well get back to the hive, to be found underneath the open mesh floor or nearby with bees fussing over her, and if she is lost you do not lose your flying bees or honey, because having realised that they have flown without their queen the swarmed bees will fly back to the hive. And you do not frighten someone with a (preventable) swarm in his or her back garden. If she is found, set up an artificial swarm with her. As a precautionary measure I would place a queen excluder between the brood chamber and the floor and leave it there until the queen had started to lay. If she is lost, reduce queen cells to one and let the colony start again.

With thanks to

Roy White

SOMERTON BEEKEEPERS NEWS

And

E-Bees

UK scientists from the University of Exeter and Food and Environment Agency highlight flaws in previous research (published in *Science*, April 2012) that predicted that neonicotinoids could cause honeybee colony collapse. Neonicotinoids are among the most widely-used agricultural insecticides and honeybees ingest residues of the pesticides as they gather nectar and pollen from treated plants.

The previous research has been cited by scientists, environmentalists and policy-makers as evidence of the future impact of these pesticides on honeybees. It is likely that the research was instrumental in the French government's recent decision to ban the use of thiamethoxam, a neonicotinoid that is the active ingredient of Cruiser OSR, a pesticide produced by the Swiss company Syngenta.

However, the new paper argues that the calculations made in the research were flawed because they failed to reflect the rate at which honeybee colonies recover from losing individuals.

The previous research, led by French scientist Mikaël Henry, showed that the death rate of bees increased when they drank nectar laced with a neonicotinoid pesticide, thiamethoxam. It calculated that this would cause their colony to collapse. The research published September 20 explains how the calculation may have used an inappropriately low birth rate.

Lead author Dr James Cresswell of the University of Exeter said: "We know that neonicotinoids affect honeybees, but there is no evidence that they could cause colony collapse. When we repeated the previous calculation with a realistic birth rate, the risk of colony collapse under pesticide exposure disappeared.

"I am definitely not saying that pesticides are harmless to honeybees, but I think everyone wants to make decisions based on sound evidence -- and our research shows that the effects of thiamethoxam are not as severe as first thought.

"We do not yet have definitive evidence of the impact of these insecticides on honeybees and we should not be making any decisions on changes to policy on their use. It is vital that more research is conducted so that we can understand the real impact of neonicotinoids on honeybees, so governments can put together a proper plan to protect them from any dangers that the chemicals pose."

Winter Tip.

A good tip for feeding your bees over the winter is to take off the crown board completely and place sugar candy on top of the frames. Put many pieces of candy all over the top of the frames so that the bees when they move around can get at the candy. Some beekeepers leave on the crown board and put one piece of candy over the slot where the porter bee escape is inserted. This is not a good idea as the bees if they cluster in the corner of the brood box will not be able to get at the sugar and could starve.

Put on an Eke (a 2 or 3 inch deep piece of wood the same size as the brood chamber) and then put on the roof. There is no need to put on a crown board as the Eke and roof will be ok and will let air through and keep out mice etc. Always make sure that the brood chamber is on an open mesh floor and that the entrance is closed down or mouse guards are in place.
Replace the candy if it is used and so keeping candy on all winter.

Candy is made up as follows.

Take 5lb or 5 pints of cane sugar, 1 pint of water, half a level teaspoon full cream of tartar.

Place water in pan and bring to boil, add sugar and cream of tartar. Boil very slowly until every grain is dissolved, then boil more briskly continually stirring until 235F is reached if a thermometer is used, or when the contents rise up in foam and bubbles.

Allow this to continue for two minutes. To test if boiled sufficiently without using a thermometer, drop a little syrup on a cool surface such as a plate. If it does not stick to the fin-gers when pressed in and withdrawn it is boiled sufficiently, but should it stick to the fingers it should be boiled again for half a minute and again tested.

Remove from fire and allow to cool. Whilst cooling the contents should not be stirred.

When the temperature reaches 137F or when a thin crust of sugar is be-ginning to form on top, it should be stirred briskly and should soon turn creamy and stiff, when it can be placed in moulds. To make good candy with a nice smooth grain, it is essential that the early part of the process be not hurried.

Another winter tip

Last Sunday the 9th Dec I opened up a strong colony and took out a frame! WHAT!!! you took a frame out when it was only 5 degrees centigrade. If we don't try it, how will we ever know whether or not there are still brood in before we pour Oxalic onto the bees? If they were treated correctly after harvesting, there should be very little Varroa.

Each year I do the same-mid Dec-I have a quick look. If no brood, they soon cluster again and I am ok to treat. BUT, I will not be treating before new year because after shaking the bees from the extracted frame (YOU SHOOK THE BEES OFF!! OH MY GOD) I found a 4 inch circle of newly laid eggs, not even started to curl. No need to look any further. Lid back on. Whole operation took 30 seconds, which is a lot quicker than treating with the drip method of Oxalic acid where the temperature loss is arguably more. I saw 100 eggs plus and I am sure there would be an equal amount on the other side of that frame, if not more on the next frame. The new eggs were NOT even in the middle of the cluster so I assume there are many more eggs. Do I want to risk killing off with Oxalic? Kill off my spring bees that will outlive the overwintered bees? I would rather risk the eggs being chilled in 10 seconds of a look. The temperature outside the hive and also on the outer shell of the cluster may be cold but the inner core is still kept warm enough for the bees to continue moving around and obviously lay. I will do the same at the end of Dec. Until we had to treat for Varroa, we didn't have to open the hives in the winter. Unless we try these things, we won't find out if there is a time during the winter when there really are ZERO brood. Last year it was colder, and it was between Christmas and New Year before I poured that dreaded liquid onto them. Who knows, I may not even have to bother if my monthly 30 second checks reveal brood each time. However, if I do decide to treat, I think it will be with the vaporisation method and if that manages to kill all the Varroa, then to gain access to my hives, they've got to get past my bloody entrance brush. HA HA HA!!

Merry Christmas to all fellow beekeepers and all the best for 2013

Steve Ganner

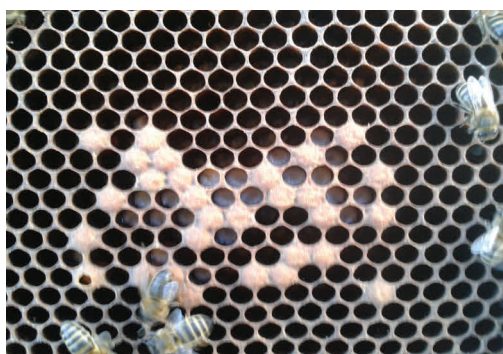


Photo of brood in what is most probably my weakest hive. Taken today 16th Dec.

Another winter tip but this time carried out in summer

Other way of controlling Varroa, but not in winter time is to treat your bees with the acid in the summer months. What do I here you say, " You cannot as there is brood in the chamber and you cannot treat with Oxalic acid when there is brood about". This is absolutely true, but you can still treat in the summer months. Below is an explanation on how to do it.

Firstly it all coincides with your swarm control and the Curry method of swarm control which I think is one of the easy ways of controlling your bees in the swarming season.

I will not go into the Curry method as its been demonstrated many times and the method is on the website. For those members who have no idea what it is I suggest you contact your mentor or ask for a demonstration at one of the meetings.

What you have when the method is done is one brood chamber with only the queen and the flying bees, no brood, eggs or larva, in other words a swarm. This can be treated within hours of carrying out the Curry method as this will give time for the flying bees to come back into the hive, so making sure that they all get treated.

What you have in the other brood chamber is either a queen cell or one that will be made so you have around 16 days before she will hatch out and then over a week before she will mate and will then start to lay.
Making a total of around 23 days.

Also you will have brood and eggs which again will be in different stages, these will all hatch out which again will take the same time it will take for the new queen to start laying.

So roughly after 3 weeks this brood chamber will be broodless and can also be treated, making both brood chambers treated in summer.

Once this is all carried out and if you then use all the other methods of Varroa control you will not need to treat in the winter.

Also remember that treating swarms, collected can also be treating in the swarming season.

Michael Birt

A few tips from members

For those who are about to buy jars for their hard earned honey this year, consider using plastic lids; same price. They can be recycled! The metal ones, once used, tend to rust on the thread after the first use. The rust occurs where the glass of the jar cuts into the varnish (that manufacturers apply to the lids) at the point the threads are made. Plastic lids are also much easier to put on the jar. Try them and you'll see. If you already have metal lids, place the lid on the jar, do a half anti clockwise turn (not you, the lid) then clockwise as normal.



Tony Hoghton will bear witness to my awful habit of losing hive tools. 5 in the last 3 years. For those who are as bad as I am, try this little cheap magnet from IKEA, as shown above. 2 small screws secure it to the side of the hive and with a waterproof plastic magnetic cover, they marry together perfectly. Simply put your hive tool up to it and no more lost tool.

Steve Ganner

NATIONAL BEE UNIT ADVISORY BOOKLETS

The NBU have updated their excellent booklets on Managing Varroa and The Small Hive Beetle. They can be downloaded free from the NBU website together with the other NBU booklets: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/index.cfm?pageid=167>. A limited number of hard copies should be available now.

BOOK REVIEW

Queen Breeding and Genetics How to get better bees - Eigil Holm
Northern Bee Books - £20 post

Although queen breeding may seem to be an advanced subject - and in many ways it certainly can be - there is plenty in this book for those who are relatively new to beekeeping.

Everyone should be producing their own queens and there are many ways to do this, from simple methods suitable for those with just a couple of hives, to ways more suited to those needing hundreds of queens. Whichever category you fall into, it is important to understand some of the principles involved in the selection of breeders and the physical methods of producing, mating and introducing queens from them.

This excellent book is a translation of the second (2009) Danish edition and is packed with the latest information, all well illustrated with clear photographs and drawings. The first eight chapters (50 pages) cover the practical aspects of the selection of breeders and the production of mated queens; they are written in an easy-to-read style and are packed with useful tips. The remainder of the book (36 pages) gives a relatively easy introduction to the genetics involved and also covers the origin of the various races of bee that we have today.

Recipe for Honey Flapjack

Honey Flapjack

450g/1lb Margarine
450g/1lb Sugar
340g/12oz Honey (can you half Golden Syrup/ Half Honey, if preferred)
900g/2lb Oats

Combine first 3 ingredients in a pan and gentle melt, add the oats and tip into lined tins and cook at 160c/gas mark 3 until golden, about 40 minutes.

This recipe came the Cooking with Honey demonstration day that Phillipa presented.

Kindly sent in by Vici Winstanley

A Thought

All my relations. I honour you in this circle of life with me today. I am grateful for this opportunity to acknowledge you in this prayer....

To the Creator, for the ultimate gift of life, I thank you.

To the mineral nation that has built and maintained my bones and all foundations of life experience, I thank you.

To the plant nation that sustains my organs and body and gives me healing herbs for sickness, I thank you.

To the animal nation that feeds me from your own flesh and offers your loyal companionship in this walk of life, I thank you.

To the human nation that shares my path as a soul upon the sacred wheel of Earthly life, I thank you.

To the Spirit nation that guides me invisibly through the ups and downs of life and for carrying the torch of light through the Ages, I thank you.

To the Four Winds of Change and Growth, I thank you.

You are all my relations, my relatives, without whom I would not live. We are in the circle of life together, co-existing,

co-dependent, co-creating our destiny. One, not more important than the other. One nation evolving from the other and yet each dependent upon the one above and the one below. All of us a part of the Great Mystery.

Thank you for this Life.

Not to much about bees but a great way to look at life Michael

Congratulations to the following members of the Blackburn and East Lancashire Beekeepers Association who were all successful in passing the Basic Assessment in 2012.'

**Eddie Jackson
Sandra Johnson
Janet Murray**

Lets hope some more of us will have a go in 2013

Beginners Tips

Once the bees have started to forage early in the year, the pollen on the legs of the returning bees will tell you it's time to look at the pattern of the brood nest and to make sure that all is well. Firstly, the smoker should be lit and going well with little likelihood of it going out in the middle of an inspection. Whether it is likely to go out depends to some extent on what fuel you use in the smoker. I find that collecting old fallen dead wood, when out walking through woodland areas, provides an adequate supply of fuel once it is dried.

Always carry a plastic bag in your pocket before such walks. Put a small handful of grass on top of the wood fuel (or in the lid) to prevent sparks being blown on to the bees. Sparks that fall on to the ground can be especially dangerous in dry weather. So long as one hive is flying well then all hives in that apiary should be examined. For inspections of the brood chamber it is wise not to smoke at the entrance as this drives the bee upwards in the hive whereas you want them below the top of the top bars of the frames. So just crack open the crown board, at one corner, and puff in a little smoke before gently twisting the crown board horizontally a few seconds later. Twisting it avoids making vibrations and noise that are likely to give the bees more warning that you are coming! None should fly up as you stand the crown board vertically against the hive stand, bees and all.

Before you stand up the crown board inspect it to make sure the queen is not on it. If she is there then you can offer her up to the entrance by sloping the crown board, upwards, to the entrance so that she can walk into the hive or alternatively hold the board so that she is on that part of the board nearest to the top bars of the frames, and a few centimetres above them. With your other hand just thump the board edge next to the hand you're using to hold the board. The queen and bees around her will fall on to the top bars. Her ladyship will quickly go down into the dark. Stand behind the hive or to one side depending on whether you have your frames the warm way (parallel to the entrance block) or the cold way. You are thus able to lift out each frame vertically.

Start slowly with the second frame from the edge of the brood chamber nearest to you, as this one is easier than the first frame, which latter is usually attached to the hive wall by more propolis or wax.

Examine carefully to ensure the queen is not on that frame before you stand it vertically near the hive entrance. If there is brood on that frame it must be examined. You now have a space within which you can lift out the next frame without rolling the bees on each other as you lift. In other words move this frame 10 mm or so towards you before lifting ... a process repeated for each subsequent frame until you reach your last frame against the hive far wall. Tilt the bottom of the frame away from you and face into the sun or best light so that you can clearly see into any cell by looking down and beyond the top bar. Be careful not to deceive yourself by reflections on the cell wall that you have an egg or young larvae in the cell, when in fact there is nothing in the cell. Eggs are roughly 2 mm long and at the bottom of the cell. Any on the sidewall of the cell spells trouble.

Next turn the frame so that you can inspect the side of the frame that was previously nearest to you. It is important to do the two sides of the frame in that order as the first side you inspected has just emerged into daylight and since queens like the dark it gives you the opportunity to spot her quickly on that side before she makes a move to the other side via the bottom bar, which is now the darker side. When turning the frame do keep the foundation in the vertical plane as you turn it over. If you are not familiar with this move ask someone to show you. This prevents any sagging of the foundation, which is quite warm and soft. Remember that you do not need to find the queen if eggs are there.

Remember that the brood nest is in reality a small sphere about the shape of a football. In the early part of the season five or so frames will divide it. Each roughly circular patch of brood will have eggs around the periphery followed by increasingly larger larvae as hatched eggs are found as you eye moves towards the centre of the patch. In the centre you will observe patches of sealed larvae.

As you work across the frames of the brood nest the circles of brood will increase in size with a similar smooth pattern, and then decrease as you reach the far frames of the brood nest. The main difference being that some of the sealed larvae nearest to the centre will have hatched. You will possibly see bees about to emerge after 21 days from the time the egg was laid. At this stage if there is nothing untoward that has been observed you need to go no further.

Close up the frames and replace the first frame, which has been standing near the hive entrance throughout your examination. Replace the crown board by placing it initially so that its corners are halfway between the corners of the brood chamber and then rotating it alternately back and forth, in small amounts, until it arrives in its correct position. This minimises the chance of squashing bees. A bit of smoke at this time helps to keep the bees down before you finally twist the crown board back into position. Squashing bees is unnecessary and results in spreading disease if it's there, as well as releasing sting pheromone.

Care and steady handling results in quiet bees for the whole season.

It has been my observation that beginners tend not to use enough smoke in order to keep the bees below the top bars when doing inspections. As you gain experience you will learn how to use the minimum of smoke to control your bees and to smoke just before you lift out the frame.

Finally, if anything seems not to be correct, for example dead larvae or larvae lying in unnatural positions, then do call in your mentor or one of the ministry disease officers.

With thanks to Essex BKA and e-bees

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