



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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Registered Charity

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Editor: Bill Ainsworth 296 Scotland Road Nelson phone 01282 614015

email:- bill@scotland1.free-online.co.uk

Assistant: Arthur Bickerstaffe phone 01282 695560 e.mail:- arthurbick@btinternet.com

Editorial

JUNE 2005

APOLOGIES

Let me get the bad news over first. Apologies to about 25 members who had to make do with a very inferior printed Bee Talk in March. Also whilst I'm at it, I'm afraid this issue will be a week or so late in publication. All due to events beyond our control as they say!

Good news for Blackburn beekeepers, our Secretary John Zamorski has been appointed Vice Chairman of the County Association. This should keep us well informed as to what is happening both in the County and the Country. Congratulations to John from us all!

HOLDEN CLOUGH

David Rayner is back from his Adventures in New Zealand and has picked up the reins as manager of Holden Clough again. He has all ready agreed to give us the low down on what it is like to work on a commercial honey farm that produces tons of honey. The idea is for him to talk to us at the meeting at my apiary Nelson Hodge Hut 24th July.

We are still not as organised at Holden Clough as we should be, no doubt David being away over the Spring period has not helped, but there is a lot more to it than that. No matter what we decide it never seems to get done. "We" are the duty men plus the manager and maybe this is where the problem lies. This arrangement is the way Ken Preedy set it up. For reasons best known to himself Ken did not want the Apiary locked in with The Blackburn Beekeepers Committee. Is it time things were changed? Should we have a proper Committee set up to organise it? Some thing needs to be done. How about some constructive comments from the membership.

COMMITTEE

Since our last issue there has been a lot of chopping and changing about with your committee. So take a good look at the changes and who is who. If I have got telephone numbers wrong let me know ASAP. All the info. you should need with regards to committee dates events etc. is on pages 18 and 19.

Visits to the monthly meetings so far have been good. The Holden Clough visit was very well received, the bees were opened and manipulations carried out. A talk and a jolly good discussion was carried out at the same time up at the house, with every one having a say. All was rounded off with a splendid tea and cakes.

SHOOK SWARM

The event at our Chairman's home was very dramatic. A shook swarm! It all went well and was fully explained and fully discussed by the meeting. We all look forward to the results, with fingers crossed. We again finished with tea and cakes, what a lucky lot we are.

MY APIARY

Sunday the 24th of July is the meeting at my apiary at Hodge Hut Holland Close Nelson. If you are coming from the Colne end. Take the M62. Exit junction 13. First left is Reedyford Rd. 2nd left is Holland Close there is plenty of parking space.

From Burnley Exit junction 13 go right round and under the motor way. First left is Reedyford Rd. second left is Holland Close. Hope to see as many of you as possible!

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'

HISTORY

As the new beekeeping season gets into full swing. Be minded of the various threats to your colonies such as varroa, AFB, Viral problems and so on.

IN THE 17TH CENTURY

In earlier times, bee diseases were equally worrying. Let us look at the advice given by John Evelyn the English diarist and man of affairs who lived from 1620 to 1706. Writing on bees in his 'Elysium Britannicum' he had this to say:

"The enemies of bees are very many, and some sicknesses are also obnoxious too, especially the roots and the flux. The vermin which haunt them must be taken. Their maladies are discovered best by their looks and mortality, and much remedied by the perfumes of Galbanum and ox-dung. But of this see Columella.



COW DUNG

If (as sometimes) the bees fight, then fling dust amongst them, sweet water or beer which will make them all smell alike and reconcile them. The punctures and stinging of bees is cured by their own honey, by juice of mallows, by cow-dung mixed with vinegar."

There is a lot in this short statement by Evelyn. Even in the 17th. century, they still looked to Roman times over a 1000 years previously for advice as in his reference to Columella, yet on the other hand, he knew of the worth of disguising hive odour so that bees would not fight, which several hundred years later, we still carry out, even though we are still in much ignorance upon the subject. On this point our knowledge is hardly in advance of Evelyn's. (I wouldn't waste beer on them though). Finally,

John Evelyn and many other early writers on bee matters seemed to have a belief in the wonders of dung. Perhaps this is knowledge that we in our modern world have lost! **Ed.**

HEAT TREATMENT OF VARROA

Heat-treating of sealed brood provides an effective treatment against the varroa mite. This treatment can be carried out in a thermostatically controlled box. In Germany a number of products have been developed specifically for this treatment, e.g. "Apitherm". In order to obtain the best results (close to 100% mortality of mites) and to create the least damage to brood, frames should be treated for three to four hours at 44°C, depending on the apparatus in use.

Treatment should be carried out two or more times over the period in which brood are present. If one chooses to treat twice, then the first at the end of May and the second at the end of July would be appropriate.

DRIVING BEES



If you can drive cattle why not drive bees? Some time ago when Michael Costello decided to go and settle in Italy he said to me "I have a skep full of bees, would

you like it for the association apiary? As I refuse nothing but blows, I was duly presented with a beautiful skep, made by Michael himself, and a little hive like structure to keep the rain off - brilliant!!

Hold on though! How do you check a skep for varroa or any disease for that matter? How do you put Bayvarol strip in? How can swarming be predicted?

So the thing to do is keep the skep at my apiary until I find out how to manage it then take it to Holden Clough for every one to see and wonder at.

I never did learn to manage it! I offered it to John Zamorski who said he would take it and sort it out, but he never came for it, he must be brighter than me!

The thing to do in this situation was to DRIVE the bees out of the skep and into a standard hive okay!

Right! Up end the skep in a bucket (I've read about it in books. Children used to do it in the olden times, so I can't see why I can't do it). Put a box on top with some combs in, get two sticks and drum the bottom of the skep and all the bees run up into the box of combs. That's all there is to it. However, what it doesn't say in the book is, should you bang it like a big drum or rattle it like a kettle drum.

After half an hour my arms were dropping off and my well known patience slipping.

At this stage I thought it was time to have a look. Raising the cloth that I was using to join the skep to the box of frames, I was disappointed to find the box of frames empty of bees, but the bees were certainly on the move a column was on its way from the skep to the box so re-wrapping the cloth, I gave it another quarter hour of kettle drumming.

By this time I was really 'fed up'. Taking the cloth away and removing the box, which I was now confident would be full of bees. But, disappointment! There were very few in there, but the slow moving column was still in formation and on the move. Now I could also see there weren't many bees in the skep - most were in the moving column, but just not sufficient bees to justify all the work I was getting involved in.

Really cheesed off by now, I took the skep in both hands and banged it face down on the box, hi presto! they were now all in the box just were I wanted them. Being such a small amount I threw them into another stock with a squirt of scented water to stop them fighting. If there was a queen in there they would just have to sort it out.

Now I could cut the comb from the skep, what few bees still left were brushed off then, in with the others.

That was the job done with the thought - "Never again"! Skep beekeeping is not for me. It could be successful, but would need to be a very different set up to what I have been used to.

I got just four jars of honey for my labours. But it was a 'nice honey'.

I read some where that Herrod Hempsall used to demonstrate skep driving, around 1890, with a big stock it took him about twenty minutes. I don't think I have made any progress at all.

Bill Ainsworth.

SWARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Snelgrove's book, "Swarming, it's Control and Prevention" was written in 1934. The research that provided the raw material for this book was carried out in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Snelgrove was a Somerset beekeeper, so his observation applied to that area. i.e. generally warmer and therefore the bees development would be earlier than East Lanc's.

TIME TO START

The main flow at that time was for a four week period commencing mid June, assume white clover. Therefore, swarming would decimate stocks before the main honey flow started. However, provided sufficient room was given, he maintained his stocks would not raise queen cells until the end of May early June. He suggested the time to start his swarm control method was the last week in May, i.e. before queen cells appeared.

EAST LANC'S

Compare these facts with the situation we are experiencing on the ground to-day in the East Lanc's area. Bees swarming in early May are reported most years with large numbers of swarms by mid-May. If

we assume our weather is two to three weeks behind Somerset, they must be experiencing swarms even earlier.

THE LAST TEN YEARS

Obviously these changes have not occurred gradually, because when I first moved to East Lanc's in the early 1980s swarming was not normally a problem until late May. However the situation has certainly changed over the last ten years, making previous guidance on swarm prevention timing invalid.

What does all the above mean in practice. Well if your swarm control method needs action before queen cells are raised, I'm suggesting you should apply it at the beginning of May for our area. Whether continuing climate change, will cause us, to revise these timings, only time will tell.

Summarising, the bees are probably breeding throughout the winter now, resulting in much earlier development. Therefore swarm control timetables have got to be brought forward. As stated above, I suggest early May.

Ken Gaiger June 2004

PROPOLIS

Propolis is the substance which can at times be regarded by beekeepers as something of a nuisance, but is now being championed as something of a miracle. The list of uses in treating medical conditions is long. From muscular pain, arthritis and rheumatism to skin complaints, eczema, psoriasis, burns and also wound dressings. Internally used for boosting the immune system, even gastro-intestinal problems and blood disorders are among the many problems that propolis can benefit.

A very important use for propolis may be in the fight against M.R.S.A. (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus), something that is very topical at the moment. In 1990 Grange and Davey at the National Heart and Lung Institute published a piece of research showing that at a dilution of 1:20 propolis completely inhibits the growth of M.R.S.A.

From Scottish Beekeeper, courtesy of B.E.E.S

QUEENS, POOR MATING AND LAYING.

PROBLEMS

Like a lot of other beekeepers I have had problems recently in getting queens mated and laying. There seem to be many reasons but few explanations. I have had poor matings with queens laying a high proportion of drones in worker cells, no mating at all eventually resulting in drone layers, and total queenlessness. The surprising thing is that in most cases there is evidence of queens having emerged from the cells, as they have not been broken down by the bees as one would expect if there was no viable queen inside.

FAILURE RATE

On several occasions I have left what have appeared to be good queen cells, yet they do not result in the laying queens that one would expect. I have not kept records but the failure rate must be in the region of 30%, where in the past it was very unusual to have any failures at all. I recently spoke to one man who normally raises a lot of queens, and he said his failure rate was 50%. I have been told that beekeepers in Denmark are having the same problem. I suspect it is very widespread.

PUNCHED CELL METHOD

What is going wrong? It does not seem to matter if the cells are swarm, emergency, or artificial cells. They still result in failure. When raising queens myself my

preference is for the punched cell method and the "take" has still been very good. If there was a problem with the larvae the bees would have rejected them at an early stage.

Due to the problems, where there is little chance of the colony swarming I have on occasions left several cells as an insurance just in case there was a problem inside the cell.

DEAD CELLS

I have noticed two things. Firstly on occasions the contents of some cells have obviously died, decomposed and gone black, and secondly on a couple of occasions I have seen a small group of bees outside a hive with a virgin queen that only has wings on one side. I have assumed that might have been deformed wing virus, although the workers haven't shown this. Are queens more susceptible?

At our Divisional apiary we are hoping to raise queens in serious numbers next year in order to try to improve the quality of the members' bees, and it would be helpful to overcome this problem. Has anyone got any suggestions please?

Roger Patterson

Courtesy of BBKA News, and BEES

(I reported this sort of thing happening, in the last issue of Bee Talk. I'm still no wiser Ed.)

GOING BACK TO THE PAST

Personal hygiene left much room for improvement. As a result many women and men had developed acne scars by adulthood. The women would spread bee's wax over their facial skin to smooth out their complexions. When they were speaking to each other, and another woman began to stare at a woman's face, she was told to "mind your own bee's wax". Should the woman smile, the wax would crack, hence the term "crack a smile". Also when they sat too close to the fire, the wax would melt and this gave rise to the expression "losing face".
(and the moon really is made of green cheese. Asst Ed.)

NATIVE BLACK BEES

WELSH BLACK BEES

The first survey of bees ever carried out in Britain has established that Wales has a unique bee. It's almost completely black and is the last survivor of the original British bee, once thought to have been wiped out by disease a century ago. Welsh beekeepers have known about the Welsh black bee for as long as they have kept bees, and survey co-ordinator Robert Jones has proved that it is a race apart.



The beekeeper, school teacher and master carpenter from Clunderwen now wants to create a kind of bee reserve where the strain can be protected from dilution by foreign intruders. And he is already some way towards achieving his aim. On a strip of land 10 miles wide from St. Davids to Cardigan, he can think of only two beekeepers who have not taken part in his survey and joined his campaign to promote the native bee.

A KEEN EYE

Farming depends on bees to pollinate plants and the native bee thrives in this climate better than any other," he says. Robert uses the principles of Charles Darwin and the keen eye of a Welsh farmer in his bee-keeping. "My father Granville Jones was a sheep breeder who showed all over Britain and I was brought up with those sort of people. "I remember going with my father and his friend John Cilowen to a field of about 50 sheep and they could not only tell each one apart, but they knew their breed lines."

Robert can do the same with bees. He can even walk round an apiary of 50 or more hives and pick out the ones that are nearest to pure Welsh Blacks just by the way they behave. He says it's all done by observation, and that's where Darwin comes in. "Darwin set the

standard of what scientists should do. He observed practically. He did not sit in a laboratory. He walked as well as talked, and if you don't do both, you shouldn't bother." Robert says all British bees were originally black, but cross-breeding by well intentioned apiarists over the years has diluted the strain and created fiercer bees that perform less well in Welsh conditions.

"A lot of scientists say that the native British bee died out at the beginning of the last century from what was called the Isle of Wight disease. "No survey was done at the time and the pronouncement was made by about five scientists mainly based in the South of England. "Most of Wales was still basically subsistence farming and there were no commercial beekeepers here. Most of the commercial hives had bees that were crossed and the disease wiped nearly all of them out, so it was assumed that all British bees were finished." Bee magazines at the time ran several letters from enthusiasts saying that their bees were fine, but no-one listened. The black bee was declared dead.

LOCAL BEES ARE BEST

Robert started keeping bees 35 years ago as a boy of 14 and has experimented widely with the Italian and Carniolan strains popular with some breeders. "Local bees were always far better than anything imported," he says. "It's obvious really. Wild bees can survive the winter, but imported bees need to be fed syrup to get through."

His methods can be brutal. When a friend died and left him 26 hives, only 14 survived the first winter because Robert did not feed them. "The Italian bee eats itself out of home because it's in a strange land. Welsh bees still collect as much, but eat much less." It is basic Darwinian theory - a species adapts to its surroundings and if you take it out of its native habitat it struggles to survive.

"Bees that are true natives will have evolved over the centuries to survive the climate here in Wales," he says. "Finding bees that are thrifty and survive the winter on little stores without feeding, will be beneficial to all beekeepers."

DOCILE

There is one other piece of good news. The true native bee is docile and easy to work with. Robert says he has never been stung by a Welsh black, but crossbred bees can be vicious. "These Welsh black are the most docile bees I have ever encountered. I never get stung. But I have never been in an Italian or Carniolan apiary and not got stung."

Robert Jones, who is vice chairman of the Welsh Bee keepers Association, is inviting every bee keeper in Wales to send him samples of their bees. They should collect about 30 worker bees from one hive in a matchbox labelled with hive identification and location, name address, post code and telephone number. They should be placed in a deep freeze before being sent to Robert at Myrtle House, Rock Terrace, Clunderwen SA66 7NA.

Robert, who teaches design and technology at Ysgoly Preseli, coordinates the survey with A-level students who carry out computer assessments and produce a final portfolio as part of the key skills curriculum. A data sheet is produced from each specimen, and is available to the beekeepers who provide samples. Identification is initially made by a painstaking study of the bee's right wing. The second stage of the survey involves DNA analysis - and it is this that has shown that the Welsh bees are unique to the British Isles.

Article from The Western Mail Aug. 17th 2004 by Steve Dube,

Courtesy of BEES

THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

SWARMS

Once again we are in the swarming season and we must be alert to ensure we do not lose our bees or upset the neighbours. If you do get swarms and don't need them please make sure you let someone on the committee know because we have a lot of members this year who are needing bees.

TOWNELEY HALL

June 26th sees yet another Annual Open Day at Towneley Hall so make sure you come and support the people who put in so much work in promoting our hobby to the general public.

VICE CHAIR

In early April I was elected as Vice Chairman of Lancashire Central Council BBKA, so I will be spending more time attending County meetings. Anyone who would like to make any comments to put forward please let me know and I will pass them on.

COUNTY HONEY SHOW

I hope that our branch will make an effort to enter the County Honey Show this year. We have one of the biggest memberships in the County, but field very few entries in the County honey show. I have offered to host the County Show next year at Castle Cement in Clitheroe. So I will need your support.

NEW MEMBERS

For all the new members out there, remember we were all beginners once and needed to ask lots of questions. Don't feel embarrassed about asking what you think is a silly question. There are a lot of silly answers in this wonderful hobby.

Good luck with the season and I'll see you at Towneley Hall

John Zamorski Hon. Sec.

RESEARCH NEWS

WEED DEFIES GENETIC THEORY

Genetics is a subject very dear to the average bee breeder's heart, but if you think you knew all about genetics, read this.

Gregor Mendel described our universally accepted laws of inheritance in the mid 1800s and according to these 'Mendelian' laws, our characteristics are determined by unique units of inheritance that are passed on intact from one generation to another. Or are they? Scientists at the Purdue University in the USA have discovered that the classic rules do not apply to a tiny weed called *Arabidopsis thaliana* which has bypassed genetic abnormalities carried by both parents and reverted to normal traits from the grandparents. One of the molecular geneticists at the university, Robert Pruitt explained that this means that inheritance can happen more flexibly than we thought in the past, and that while our school lessons on Mendel's laws remain sound, they are not absolute.

They believe that if this mechanism is discovered in animals, they may be able to use gene therapy to treat diseases in plants and humans.

The scientists found that if they took a mutant *Arabidopsis* which has two copies of the altered gene, let it seed and then plant the seeds, 90% of the offspring will look like the plant but 10% will resemble the normal grandparents. They say that this challenges everything that they believed in.

HONEY & CALCIUM

A new study conducted at Purdue University showed that consuming honey along with supplemental calcium enhanced calcium absorption in rats. In addition, the absorption of calcium was increased as the amount of honey

was increased. The study, led by Dr. Berdine Martin of Purdue University, was presented at the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology meeting this month in San Diego.

"Many adults struggle to get the recommended amounts of calcium in their daily diet," said Dr. Katherine Beals, nutrition consultant to the National Honey Board. According to the recently released US Surgeon General's Report on Bone Health and Osteoporosis "By 2020, half of all American citizens older than 50 will be at risk for fractures from osteoporosis and low bone mass if no immediate action is taken by individuals at risk, health care professionals, health systems, and policy makers." Osteoporosis is often referred to as a "silent" disease because many of those afflicted are completely unaware that they suffer from it. In fact, four times as many men and three times as many women have osteoporosis than report it.

One of the key strategies for reducing the likelihood of developing low bone mass (and subsequent osteoporosis) is to consume the recommended amounts of calcium. It is also important that the calcium consumed be absorbed by the body.

Dietary factors that have been shown to enhance the absorption of calcium include vitamin D and the sugars found in honey, specifically glucose, fructose and raffinose, may enhance calcium absorption. "Although this study was done with rats, the preliminary results are very compelling," said Dr. Beals. "Of course we would have to replicate the experiment in a human sample to see if the same holds true for people."

courtesy of Apis UK on the internet.

<http://www.beedata.com/apis-uk/newsletters04/index.htm>

THE WILLIE SHEPHERD METHOD

This article was taken from a 1976 issue of 'The Scottish Beekeeper'. For those who, like me, have difficulty in finding the Queen it could be a Godsend. I shall certainly get a tube and a board made up just in case. Ed



SWARM CONTROL

To remove some of the disadvantages of the Snelgrove plan, the late Willie Shepherd, of Newton Mearns, and founder of the Beekeepers' Club, in Glasgow, now sadly defunct, developed what is known as the "shepherd" method of swarm control.

A TRIAL

Willie lectured all over the country with sincerity and enthusiasm but some how apart from a few enthusiasts, his method never gained any real popularity. A good case can be made out for giving his brain child a fair, unbiased trial under experimental conditions, mainly because of it's inherent simplicity.

WILLIE'S PLAN

Willie's plan differed from Snelgrove's in that he eliminated the need for the three pairs of openings and at the same time the need for the opening and closing sequence by using a telescopic tube to drain the bees from the upper box to the lower one. The top of the tube was

pressed into a five eights inch hole drilled in the top cleat of the board, the other end was kept free of the hive wall and terminated a half inch above the hive entrance.

DOING IT

To put the plan into operation there is no need to find the queen; a bonus to those who have difficulty in finding queens. Set the hive slightly to one side and rebuild as follows:-

- 1 Floor board;
- 2 Box with combs containing no unsealed larvae, eggs, or queen cells
- 3 Queen excluder;
- 4 Supers;
- 5 Board with one inch of queen excluder uncovered; screen off remainder with perforated zinc. Put tube in position;
- 6 Box with the rest of the combs, larvae, eggs and food;
- 7 Provide water and ventilation.

THE QUEEN

We quote now: "If the queen is in the bottom box, the brood nest will be developed there; Queen cells will be started in the top box. The first young queen to emerge will, after killing her rivals, go down the tube to the bottom box and generally supersede the queen.

If the queen is in the top box, by means of the tube the pressure will be removed, the drones extracted, and no swarming will occur; The queen can be put down later, on the comb which she is on."

The originator was of the opinion that the principle would work anywhere, with, perhaps slight variations. .

KASHMIR BEE VIRUS IN THE UK

Kashmir Bee Virus has been confirmed in three colonies, in Urmston, Manchester and just outside Hull. The colonies are reported to be in a normal condition for the time of the year and it is thought that the virus has been present for a considerable time. There are no links to imported bees or migratory beekeeping.

Field Symptoms

There is no prescribed set of symptoms confirming KBV in the field. Definitive diagnosis is carried out in the laboratory through Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) analysis. However, beekeepers may observe various symptoms that may point to viral infection. These include:

- Weakening of the colony without any apparent presence of brood diseases and mites.
- Increasing numbers of dead or dying bees on the inner cover, landing board or in front of the hive. Dying bees may be trembling and display uncoordinated movement.
- Affected bees are partly or completely hairless where the upper surface of the thorax is especially dark.
- Older adult bees have a greasy or oily appearance while recently emerged bees may appear opaque as if pigmentation of the tissue had not been completed prior to emergence.

To minimize the impact of KBV and other viral infections:

- Reduce stress to bees by applying good management practices.
- Provide plenty of food stores, especially pollen.
- Keep mite levels low through frequent monitoring and applying mite control products when necessary.
- Apply hygienic management practices in the apiary.

Keeping varroa mites at the lowest possible number is the most important thing we can do to keep all virus disease at a minimum , this and new comb should keep our bees healthy and happy

WE SHOULD DO BETTER.

Looking into quite a number of hives this last month or so, I have found far too much old black comb about the place. In the old days ,old comb was treasured as a good basis for a swarm or giving more room to a stock, leaving the bees to collect and store honey in the supers, rather than use the honey or nectar to build comb. Times change, with all the virus that we have about, we need to be a lot more concerned to keep the bees on clean comb. After all in the wild the bees produced new comb every time they swarmed. Even if they did not swarm often they would extend the nest and leave old comb if it was possible.

I have been as responsible for old comb as anyone, but it is time we all changed our ways. I know full well the difficulty and mess it is cutting out the old comb from the frames. I cannot offer a brilliant way of doing this, just scraping away with an old knife is the only thing I can suggest (perhaps there is some one out there who can give us some help here) we must, nevertheless, get new comb into the hives and do it this year. **Bill**



READERS' TIPS.

TAKE A PICTURE WITH YOU

If you are like me, when faced with a problem at the apiary, your head empties itself of all relevant information that you ought to know. When you are at the apiary your bee-books are of little use on the bookshelf at home, so why not copy essential information out of them? Practical illustrations on swarm procedure, photos of disease, pictures of the age of larvae, gestation periods etc. Put fablon over them or better still get them laminated and keep them in your kit.

TAKE NOTES

Keep notes of what is going on in each hive, the action you have taken and what you plan to do next. Otherwise you may have forgotten by your next visit and you end up leaving the bit of kit you need at home. Notes such as Hive 2: Did not see the queen but there are plenty of eggs and capped brood on 8 frames. Half the first super is filled and capped. Three queen cells with eggs in. Must do artificial swarm next time, etc. This will really help your beekeeping.

TAKE A FRAME CLEANER

Cleaning up old frames and replacing old brood with new foundation can be made easier by using a frame cleaner. This is a gadget which is used for cleaning out the grooves on the side bars, which get left filled with wax when the old comb is removed. They can be purchased from Beekeeping suppliers for about £5.00.

If you want to save a fiver take an old screwdriver, a small one with a 3mm blade. Put the screwdriver in a vice and bend it about 10 to 12mm from the end of the blade. Bend it so it is at right angles. You now have a gadget that you can hold easily in your hand and scrape out the wax from the grooves

Thanks to Gordon Hartshorn & Steve Watkins Shropshire beekeepers. Via BEES

A BEE JOKE?

A bloke starts his new job at the zoo and is given three tasks.

First is to clear the exotic fish pool of weeds. As he does this a huge fish jumps out and bites him. To show who is boss he beats it to death with a spade.

Realising his employer won't be best pleased he disposes of the fish by feeding it to the lions, as lions will eat anything.

Moving on to the second job of clearing out the Chimp house, he is attacked by the chimps who pelt him with coconuts. He swipes at two chimps with a spade killing them both. What can he do? Feed them to the lions, he says to himself, because lions eat anything. He hurls the corpses into the lion enclosure.

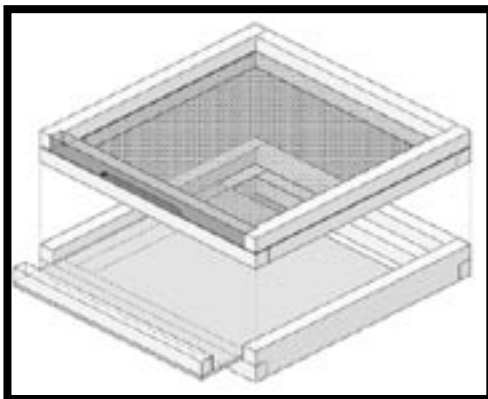
He moves on to the last job which is to collect honey from the South American Bees. As soon as he starts he is attacked by the bees. He grabs the spade and smashes the bees to a pulp. By now he knows what to do and throws them into the lions cage because lions eat anything.

Later that day a new lion arrives at the zoo. He wanders up to another lion and says "What's the food like here?" The lions say: "Absolutely brilliant, today we had Fish and Chimps with Mushy Bees."

OPEN MESH FLOOR WITH REMOVABLE TRAY

Dimensions have not been included... make to suit the size of equipment that you use. This version is drawn as two separate components, a "normal" mesh floor and a tray stage that can be placed underneath. Suitable strips of planed timber are readily available from DIY stores or woodworkers' suppliers.

Although I have drawn galvanised 8 mesh, other metal screens are suitable, providing the mesh is not large enough to admit bees or wasps. The Plywood that is used for the tray itself should be 9 mm in thickness (thinner material warps and sags). The under rim of the upper component should be made first, gluing and screwing the corners.



The mesh should be stapled in each corner and along the exposed front edge, then the upper rim parts are added using 38 mm woodscrews through the bottom rim into the top parts so that the heads of the countersunk screws are underneath.

The tray stage can be made in a similar fashion using broader strips for the tray to rest on. An entrance block of 421 mm x 21 mm x 21 mm (Thorne's size) has been drawn, but you will need to use whatever size fits your hive type

The version, as drawn, is simple to make. Lubricate the edges of the sliding tray with petroleum jelly to make it easy to remove.

UNITING A SUPER OF HONEY AND BEES

Sometimes in the summer we find one colony building up more quickly than another. The underdeveloped colony can be given a boost from a strong colony, by removing a super of honey and bees from the strong colony and adding it to the weaker one. Take a crown board and cover up the porter bee escape holes with a thin piece of plywood which has an 8 mm. hole drilled in it, the hole being over the central porter bee escape hole. Assuming both colonies are in the same apiary and are near to each other.:

- (a) Take the roof off each colony and lightly smoke.
- (b) Remove the crown board from the weak colony (shaking off all the bees) and replace it with the modified crown board with the 8 mm hole.
- (d) From the stronger colony, gently take a super containing honey and bees and place on top of the modified board.
- (e) Replace roofs and crown boards on top of both colonies. Leave for a few days, then remove modified crown board.

The bees can only unite by passing through the 8 mm hole, which allows room for 2 bees at a time, thus creating a slow mingling of the bees, as the bees below enter the super when they smell the honey. Because of the slow mingling there is no fighting. Also very few bees from the super return to their original hive.

This idea came from Dave Cushman of BIBBA.

Standard reply from Lord Whitty Minister for Food, Farming and Sustainable Energy to the letters we have sent to our MPs

DEFRA

Firstly I should say that DEFRA recognises the important role of honey bees for the pollination of commercial crops and wild plants, as well as honey production, and we take very seriously the threat to honey bee colonies from pests and diseases.

We also appreciate that the fragmented nature of the sector makes concerted bee health action difficult without Government intervention. That is why each year, Defra spends about £1.2M on a range of bee health measures. These include:

1. Enforcement of statutory disease controls under the provisions of national bee health legislation and EC veterinary checks Directives.
2. Assisting the beekeeping sector to become more self-reliant in controlling serious bee diseases through the provision of information on disease outbreaks and training and guidance to beekeepers to help them improve bee husbandry.
3. Researching more effective control methods and diagnostic techniques.

4. Supplying data to Defra to enable informed decisions to be made about UK bee health policy.

In addition to funding the NBU, Defra is spending some £240k per annum on research and development to support bee health work.

However, recently Defra undertook a review of its activities. The review identified the NBU as an area where savings could be made and I have asked officials to achieve a 20% cut in costs by March 2008 which will produce a saving of £250k per year.

Through the R&D programme mentioned above we have learnt a great deal about Varroosis and EFB. A lot of work is continuing to develop effective treatments and to train beekeepers to identify and manage outbreaks at an early stage. As a result, we believe it is now realistic to ask bee keepers to take a greater degree of responsibility for the control of these diseases.

In the case of Varroa, it is now generally accepted that statutory enforcement is no longer necessary. We have therefore informed beekeepers that we plan to amend the legislation in 2005 to remove Varroosis from the list of notifiable diseases.

ARE YOU AT RISK?

The treasurer reminds everyone who has not paid their subs that these were due last November.

No subscription means no membership certificate which means you are not covered for third party insurance which is included with your subscription.

If renewal is not received before March 31st. then insurance cover will not begin until forty days have past from the date of renewal.

PLEASE RENEW NOW !

BEAUTY TIPS



We all know that protecting ourselves from the sun is very important, so here's some good news you can use. Honey may help us in the fight against the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) rays. Studies have revealed that honey has

significant natural antioxidant properties. Antioxidants play a role in protecting the skin from the damage of UV rays and aiding in skin rejuvenation. Prolonged exposure to the sun's UV radiation can cause skin damage, premature ageing, and even skin cancer.

The Cosmetics Toiletries and Fragrance Association says that because chemical and physically opaque sunscreens can cause skin irritation, companies are researching the use of antioxidants anti-irritants and moisturizers in sun care products. Because of honeys' great ability to maintain the skin's moisture and not irritate the skin, it has the potential to be used for these products.

According to Janice Cox, author of *Natural Beauty at Home*, Honey's antimicrobial properties make it useful for the treatment of minor acne flare-ups. Also, unlike some acne treatments, honey doesn't dry the skin.

Honey is a natural way to care for your skin and hair. Try these home recipes to save the money you spend on expensive beauty products.

HAIR CONDITIONER

Mix 1/2 cup Honey with 1/4 cup olive oil. Use 2 tablespoons for normal to oily hair. Using a small amount at a time, work mixture through hair until coated. Cover hair with a shower cap and leave on 30 minutes. Shampoo well and rinse; dry as usual.

SOOTHING SKIN CLARIFIER (FOR MINOR ACNE)

Mix 1/2 cup warm water with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Using a cotton ball apply directly to blemishes. Maintain pressure with cotton ball for several minutes to soften blemishes. Using a cotton swab, dab honey on blemishes. Leave on 10 minutes; rinse and pat dry.

SKIN SOFTENING BATH

Add 1/4 cup honey to bath water for a fragrant "soaky" bath.

FACE MASK

Whisk 1 tablespoon honey, 1 egg white, 1 teaspoon glycerin (available at drug and beauty stores), and enough flour to form a paste. Smooth over face and throat. Leave on 10 minutes; wash off with warm water.

MILK AND HONEY LOTION

Instant conditioner and refresher.

1/4 cup milk or cream

1/4 cup honey

Mix milk (or cream) and honey in a small glass or enamel pan. Warm until the honey melts, then remove from heat. When it is cool enough to tolerate, apply to face and neck (or your entire body if you have time). Let it stand for 15 minutes, then rinse or shower off with warm water. The mix can be made in larger quantities, and it will keep for a week if refrigerated.

HONEY AND EGG MASK

For dry skin.

1 tablespoon powdered milk

1 stiffly-beaten egg white

1 egg yolk

1 teaspoon honey

Combine milk and egg white. Slowly mix in egg yolk and honey. Apply to face. Leave on for 5 minutes; rinse.

FOR ALL YOUR BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES

Contact

Judith David

agent for

Thornes Beekeeping Equipment

Hoarstones, Fence

BURNLEY BB1 2 9EA

'phone 01282 693330

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THE ITALIAN CONNECTION JENI'S JOTTINGS MAY 3RD 2005

DANDELIONS

It's Dandelion time! The meadows are awash with yellow and the Sun has at last been shining - good for the bees, as they have had a long cold Winter again and quite a few stocks didn't make it.

DEEP SNOW

After my last "jottings" in which I said it had been a very cold but dry, Winter came in with a vengeance. Lots of deep snow at the beginning of March and very low temperatures, down to minus 16°C. All through April the weather remained cold and wet, and with the snow line only just above here the bees were kept in check with very few days when it was warm enough for them to fly. The very early blossom of the apricot, almond and peach were all put paid to by the rain and snow. It wasn't till the 26th April that the Sun shone properly. So on with the supers and a quick "stock take". Most of the stocks that have survived are average, with only a few really strong ones.

UNITED SWARMS

The ones that have succumbed to the cold are mainly the united swarms of last season. I'm wondering if the poor back end of last year as regards abundant food was a problem, which resulted in fewer bees going into Winter (all hives seemed to have plenty of stores) or the fact that most were in 10 frame new type hives. The new hives are well made and I like them as they are much easier to handle, have a Varroa screen and drawer but they all have a flat roof and no cavity as do the old 12 frame hives.

SNOWED IN

Could this make a difference I wonder? Something to think about for next Winter. Maybe line the roofs with insulation of some sort? The other thing that always bothers me (perhaps some of you knowledgeable people can help) is that when a hive is completely snowed in, can the bees breathe? I always clear the snow away from the entrances fairly quickly as it bothers me that they might suffocate! I'd be very grateful for information regarding this problem as it is a fairly regular occurrence every Winter.

TEA BAGS

In March I did find a reasonable hour or two to treat the bees to a tea bag of thymol, and on putting the supers on later I did notice most hives had cleared it away leaving the piece of tea bag at the entrance. So I'm hoping that this has helped them to get off to a good start.

TENERIFE

Recently I have had contact with a relative who has gone to live in Tenerife. Although not beekeepers they have an interest in bees and have made contact and shared with a local beekeeper their 'Bee Talk' (you see 'Bee Talks' do spread far and wide). Anyway the subject of Varroa was brought up and it appears that the Beekeeper there has the new type hives with a Varroa screen and drawer and just uses that. So far he hasn't needed to use anything else and hasn't a great problem. Lucky him.

SHEEP

I've had to ban the sheep from the apiary as they decided to become Spring lambs again and after a hive was knocked off a stand and upside down, I decided my idea of sheep in the apiary was definitely a bad one. Fortunately I managed to right the hive straight away but was unable to get it on the stand single handed.



RUN FOR IT

I collared a local farmer's daughter early the following day, as she made her way to do some wood cutting. We managed



to get the hive back on the stand quickly and apart from some very angry

bees no harm done. The 'friend' got off light as I said "Run for it" while plucking bees out of her hair.

BLOOD TONIC

Going back to the dandelion plant which we rather take for granted and some try very hard to eliminate from their gardens. It is as well to remember what a beneficial plant it is, not only for the bees but us as well. Full of vitamins and minerals.

SALAD

When used as a salad in early Spring it is a blood tonic, and very beneficial for the health. It is said to have originated in Asia Minor and is now all over the world, taken to the Americas by European settlers. Even the roots can be used as a coffee substitute.

DANDELION HONEY

I have only once eaten dandelion honey here in Italy and find it to have a very strong flavour, as you would expect from such a plant, and of course it has that distinctive yellow colour. Now is the really busy time with the bees, sometimes annoying when a swarm or two goes off just as you sit down to dinner, but always something to be learned and enjoyed.

I sincerely hope that you all have an enjoyable season with your bees too, with plenty of rewards.

Best wishes, tante salute. Jeni.

*In England, in the days when we had heavy snow falls. It was normal practice to bore a hole in the top of the top box as an entrance to eliminate the problem of the normal entrance becoming blocked with snow. I suppose it must have helped in ventilation, but I think it was primarily to let the bees fly to relieve themselves. The **new** hives with ventilated floors should help, as the snow will be a bit porous until it starts to thaw then it will fall away from the floor*

Talking to David Rayner the other day, he thought it would be a good idea to allow a strong hive to fly from a top entrance, to save the foragers the bother of trailing down through the queen excluder and through the brood box. Ed.

DESCRIPTIONS OF PROPOLIS

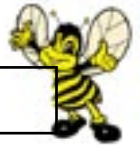
Propolis is collected by bees from tree buds and used as a cement and to seal cracks or open spaces in the hive. Honeybees will use propolis to attempt to seal any gap inside the hive that is smaller than the bee space, approximately 6.3 mm.

Traditionally, beekeepers assumed that bees sealed the cracks and joints of the beehive with propolis to prevent drafts during the wintertime. More recent research suggests that bees not only survive, but thrive with increased ventilation during the winter in most temperate regions of the world. Propolis is now thought to: reinforce the structural stability of the hive reduce vibration make the hive more defensible by sealing alternate entrances

Bees will also sometimes use propolis to keep the hive hygienic. Bees normally carry waste (dead larva, etc.) out of and away from the hive. However, if a mouse chews its way into the hive for a winter nest and dies, the bees won't be able to move it out through the hive entrance. They have instead been known to seal the carcass in propolis, effectively mummifying the mouse



BEE - NOTICES



SCHEDULE OF VISITS TO HOLDEN CLOUGH DURING 2005

DATE	DUTY MAN
June 19	John Zamorski
July 3	Bill Ainsworth
July 17	Ken Gaiger
July 31	Michael Birt
August 14	John Zamorski
August 28	Bill Ainsworth
September 11	Ken Gaiger
September 25	Michael Birt

PLEASE RING THE DUTY MAN IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND TO MAKE SURE THE VISIT IS AS SCHEDULED. STARTING TIME APPROX. 9.30am

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Michael Birt	01706 222849
Bill Ainsworth	01282 614015
Ken Gaiger	01282 778887
John Zamorski	01200 427661
Apiary Manager	
David Rayner	01200 426898

MEMBERS SERVICES

Bayvoral £3.10 per pack of 4 strips
Thymol crystals £2.20 per 100 g
Beekeepers quarterly Annual subscription from the publisher is £24 - from our treasurer only £16.00 with a slight profit to our society.

The publication has just been expanded to include another publication - 'Beebiz'.

Talk to Ken Gaiger phone. 01282 778887.

Library. There is an extensive range of bee books etc. that may be borrowed.

Our librarian, Brian Jackson brings some with him to our meetings. Contact him on 01535 634503 for special requests.

ARE YOUR HIVES VARROA FREE?

Scrapings from hive floors can be sent to :-
 Diagnostic Services
 National Bee Unit
 Sand Hutton
 YORK
 North Yorkshire YO4 1YW
 They will send you a report and the service is free of charge

FROM THE TREASURER

Subscriptions for 2005 were due 1st November. The new full membership rate will be £14.00 and £2 for each additional family member. Associate membership remains at £4.00.

The rates for Bee Disease Insurance (B.D.I.) Are:-

First 2 hives £1.60 covered by subscription
 up to 5 hives £2.40
 up to 10 hives £5.65
 up to 15 hives £8.15
 up to 20 hives £9.90
 up to 25 hives £11.50

Above 25 hives see Treasurer.

CHEQUES SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO L. & N.W.B.K.A. AND SENT TO KEN GAIGER, 2 HIGHAM ROAD, PADIHAM, BURNLEY BB12 9AP
 Telephone 01282 778887

COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONTACT DETAILS

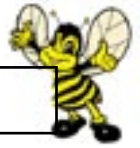
Brian Jackson	Acting Chair	01535 634503
Bill Ainsworth	Vice Chair	01282 614015
John Zamorski	Hon. Sec	01200 427661
Ken Gaiger	Hon. Treas.	01282 778887
Bridget Beattie	Honey Show Sec	01257 425990
David Rayner	Manager Holden C.	01200 426898
Brian Jackson	Librarian	01535 634503
Brian Jackson	Education Officer	01535 634503
Robert Bradshaw	Member	01254 261216
David Bush	Member	01200 428152
Joe Wrigley	Member	01200 447621

DELEGATES TO THE CENTRAL COUNCIL

John Zamorski	Hon. Sec	01200 427661
Ken Gaiger	Hon. Treas.	01282 778887



BEE - NOTICES



INFORMATION ABOUT 'BEETALK'

Planned Publication Dates: March 2005, June 2005, September 2005, December 2005,

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

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

Good, crisp photographs or line drawings are always welcome

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

DATE	TIME	VENUE	SPEAKER	SUBJECT
Sun 26th Jun.	1pm	Towneley Hall	Everyone	Annual Open Day
Sun 24th Jul	2.30pm	Hodge House Hut Nelson	Bill Ainsworth	To be arranged
Sun 21st Aug	2.30pm	Ken Gaiger's	Bee Officer	To be arranged
Sun 18th Sep	2.30pm	Angela Moyle's	Barbecue	Bring a bottle for the raffle and perhaps another to drink!
Sun 9th Oct	2pm	Castle Cement	Annual Honey Show	Get there in good time to set up
Wed 9th Nov	7pm	Ken Gaigers	AGM	Please try to be there

Please refer to the editorial on page 1 for more information about these events.

FOR OUR BEGINNERS

- Brian Jackson, our librarian and education officer is appealing for beekeeping magazines, periodicals etc so they can be distributed to new members. The age of the material isn't important - after all very little changes in beekeeping.

MAKE A NOTE - NOW!

The rates for Bee Disease Insurance (B.D.I.) have been increased and the new amounts are shown on Page 18.

The new insurance fee should be included when you pay your subscription which WAS due at the AGM on November 3rd. Your third party liability insurance is a part of your subscription. PLEASE NOTE you are not covered until your subscription is paid

Scrapings

FUNERALS

The practice of telling bees about important events in the lives of members of a family has been widely observed for hundreds of years. Although it varies somewhat among different peoples, it is invariably an elaborate ceremony.



As soon as a member of the household has breathed their last, a younger member of the family, often a child, is told to visit the hives. Rattling a chain of small keys, the messenger taps on the hive and whispers

three times, "Little Brownies, Little Brownies, your mistress is dead."

A piece of funeral crepe is then tied to the hive and after a period of time, funeral sweets are brought to the hives for the bees to feed upon. The bees are then invited to the funeral and have, on a number of recorded occasions, seen fit to attend.

***@?-/!X*=%!!**

Among people who know them well, bees are understood to be quiet and sober beings that disapprove of lying, cheating, and menstrous women.

Bees do not thrive in a quarrelsome family, dislike bad language, and should never be bought or sold for money. Bees should be given without compensation, but if compensation is essential, barter or trade is preferable so no money changes hands.

MORE ANCIENT HISTORY

MAYAN BEEKEEPERS

In the Yucatan Peninsula, Mayan keepers of five native species of stingless bees believe that "the actual work with the bees cannot be separated from the rituals that accompany it." Should they fail to enact annually their rain-bringing ceremonies, not only do the rains refrain from coming but the bees become weak, honey production declines, and their crops fail to produce fruit.

To avert these tragedies, the Mayans perform a rite that lasts twenty-four hours called the Hanli Kol, which requires that honey from the native bee, xunan kab, be left out in their fields as a thanksgiving. The ceremony, which allows the regeneration of the stingless bees, was traditionally enacted every four years under the revolving patronage of various beekeepers in the Mayan villages.

Today, there are only 500 Mayan families who still keep stingless Melipona and Trigona bees, but this ancient art is being revived. The bees do more than produce a dark, musky honey; they effectively pollinate sixteen crops in Mayan gardens, as well as an unknown number of rain-forest trees in the wildlands surrounding the Mayan villages.

A COMMENT

If you have something to accomplish, do not delay because you are not in possession of the right tools, start the project and better tools will be discovered along the way.



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