

CBKA Newsletter February 2007

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After the warmest January on record our bees are now (February 10th) having to put up with freezing, wet conditions and have done so for most of this month. Cold will not hurt them so long as they are dry and have food enough to see them through to when they can fly again. I did put candy on my bees early in January and was quite surprised at just how much honey they still had in the hive. I checked the candy on a 'mildish' day a week or two ago, they were certainly using it but only one of the four colonies had finished the first 700grams and needed more. If you do decide to feed at this time, candy is the only food to use. It should be placed

directly on top of the brood frames or over the crown board feed hole again directly on top of the brood box. In early spring you can feed sugar solution but only in a contact feeder, for in cool weather bees will not rise up into a Miller type feeder. Each of my colonies have lots of bees visible though I did not go into the hives to look at the brood frames. When they do fly on more mild days, the air is filled with bees and they can be heard well away from the apiary. They are taking in pollen though in quite small amounts, probably from crocus and primroses.

There are a few dead bees on the ground beneath each hive, not many and this is to be expected. Winter losses is a way of weeding out the unfit bees and some 10% or more may be lost this way. Other losses may be due to Varroa and it's important to monitor the mite drop with a view to early treatment, if necessary, when the weather warms up again. Those of you who have a paper insert beneath the mesh floor should have a good idea of how many mites are present in each hive. Count the number of dead mites and divide that by the number of days the paper insert has been in place (this is where good record keeping is important). That will give the average mite drop per day and if it's more than 5 or 6 then treatment is necessary in early Spring to maintain colonies in a healthy state for the summer.

I have received the following from our secretary Ian Brown:-

"Many of you will now be aware that CBKA have been awarded a grant from the National Lottery in the sum of £4,661-00. This grant has been awarded for a laptop computer, projector, software, sound amplification equipment, display stands, bee hives, protective clothing, protective netting and beekeeping tools.

Your committee met last month and agreed



that Rob Andrews and Sal Mancina should between them find the keenest prices and the best equipment (i.e. lap top computer, printer etc) suitable for CBKA needs. Also that Bryan Hateley should liaise with John Allen and Alan Jefferson for the remaining equipment, i.e. beehives, beehive stands, bee suits, netting with supports and beekeeping tools. When they have done this they are to report back to your committee. We will keep you informed of progress". We should all thank Rob Andrews for the considerable amount of time and effort he has put into obtaining the above grant, all on behalf of Cleveland BKA. It has taken two years, entailed many meetings with officialdom, much

form filling and a great deal of exasperation to achieve the end result. Well done Rob.

At a committee meeting held on Saturday the 10th of February it was decided to go ahead with the purchase of various items including a laptop computer; a projector; amplification equipment; two complete National beehives, Nucleus hives, tools and protective clothing.

I also sent the following:-

The January meeting of CBKA was, I think, the best attended that I can recall. 35 people attending, these included 12 visitors, all potential members of CBKA. We are now getting an influx of new blood and it is telling in increased support and keenness. Once again our Honorary member, Bryan Hateley, came up trumps. Unknown to him, he was given the duty of speaker and gave our new members and visitors benefit of his knowledge on practical beekeeping along with questions and answers.

Members approached me later and said the meeting was one of the best ever.

I had to be ruthless and chase people home so that I could lock-up. Those people who couldn't make it to the meeting missed a fine evening.

I must also thank the folks who brought the wealth of equipment on the night, there seemed to be a mountain of it. It all helped to make the explanation of the different items so much easier to understand. Thank you all.

The full report of the BBKA Annual Delegates meeting held in January has not yet been formally issued, but I do have some preliminary details. The most obvious item to emerge is the increase in the BBKA Capitation fee, up from £11-00 to £13-00, over 18% increase, as from the start of the next financial year in October 2007. With approximately 10,000 members that's a massive £20,000 increase in the BBKA income, and we have to ask 'what for'. No doubt when the full report is made available we will learn more, but it will be surprising if this doesn't cause even more local associations to resign from BBKA.

You only have a few more days left to enrol for the North of England Beekeepers Conference to be held this year on Saturday the 24th of March at Grey College, Durham. There is also a Microscopy Workshop to be held on the following Sunday at Close House, Heddon-on-the-Wall. I have the programme and registration forms if anyone wishes to attend. I will be attending on the Saturday and will have spare car seats available if anyone wishes to come with me.

The secretary of the Stokesley Show has requested that we again put on a display similar to the one we did last year and your committee have agreed. We are looking for ideas to improve on what we did last year, even though that was received with generous applause. In addition we have said we will try to get even more folks to enter the honey show. The show is to be held on the 22nd of September, (mark it in you diary now), so you all have plenty of time to prepare your honey and wax exhibits.

She also asked if we wanted to add any other class in the honey show to the existing ones. So we are looking for ideas. Put on your thinking caps and let us know. Maybe it could be some sort of honey display or wax models, but keep it simple and practical. I need to know before the end of May so it can be included in the show programme.

My guess is that you all completed the January quiz without any difficulty, but just in case there was a problem here's the answers: Capped; Drones; Culled; Colony; Beeway; Fungal and Pollen.

And now little over a week after I started this letter the weather has turned again, it's very mild with bees flying as though there's no tomorrow, all in mid February. But spring is in the air, the birds are wonderful and the spring bulbs are well up. Think 'honey'.

Kindest regards to you all,



bryan@hateley.me.uk

If bewildered, don't give up in despair. The best plan is to follow some form of systematic study.

Secretary; Ian Brown, 48, Thames Avenue, Guisborough, TS14 8AF. Tel: 01287 632851

Meetings held, from September to April, in Lingfield Farm, Countryside Centre, Middlesbrough, on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7.15pm
Newcomer's are welcome.

BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES

Allan, Tony & Richard Jefferson;
Tel. 01947 840723 or Tel/Fax 01947 893811
Email:- tony@stoneleabees.wanadoo.co.uk
Stonelea Apiaries, 1, Dalehouse Bank, Staithes,
Cleveland. TS13 5AN.
Suppliers of all beekeeping equipment.
Honey bought and sold.

John R. Allen

LONGNEWTON GRANGE BEEKEEPERS SUPPLIES

THE GRANGE, Phone: 01642 585896
BACK LANE, Fax: 01642 585896
LONGNEWTON, Home: 01642582460
STOCKTON-ON-TEES. TS21 1BN Mobile: 07814 576785
EMAIL: beekeepingsupplies@longnewton.fsworld.co.uk

Alphabetical Beekeeping

F is for.. Flu, hot honey and lemon is the ideal tonic for cold and flu sufferers

Copied from the Honey Association's WebSite

U is for Unifloral, a honey made primarily from a single flower source