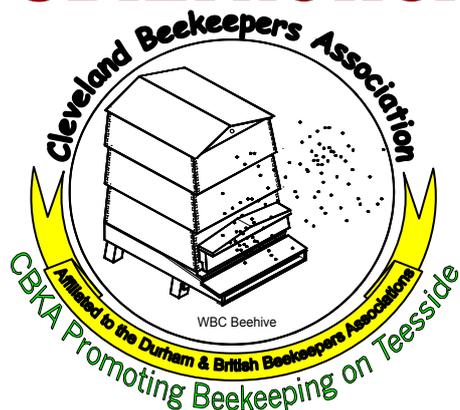


CBKA Newsletter January 2007

Volume 21 / 5
www.teesbees.co.uk



The cold weather came as something of a shock in the middle of December, complete with thick freezing fog, such a sudden change from the mild autumn we were beginning to get used to. I hadn't seen my bees for several days, they're obviously staying where it's warm and dry, and who can blame them. There is every chance of us waking up to a covering of snow at any time in the next few weeks, do not be tempted to remove it from the roof of your hives for it acts as insulation against severe frost. If the entrances become blocked with snow you can (very) carefully remove it, but do not disturb the bees. They can then make cleansing flights on warmer days. It's then time to sit back and plan your beekeeping year. Yes plan your year - don't get caught out. There's little or nothing you can do for your bees at this time of the year, though during the mild spell in early January, I did put a block of (home

made) candy over the feed hole on each of the cover boards. I have no idea whether they have found it, or whether they really need it but it's there just in case they do. I don't want to open them up in a few weeks time only to find lots of dead bees with their heads stuck firmly in the brood cells trying to scrape out the remains of any food. If the weather warms up, the candy may help in encouraging the queen to lay and every extra bee is one more to gather nectar in the spring. If you do start to feed candy do make sure you keep it up until the bees can find their own nectar supply later in the year. Feeding candy will cause the queen to begin laying early and once there is brood in the hive the bees must have a continual supply of food, otherwise the brood may die of starvation. I have checked the paper inserts under the varroa floors; there's a few mites but nothing to cause any great concern. A treatment with formic acid in late March should see them off before the spring nectar flow begins.

Talking of nectar flow, I wonder how many of you are ready for it. There are many square miles of oil seed rape planted around here and it's very well advanced. I am told that some is already in flower, once the weather warms up your bees will be going for it. Have your brood boxes, floors, supers and frames cleaned and ready for use. Make sure all your boxes are bee and wasp proof, and your roofs waterproof. I am always amazed by the number of people who get caught out at the last minute even though they have had all the winter to prepare. In addition take a look at the foundation you have in store, (do you write the date when you bought it on the package?), and if the package has already been opened throw it away, also if its more than two years old treat it with suspicion. Your bees will always benefit from new fresh wax foundation and they flatly reject any old, dried, worn out rubbish.

How many of you noticed my 'deliberate' mistake last month in my notes regarding the quiz at Houghall. I said "*---we were held to second place this year just behind Durham ---*" It was Richmond who won not Durham. Sorry about that. I did say that it was the last time Judy Wilkinson will be setting the questions. The new arrangement is that this years winners will have the task of setting the questions for next years quiz, a task I feel sure Richmond will be more than capable of seeing through. This (2007) years quiz will be held on Wednesday the 5th of December - note it in your diary now.

This is another article from the Apis UK WebSite. I found it so amazing I had to tell you about it: Bees and Bombs
Last year we first reported on Inscentinel's new device which uses bees held in a box to detect explosives. The

device has now been tested by American scientists and has proved so successful that the small British company is set to cash in when its box full of computer technology that turns honeybees into bomb detectors goes into mass production. The boxes could be on duty at airports, train stations and other terror targets within a year, say the scientists. Los Alamos sniffer squad trainer Tim Haartman, an entomologist - insect specialist at the lab, said: "The technology is there. It's just a case of putting it into production."

Inscentinel's managing director Stephen James thought this could be harnessed to monitor food in warehouses and detect when it is going bad, but then discovered that as well as food and flowers, bees recognise just about anything that has the slightest smell, raising the prospect of detecting explosives. They trained the bees to only extend the proboscis when smelling a particular explosive, conditioning them by giving them a reward of sugared water when they responded correctly.

Inscentinel showed the US scientists that the bees can be trained to sniff out anything from home-made fertilizer bombs, through demolition dynamite to C-4 plastic explosives and unlike sniffer dogs which require three months training, it takes 10 minutes to train the bees.

After training three or four bees are put in a shoebox-sized "sniffer box", held in position on plastic mountings. Air is sucked by a fan into the box via plastic tubes and wafts gently over the bees. If they detect explosives in the air, the trained bees all stick out their proboscises together. A miniature video camera in the box is trained on them and is connected to a computer programmed with movement recognition software. As soon as the movement of the proboscises is detected, an alarm sounds to alert the security operator. To avoid false alarms from rogue results, a single bee sticking out its tongue does not set the system off.

The idea would be to use the box at a security checkpoint, waving it around people being checked, in the same way electric wands are used as security scanners at airports. Now Inscentinel and Los Alamos researchers are looking into other uses for sniffer bees, like detecting dry rot in old buildings, and drugs smugglers at airports. Interestingly, the scientists have discovered that feeding them caffeine improves their memory, and using this discovery, they want to breed an explosive sniffing super-bee. Inscentinel Managing Director Stephen James said: "Bees are incredibly versatile and their potential uses are enormous." And it's not yet April 1st. Don't tell anyone but I am training them to put their honey into the jars for us.

Following on from the talk last November on the subject of Bee Plants I have had several requests for information on which plants you should grow with honeybees in mind. The BBKA Leaflet N° 39 'Shrubs, Plants & Wild Flowers for Bees' is very helpful, as is BBKA Leaflet N°8 'Trees for Bees'.

I have copies of both, if anyone wants one please see me. Now's the time to be planting new trees etc.

Last November we visited a relative who for years has suffered from dreadful leg ulcers. I suggested she treat them with Manuka Honey and sent her copies of leaflets on the subject. The following letter arrived this week:-

Dear Sheila & Bryan,

First of all thank you very much for the information you sent me on Manuka honey. When we told the District nurse what you had told us, she said how good it was & that they would try it on me. I am so pleased to tell you that after all this time & the nurses perseverance, my one leg has completely healed & the other one, which was much worse is almost healed & the nurse who has been coming the last few weeks is so pleased the way it is healing. She sees a difference every time she comes, so I am ~~not~~ most grateful to you for telling me about it. I can't believe the difference in them, I am also eating it on toast.

This is not the first time I have heard of Manuka honey being used successfully for the treatment of ulcers. Manuka Honey is produced in New Zealand from the manuka bush, *Leptospermum scoparium*, which grows uncultivated throughout the country. It's expensive honey, but it's a cure and probably cheaper than the years of failed treatment that I know she has had to put up with.

I have received the following from Sal Mancina:-
 "Twenty two people turned out for an enjoyable Christmas Dinner at the Dog and Gun in Potto on the 18th of December. Many thanks to Roger Chappel and Len Mutton for organising the event and for making sure everyone remembered what they had ordered some weeks before!
 Bryan and Sheila Hateley had organised an entertaining and unusual after dinner quiz in which the non-beekeepers in the party could take part. The quiz was designed to identify people with a sweet tooth as all the tricky questions were based around

finding the names of different types of sweets and chocolate bars. Thanks to Bryan and Sheila for thinking up the questions".

And from Ian Brown I have received this reminder:-

"The time has come around to subscribe again for the Bee Keepers Quarterly. For those members who do not know this magazine it is, as the name implies published quarterly and is posted direct to subscribers.

The magazine is a full colour A4 size with usually 56 pages of very interesting articles from around the world on matters such as Queen rearing or an article from Cornwall on how their bees are coping with varroa and the evidence that bees are "grooming & biting and cleansing in response to varroa." There is also always a good correspondence page. I can highly recommend it

The direct subscription to the magazine is £25 per year but members can take advantage of the Quality Quarterly scheme and receive it for only £15 (a saving of £10). I need at least 10 members to subscribe. Over the last few years that this scheme has been operating I have had well over this number.

Cheques for £15 should be made out to me, Ian Brown, as Northern Bee Books require one cheque to save administration costs."

Finally a pastime for a cold winters night:-
Not a crossword, just find the 'B' Words

Take two consecutive letters from each of the three words in the rows on the left to make a six letter word in the rows of the grid on the right. e.g. Hygiene; Brood; Acid would make Hybrid. When you have found the six words in the horizontal rows of the grid another 'B' word will appear in one of the vertical columns. Each word in the grid is used at some time in beekeeping.

Cat	Lapped	Feed
Overdrive	Front	Gates
Cup	Full	Emptied
Records	Calorie	Many
Label	Brew	Playing
Cupful	Ring	Quality

The answers will be in the February Newsletter.

Kindest regards to you all,



bryan@hateley.me.uk

If you don't enjoy what you have, how could you be happier with more.

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
E is for.. Energy - a teaspoon of honey provides an instant boost

Copied from the Honey Association's WebSite
V is for.. Valentine - cook your honey a delicious meal using honey