

# CBKA Newsletter March 2008

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www.teesbees.co.uk



Computers!! This is the second time I am having to type this Newsletter, for after a very stupid mistake on my part I have lost the one I completed a few days ago. It's so easily done and I am not clever enough to be able to recover the information. There's no doubt computers are wonderful pieces of technology but in inexperienced hands can sometimes be a problem. However with only three days to go I start again. Don't blame the computer, just the operator.

There's no doubt that spring is on the way. Spring flowers can be seen everywhere with the daffodils looking wonderful once again. But only yesterday we saw rape in

flower not very far from here, not a lot but it will only require a few days of warm weather and the fields will be a mass of yellow. I read recently that the yield in a field of rape is increased by some 15% if sufficient honeybees have access to it. But to be in flower so soon is very early, far earlier than I have seen it before and our bees are just not ready for it. This is the time of year when the brood nest is beginning to expand, but the weather can be very cold and our bees will spend most of their time nursing, or keeping warm, the young larva. However, whatever else happens, March/April is certainly a time when the populations of honeybee colonies are expanding rapidly. When colony populations are expanding in the Spring nothing must be done that will restrict this happening. Nor must expanding colonies suffer from any shortage of food. It should be apparent by April which colonies have consumed extra food in Spring and which have managed on their Autumn stores. If you are feeding your expanding colonies you can use this opportunity to have foundation drawn out and to take combs of food into store for later use. Start at the edge of the broodbox and remove frames until you reach the outside one of the brood nest. Put a frame of foundation next to this, then the pollen comb that previously occupied the edge of the brood nest. Fill up the remaining space with food combs. As soon as the foundation has been worked on and the queen has laid in it, another frame of foundation may be added. Very strong colonies may be able to cope with this process at each side of the broodnest. Reduce the entrances by putting in an entrance block. Bees will build more complete combs if one end is not near a large cold entrance. New beekeepers are often unsure as to when to put on the first super. Whatever the size of the broodbox bees will not store in any supers until the

broodbox is full. A supers should be put on when the broodbox is almost full of bees, 7/8 frames covered with bees is a good guide. The second super should be in place when the first is full of busy worker bees.

Unless the weather during March is very warm, April is the earliest month I like to make the first brood nest inspection. Always change the floor in early spring and make sure you monitor floor debris for varroa mites. It may well be that due to problems like re-infestation you find that your daily mite fall indicates the need for Spring varroa treatment. Do not let varroa mites build up early in any year for they can devastate a colony very quickly as well as spreading to other neighbouring colonies.

It is always a sad time when people pass away and it's particularly sad when it's someone you have known for a long time. I first met Pauline Barnes when we were both attending a beekeeping class at Lawrence Jackson school in the early 1970's. The class was run by Bill Beilby, the then Bees Officer for the North Riding of Yorkshire, a post axed when cost cutting became popular. I well recall Pauline tapping me on the shoulder one evening and without say a word pointing down at my shoes.



Pauline Barnes, Sept 1920/Feb 2008

They were covered with bees. "Your shoe polish must contain beeswax" said Bill, "walk away and kick them off", but not before many bees had found their way up my trousers. A lesson in 'being careful' when handling bees for I will never know just how many stings I received. Pauline was most upset when she realised what had happened. She could no longer drive her car at night time and

with no CBKA member living locally to help we have seen little of her in recent times. I last met Pauline at the 2007 Stokesley show when she was as bright as a button asking all sorts of beekeeping questions. She died as the result of a stroke on the 9th of February in the James Cook hospital and her memorial service was held at Kirkby Church where her son described her a "gentle, lovely lady and wonderful mother to them all". A friend of mine in the village described her as "a very thoughtful, friendly and kindly lady who we all admired and who will be missed by everyone". I'm sure CBKA members all agree.

**R**ob Andrews tells me that several members have expressed the wish to take the Basic Beekeepers Assessment this year. The 'Basic' takes about an hour, is not difficult and is a considerable help with your beekeeping. The syllabus and application forms can be downloaded from the BBKA WebSite. Completed forms along with a cheque for £10-00, made payable to **BBKA**, should be sent to Rob Andrews as soon as possible. Arrangements will then be made for a practice weekend to be held at the apiary prior to a date being set for an examiner to attend.

**A**nd Ian Brown has said that the following members have volunteered to be 'swarm collectors' this year. Ian Brown, Bryan Hateley, Mark Hodge, Graeme Kidd, John Law, Unal Metti and Chris Rutter. Their names, addresses and telephone numbers have been passed to Stockton, Middlesbrough and Redcar and Cleveland councils. There is still time to add your name to the list. A brief comment on collecting swarms. Before going out to pick up a 'swarm' always ask where it is, when did it arrive, what do they look like, how long have they been there and anything else that will help determine the type of 'bee' folks have. Only too often we find that the offending 'bees' are wasps or bumblebees. Wasps can be disposed of by the local authority. Bumblebees cannot be moved without the risk of killing them. In addition they are protected and unless they're a distinct hazard, people should be told of their value to the environment and persuaded to leave them alone, for they will die out naturally in the autumn and are very unlikely to return to the same spot. If it is a genuine swarm of honeybees, first assess any risk to yourself and to members of the public who may be watching or passing by. Children in particular should be moved well back and out of

the way, and the red and white tape used to warn of hazards on the road helps to form a barrier. Do not take any risks when collecting a swarm. If its high up in a tree, leave it alone - it will fly away. Do not be tempted to break into the structure of any premises to move bees without the express permission, in writing, of the householder. Do not ask for payment for by doing so you are accepting a 'contract' and as such can be held responsible for any damage that may occur. You can however *accept* reasonable expenses' for petrol and travelling. Finally, make quite sure you have the bees in a safe container to transport back home by car, for bees escaping into a moving car can be particularly hazardous. Just be careful.

**T**he Yorkshire Beekeepers Association 50th Annual Conference will be held on Saturday the 26th of April. The venue is Bishop Burton College, Beverly. The theme is "*Making the best of Beekeeping knowledge to improve your practical skills*". Guest Lecturers are; Graham Royle NDB; Murray Reid, National Manager Apiculture,ASURE Quality Ltd. New Zealand and Pam Hunter. Further details and a booking form can be obtained from, Dudley Gue, 87, Grove Park, Beverley, HU17 9JU. Telephone 01482 881288.

You are asked to book before the 12th of April.

**W**ith spring clearly on the way it's time to be looking ahead to the summer meetings and in particular the honey shows. The two shows we are normally committed to are the Cleveland Show and the Stokesley show. Please put aside your honey now and do all you can to support each show by helping on the day.

But in addition we have been asked to support the Gateshead Show this year. The honey section may well be deleted from the show if it is not supported this time. It is to be held over the weekend beginning Friday the 1st of August. Some CBKA members have said they will enter but we are looking for more. I have copies of the schedule and with only five classes it should not be difficult for most members of all the local associations to 'have a go'. Arrangements will be made for your entries to be taken to the show on Thursday the 31st and collected on the Sunday.

Kindest regards to you all,



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You've got to keep going to get anywhere.

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**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**  
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 Suppliers of all beekeeping equipment.  
 Honey bought and sold.

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Alphabetical Beekeeping Copied from the Honey Association's WebSite

L is for.. Lavender - a delicately flavoured sweet honey from the Mediterranean.

O is for.. Orange blossom - a lovely fragrant clear honey which tastes of almonds and orange rind.