



# CBKA Newsletter

## April 2009

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### Last Meeting, March 16th, 2009

A packed room of 32 people enjoyed an evening with a presentation and talk by Claire Hutchins of Leeds University. Claire spoke of her research work and of her future projects, including the study of the effects of our bee colonies on native bees when introduced to the heather moors during the heather honey crop. Claire also spoke about the serious decline in all types of pollinator species, not just honey bees, and the effects on the plants that we see about us. A short anonymous questionnaire asking about our heather honey yields was handed out and some people filled it in to give to Claire. The questions can be found on last months Newsletter so you can still help with the research. I hope we can invite Claire back in the future so that she can give us an update on her fascinating work. We would like to thank Claire for travelling up from Leeds to give us a very interesting talk.

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### Varroa Treatment - Icing Sugar

Some of you will have heard the name Ian Molyneux and know that he is the Regional Bee Inspector for the North West of England. The following article is from the Durham Beekeepers' last Newsletter and describes an alternative Varroa treatment using icing sugar, the theory being that the bees will clean themselves of the powder and in so doing will shake a lot of mites off their bodies....

*The following was written by Ian Copinger of Durham Beekeepers.*

I have made a fine sieve for dusting colonies with icing sugar, which I intend to use this year. I



purchased the fine mesh from JT Wirecloth, a piece about 18 inch by 18 inch made of stainless steel will cost you about £10. The stainless steel mesh is fitted to an eke the same size as the brood chamber. A bee space is created by tacking a piece of wood

about 8-10mm by 12mm under the eke. For a full brood chamber you will need 100mg of icing sugar which is placed on the fine mesh and brushed into the colony through the mesh. Ian Molyneux recommends doing this on four consecutive weeks. This will dislodge a lot of mites which will drop through the open mesh floor. You must use an open mesh floor otherwise the mites can walk back up onto the bees if a solid floor is used. This method can be used at any time of the year. Ian also stated that the NBU would like us to stop using Bayvarol and Apistan as mites are resistant to the Pyrethroids used in these products. You will also need to monitor your colonies for the daily mite drop. This can be done in many ways. Count the daily mite drop, though this is time consuming. Try placing the tray under the open mesh floor for a week and count the mites, divide the number of mites dropped by seven and this will give you the daily average mite drop. You could also uncap Drone brood to see the extent of the mite infestation. Also get the latest CSL, MAFF hand book on Varroosis - A Parasitic Infestation of Honey Bees.

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A simpler method involves dusting each brood



frame using a sugar shaker full of icing sugar... a light coating covering the bees on both sides of each brood frame is enough. Do try icing sugar as part of your Varroa treatments this year, it is reported as a

method which will leave no unwanted chemical residue in your honey.

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### The View from an Electron Microscope

Some of our members have access to conventional microscopes and use them to examine bees, varroa, pollen etc, but not everyone has the chance to examine the fallout from their hives under an electron microscope. The husband of one of our members, Annette Lees, has sent me an

interesting article and some amazing photos.

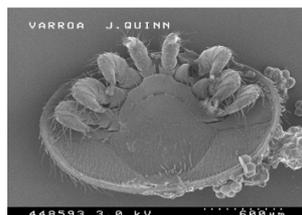
*Written by Richard Lees*

A sample of detritus from the sliding board below Annette's hive, when examined under a low-power stereo microscope, was seen to contain a number of small, active creatures. Closer inspection revealed a striking resemblance to text-book illustrations of the



tracheal mite, although our specimens appeared rather too big and, as Tom Rettig pointed out, of too independent a habit. A few

were collected and examined in a scanning electron microscope: the image shows a typical ventral view (ie. belly-up). The scale bar at the bottom indicates that the beast is over 300 microns long, compared with reports of around 150 for the tracheal mite. A micron is a thousandth of a millimetre, so our bugs are around a 0.3mm in size. An internet search confirms that a large number of Acarapine species share the same morphology, and that many exhibit the size and life-style seen in our specimens, who therefore walk away without a stain on their collective character. The other micrographs may convey a whiff of schadenfreude, as they illustrate a varroa mite from the floor of a friend's hive. The light micrograph displays the creature's sinister red livery; the SEM image yields more detail but of a grey, lifeless nature.



## North of England Convention-Sat 4th. April 2009

*Written by Ian Brown*

The convention was held at Grey College, Durham. The convention started with a eulogy for Bryan Hateley, followed by a minutes silence. Many people said how much they will miss Bryan. The programme was designed and printed by Bryan.

*Beekeeping in Revolution and Global Warming*  
Glyn Davies opened by stating that diseases were made worse by bad beekeeping and the incorrect use of inserts such as Apistan. Has global warming had any affect on beekeeping? This is still in doubt. Much depends on good house keeping, such as changing brood frames every two years. The beekeeper must be able to recognise the diseases that may attack the hive. His second talk was "The Bees Knees" and was all about bees' legs, how they worked and what uses besides walking they were used for. This talk was extremely interesting.

*Presentation and Marketing*

Margaret Johnson spoke about the commercial aspects of beekeeping, marketing honey and wax products, and the problems of dealing directly with the customer. The audience relished the tasting of various mustards with honey and marmalade with honey.

*Tricks of the Trade*

The day ended with informal ideas and contributions from the audience. I really enjoyed the day and met some wonderful people and am looking forward to next years convention and hope that more from CBKA will accompany me.

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**This Newsletter is the last before the Autumn. Please make an effort to come to the summer meetings, just ring the hosts and tell them you would like to go.**

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

Meetings are held at Lingfield Farm Countryside Centre, Coulby Newham, Middlesbrough on the 3rd Monday of the month from September to April at 7:15pm. Visitors and new members welcome.

### BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES

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