



CBKA Newsletter

February 2009

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We will all miss Bryan Hateley in so many ways, from his knowledge, his humour, his willingness to help anyone with a beekeeping problem, to his always interesting and informative Newsletters.

I'm sure we would all like to continue the tradition started by Bryan and publish a regular news sheet to inform and entertain - it won't be an easy task to follow !

I am happy to collate your articles, tips, news or anything at all that you would like to include in the newsletter. Any suggestions on layout or regular items to include would also be welcomed.

Sal Mancina.

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£4.3M Bee Health Funding Increase Announced

(DEFRA, 21st January 2009)

An extra £4.3 million to safeguard and undertake more research into the health of bees was announced by Environment Secretary Hilary Benn today. Mr Benn said that nearly £2.3 million over the next two years would support the work of the National Bee Unit in its efforts to help England's beekeepers deal with the problems facing their bee colonies. This will include identifying all those who keep bees and providing expert advice to them on tackling pests and diseases and applying good husbandry. In addition, Defra will put an extra £400,000 towards bee health research every year for the next five years. This extra funding - a total of £2 million - forms part of a comprehensive bee health strategy, which is under development. Over the last two years Britain's bee colonies have suffered significant losses due to a combination of potential issues including the weather, the varroa mite, and other factors requiring further investigation by researchers. Speaking today at the Royal Society of Chemistry, Mr Benn said: "Bees are vulnerable to a number of threats. Pests and diseases, when combined with poor summers can leave colonies unable to survive the winter. We must get to grips with this, to see just how serious a problem it is, what the impacts on pollination are, and what we can do in response. So today I am announcing an additional £4.3 million of funding, targeted at bee disease surveillance, education and research." Mr Benn also highlighted the important role science

will have to play in producing enough food to feed nine billion people by 2050, while simultaneously protecting the environment. He continued: "We must ensure that in meeting demand today we don't destroy our ability to feed ourselves tomorrow. We're trying to find ways of producing more food, for more people, using less energy, less fertiliser and less pesticide, while producing fewer greenhouse gases - and we've got to do all that with limited land and limited water. I believe that we have the knowledge and the technology to do this, but the perfect storm of climate change, environmental degradation and water and oil scarcity, threatens our ability to succeed. It is science that will help steer us through that storm."

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New Technical Officer

One of the many roles that Bryan Hateley had in CBKA was that of Technical Officer. We are lucky to have someone with the knowledge and expertise of Tom Rettig in our Association who is willing to fill that vacancy. Tom is happy to advise us on technical aspect of bees and beekeeping.

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Next Month's Meeting- March 16th

Claire Hutchins from Leeds University is our March speaker. Claire is a PhD student researching the effects that honey bees have on native bees when a colony is taken to the heather. She is keen to learn from our experiences of beekeeping on the heather and would like to ask us some questions - please try and prepare some answers if you would like to help. Answers can be given or sent to Claire privately if desired.

1. How many hives do you have and how many do you take to the heather?
2. Where do you take your hives?
3. Do you keep records of how much heather honey per hive per year you produce ?
4. When do you take your hives onto the heather and for how long?
5. Have you noticed any non-honey bees around the heather site(s) you use?
6. Would you be to willing to discuss being part of a heather honey study?

Study finds bees can count to four

<http://www.physorg.com/news144427441.html>

Professor Mandyam Srinivasan and a colleague from Sweden discovered a new insight into honey bee cognition after developing a series of experiments based on sugar-water incentives. "We began by asking whether bees can learn to 'count' the number of landmarks that they encounter on the way to a food source," Professor Srinivasan said. "Individually marked bees were trained to receive a reward of sugar solution after they had flown past a specific number of regularly spaced yellow stripes during their flight through a narrow tunnel.

Depending upon the experiment, this number was one, two, three or four. After training, the bees were individually tested by removing the food reward, and observing their searching behaviour in the tunnel to determine which landmark they had associated most strongly with the reward during the training."

When the research team randomly introduced random objects that were outside the bees' range of experience, the bees' ability to count to four did not appear to be hampered.

"Bees trained in this way are able to count novel objects, which they have never previously encountered," Professor Srinivasan said. "Our findings provide evidence that bees are capable of counting objects on the way to a food source. In all probability, this counting is performed sequentially, and required the ability to maintain a running tally of the number of events, incrementing the tally by one each time an event occurs."

Professor Srinivasan's research paper Evidence for Counting Bees appears in the journal *Animal Cognition* 11, 683–689 (2008).

Provided by University of Queensland

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Taking the Basic Exam

Are you interested in studying and taking the Basic Exam during 2009 ? Contact Rob Andrews for more details.

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Beekeeping Course

Rob Andrews has had so many people wanting to attend his training weekend in early June that he has decided to hold a second course. The dates of the two courses are 6th - 7th and 13th - 14th June 2009. The second course is now also well subscribed.

Membership Fees

A gentle reminder... have you paid your 2009 fees ?

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Saving Costs and the Environment

By default the Newsletter will continue to be printed and sent in the post to all members, but you can choose to receive it via email instead. You can also choose to receive Newsletters on paper and any other communication via email. If you want to try this out please let Ian Brown have your email address and tell him what you would like to receive electronically.

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Bee Exchange

Do you have any beekeeping items that you want to sell, give away, buy or swap ? Send the details to Sal Mancina please. A maximum of two items at a time per person will be shown in the Newsletter, for a maximum of two months per item. Only open to members of CBKA. CBKA are not liable or responsible in any way for items sold, bought or swapped via this service. For security no telephone numbers or email addresses will be shown. Use the members list to contact the advertiser directly.

1. Used CBKA honey spinner/extractor, plastic and stainless steel, £75. Contact Philip Staniland.

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This month in the Hive

It has been a long cold winter and you should be checking that your hives have sufficient food to last until the warmer weather arrives. Heft your colony and feed with fondant if you need to. Fondant can be bought ready made from our local suppliers or made up by following this recipe:-

This one comes from the excellent 'A Manual of Beekeeping' by E.B. Wedmore and does not include the usual half teaspoon of cream of tartar.

4 lb (1800 grammes) granulated sugar.

1 pint. (570 ml) water.

Place sugar in a heavy bottomed saucepan, add water and stir and heat gently until crystals are dissolved. Boil with medium heat for 14-15 minutes, use a jam thermometer to check temperature is between 114-118 C., otherwise continue heating and stirring. Place in a water bath in cold water. Stir increasingly (transferring colder material from sides to centre) as the fondant cools until you have a smooth opaque product. Transfer into 4 plastic or foil trays and apply to hives.

HAPPY BEEKEEPING !