



# CBKA Newsletter

## March 2009

Volume 23/7. Download our Newsletters from [www.teesbees.co.uk](http://www.teesbees.co.uk)

By the this time of the year I always feel that I've had enough of winter, and after such a long and cold winter I am more than ready for spring. The following extract from an article on the BBC News website confirms that we have had an exceptionally cold spell.

( <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7921230.stm> )

*"The UK had its coldest winter for 13 years, bucking a recent trend of mild temperatures, the Met Office has said. The average mean temperature across December, January and February was 3.1C - the lowest since the winter beginning in 1995, which averaged 2.5C. February started very cold as the heaviest snowfall for 18 years swept in, but temperatures ended up average. Peter Stott, of the Met Office, said despite this year's chill, the trend to milder, wetter winters would continue."*

On warmer days I've started seeing bees gather pollen from snowdrops and crocus, so perhaps spring is round the corner at long last.

Sal Mancina.

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### New Members

It has been really heartening to see so many new faces at the recent meetings. I don't know if it is an increased focus in the news on the plight of bees or a trend towards looking after our environment in general, but beekeeping has again become of interest to a lot of people. It is the first couple of years that are crucial in learning and feeling confident in handling your bees, and things that appear really daunting and difficult often turn out to be quite easy once someone has taken the time to explain them. It would be great if our more experienced members could make our new members feel welcome and take the time to talk to them and guide them through their early beekeeping experiences. With this in mind we will try and get our speakers to finish no later than 8:30 - 8:45 at our monthly meetings, this should give us a little extra time to talk and mix.

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### Equipment for Loan to all Members

You have probably borrowed books or a DVD from the Library, but did you know that the Association has a lot of equipment that every member can borrow ? Some of this equipment is the sort of thing that you might want to use once or twice during the year and would be expensive to purchase outright for such occasional use, for example a solar wax extractor and a honey centrifuge for spinning honey from uncapped frames. See Unal Metti who has a list of the equipment that the association owns.

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### Honey Containers

Traditionally the standard jar held 1lb or 454g of honey. For some time, the EU has been in the process of relaxing legislation regarding the sale of foodstuffs (including honey) in fixed-size containers. Directive 2007/45 is due to come into force in UK Law on 11th April 2009. That means that the fixed pack sizes for honey no longer apply although there is nothing to prevent a manufacturer from continuing to market honey in the customary sizes if they so wish. They may wish to do so, for example, because of continuing customer demand for the traditional pack (or, in this case, jar) sizes. When the UK Legislation comes into force all current legislation relating to specified quantities will be revoked as part of the Act.

- Pre-11th April 2009 the UK Specified quantities for honey were: 57g - 113g - 227g - 340g - 454g - 680g - multiples of 454g. Exempt: Less than 50 g.
- After the 11th of April 2009 you can sell your honey in containers of any weight that you wish.

If you want to read the full Directive Notes you can download the pdf file at:  
[www.nwml.gov.uk/fileuploads/Docs/Legislation/SFQ/Guidance\\_for\\_Business\\_on\\_Specified\\_Quantities\\_for\\_Pre-packages\\_Jan\\_09.pdf](http://www.nwml.gov.uk/fileuploads/Docs/Legislation/SFQ/Guidance_for_Business_on_Specified_Quantities_for_Pre-packages_Jan_09.pdf)

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## **Taking the Basic Assessment in Beekeeping**

Last month I mentioned that there was still time to consider taking the Basic Assessment in Beekeeping, so here are a few more details. The starting point and entry requirement for all other examinations and assessments is the Basic Assessment in Beekeeping; this practical assessment tests the basic skills and knowledge of the craft. To take the Basic Assessment you should have kept bees for at least a year or attended an appropriate Course. The Basic Assessment Syllabus looks daunting at first glance but closer inspection will show that it merely lists the basic things which all beekeepers should know. If you have a phobia of written tests don't worry; the assessment is completely practical and oral and takes place at the hive. To apply for the assessment see Rob Andrews for an application form.

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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.

## **Offer of an Apiary Site**

Finding a suitable site to keep your bees is one of the most important and sometimes one of the most difficult things to find when first starting to keep bees. I'm pleased to say we have had a kind offer from a farmer in Moorsholm in East Cleveland to anyone who wants to place some hives on his land. Please see Rob Andrews for further details.

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## **This month in the Hive**

Keep checking your hives to make sure that they have enough food, and feed if necessary. As the weather improves the queen will increase her egg laying and the brood will grow so a lot more food will be needed. The speed of the brood expansion will come in a bit of a rush if the weather suddenly improves. Be prepared to take a quick first look into your hives in the next couple of weeks. By mid April there may be an opportunity to make a more thorough inspection and you will need to plan ahead to make sure you have the right equipment ready. Make sure that you have prepared enough brood frames with clean foundation to replace any old ones at the outer edges of your brood box as they may have become a little mouldy over the winter. Clean and scorch enough floors to replace the ones that the bees have been standing on all winter. In anticipation of an overdue long, productive summer with a huge honey crop start cleaning and preparing those super frames.

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## **CBKA Apiary update**

Thursday, 12 March. All four hives were very active despite a stiff cool breeze, with lots of bright yellow pollen being brought in. Some more fondant was given to all four as there was only a small amount of the previous feed left.

## **HAPPY BEEKEEPING !**

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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.

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### **BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES**

Allan, Tony & Richard Jefferson

Stonelea Apiaries, 1 Dalehouse Bank, Staithes, Cleveland, TS13 5AN

Tel 01947 840723 or Tel/Fax 01947 893811

tony@stoneleabees.wanadoo.co.uk

Suppliers of all beekeeping equipment.

Honey bought and sold.

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### **LONGNEWTON GRANGE BEEKEEPERS SUPPLIES**

John R. Allen

The Grange, Back Lane, Longnewton, Stockton-on-Tees, TS21 1BN

Tel 01642 585896 or Tel Home 01642 582460

beekeepingsupplies@longnewton.fsworld.co.uk

Suppliers of all beekeeping equipment.