



# CBKA Newsletter

## October 2009

Volume 24/2. Download our Newsletters from [www.teesbees.co.uk](http://www.teesbees.co.uk)

With the first frosts due soon our active beekeeping is coming to an end for the year. The bees will now only venture out on the days when they feel the temperature is high enough for them. I have noticed that my four hives have different "operating" temperatures, one is very reluctant to get going on a colder day, while another one is always first to start flying and the bees continue flying until later in the afternoon. I don't think it is down to orientation towards the sun, and they are all within 20 feet of each other. The more cold tolerant hive has been the most productive so perhaps we should be breeding for this characteristic if we want more honey in our cool climate.

Which brings me neatly to a reminder for the people who have booked a place on the Joint Meeting with other nearby Beekeeping Associations on 'The Joys of Queen Rearing', speaker Clive De Bruyn on Wednesday 21st October at 7.30pm in the Functions Room at the Premier Inn, Morton Park Way, Darlington. Please do not turn up unless you have booked as the meeting is now full.

Here are some notices of forthcoming events. Our next meeting is on Monday the 16th of November and is about something a bit unusual for us.... 'Bats for Beginners'. On the 2nd of December you are all invited to a beekeeping Quiz in Durham, details will be available by the next Newsletter. Finally the annual Christmas Dinner will be on the 21st of December, hopefully more details will be available by the next Newsletter.

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### New Venue for our Meetings

Our usual venue of Lingfield Farm is being redeveloped and we will shortly have to find a new "home". Rob Andrews has been in communication with Len Duckworth (the Training Coordinator at Stewart Park, Middlesbrough) with a view to finding a new base. Rob reports that it looks promising that we will be able to use the newly refurbished Wellburn Room facilities at Newham Grange Farm for our meetings and there is also the prospect of having somewhere permanent to store our library and other equipment. As our Apiary site is at the Farm this would be a convenient location for us, and it isn't too far from our present base.

### A site in the Town

Finding a place to keep your hive(s) has always been a problem, so we are pleased to have had an invitation to a fine site in Acklam, Middlesbrough. Len Duckworth (see previous article) has passed on a message from Stuart Goldie, the manager at Nature's World. We had expressed some concerns as some of us have experienced vandalism in the past to hives and an observation hive on the site and consequently pulled out, but we have been assured that things have improved. Len writes:- *Natures world has 26 acres of prime horticultural land. There is a bee theme garden being currently constructed incorporating bee friendly plants. There is an established orchard area comprising of 80 different apple varieties along with pears, medlars, quinces and other top fruit distributed over the site. Stuart expressed an interest in the possibility of locating bee hives on the site. The point you mentioned re security and vandalism at Nature's World seems to have been - dare I say - 'resolved'. I did ask about this very subject. They have someone on site all night and two community police officers pass through the site on a night. I also spoke to a lady called Dawn who has worked full time on the site as the gardener for the last seven years and she says that vandalism is now negligible to what it was. I hope this allays some of your concern.*

If you want to know more speak to Rob Andrews or Sal Mancina

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### Do Our Bees Catch Diseases on the Heather ?

Once again we have had the problem of beekeepers from the south bringing diseased bees into our region. Not Varroa or resistant mites this time but bees infected with the dreaded European Foul Brood. Bees infected with EFB were brought to the moors at Snilesworth near Osmotherley by beekeepers from the Gloucester area and only due to the vigilance of our seasonal regional bee inspector were these infected colonies spotted and the beekeepers told to take them back. Isn't it about time BBKA or Yorkshire BKA insisted on bees being inspected at their own apiaries before transporting them hundreds of miles to infect clean

bees in another area? We work hard to monitor our bees for disease only for some other beekeepers (who for some reason cannot be named and shamed) to destroy all our hard work through their lack of care and good beekeeping practices. Since these 'visitors' are coming into our area we should do something to protect our bees. Should we lobby our local BBKA representative or BBKA directly to try and prevent this problem happening in the future? What do you think we should do?

Rob Andrews

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### **Beekeeping Calendar**

Have you got some good bee or beekeeping photographs that you think would be suitable for a Calendar ? Perhaps we can arrange to have some



interesting photo for each month. Look through all those digital camera shots that you have and pass them on ! *Picture by Rob Andrews*

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### **How much is a Swarm Worth ?**

We all know the old saying 'A swarm in May is worth a load of hay; a swarm in June is worth a silver spoon; but a swarm in July is not worth a fly.'

So what is a swarm in August worth ? Well, I caught a swarm very late in the swarming season on the 10th August and fed them for a while. I then put a super on the hive and in due course I got six frames of honey. Working on about 3lb of honey per frame that was 18lb of Heather Honey which at £5 per lb (shop price) is £90. As nucs have been selling for £165 this year that makes my August swarm

worth £255 ! Bringing the saying up to date, how does 'A Swarm in August is worth an Ipod' sound ?  
*Philip Staniland*

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### **Himalayan Balsam Honey**

In the last few months of summer you may have noticed some of your bees returning to the hive covered in grey pollen, or perhaps marked with a grey dab on their back. By the end of the season most of my bees were coming back to the hive like this. These bees had collected nectar from Himalayan Balsam, which has increasingly colonised riverbanks and waste areas. Between June and October it produces clusters of purplish pink flowers which the bees find irresistible. You will recognise the plant as it looks very much like a large Busy Lizzie though the irony is that this plant is a pest which competes and often swamps native species. When one of my hives came back from the heather in mid September I decided I wanted to see what reasonably pure HB honey would be like. After removing the heather honey frames I replaced them with a drawn set of empty frames. Normally I would have left the hive without a super, ready for the winter. After a few weeks I removed a frame and scraped the unsealed honey which when checked was still at 24% moisture content, which is far too high to keep for long. However the 1.5lb of medium dark honey was very tasty. I'm sure there will have been nectar from other sources, but the bulk will have been from HB. Is this a sign of a new major nectar source at the back end of the year ?

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### **This month in the Apiary**

Make sure mouse guards and insulation above the crown boards are in place. Check the hives occasionally, especially if we get the usual gales at this time of the year. Start cleaning your frames and supers and put them away where wax moths can't get to them.

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### **HAPPY BEEKEEPING**

**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**

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.

#### **LONGNEWTON GRANGE BEEKEEPERS SUPPLIES**

John R. Allen

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

Tel 01642 585896 or Tel Home 01642 898073

beekeepingsupplies@longnewton.fsworld.co.uk

Suppliers of all beekeeping equipment.