



CBKA Newsletter

September 2011

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Next Meeting

The next meeting is our AGM, please come along and help shape the future of CBKA, perhaps you can help on the committee, or volunteer to assist at one of our apiary meetings.

Apiary Meetings

Another summer has come and gone, hope you all had an excellent year with your hives. It was good to see so many new faces at our outdoor meetings, even if the weather was normally pretty bad, with Billy and Barry saving the day at our apiary with an impromptu indoor question and answer session.

Now is the time when next years programme is put together, as last year this is being done by Bill Wilkinson, if you could hold a meeting at your apiary or have any suggestions for next years programme please contact Bill, or any committee member.

The Cleveland Show

Despite my best efforts entries were down on last year. Apart from entries from a couple of our newer members, for which I thank you for making the effort, yet again it was the same faithful few who had to put in multiple entries to make a reasonable show for the judge and general public. Resulting in the same people also winning the cups. We really do need more people to participate to make for more variety and a better display.

Our stand, as usual attracted quite a bit of interest, but we were not as busy as last year. This year we had not one but two observation hives, one at each end of our stand. These were a great draw to young and old alike. The show as a whole had a greatly reduced number of visitors, 3,000 less than last year. We thought this reduction in numbers was partly due to the previous days of wet weather as well as the change of venue due to Stewart Park being "revamped", but then we found out that Bingley had moved their show date forward by two weeks to coincide with our date, questions are being asked as why this was allowed. As a result the show made a loss of £5,000. Hopefully this loss can be made up next year when the show will be back in Stewart Park and hopefully Bingley will have moved back one week!

Thank you to the exhibitors and also those who helped on the day, one and the same in most cases, without whom our part of the show would not have been the success it was.

Ada

Swarm Collection

In case you had not noticed it has been a swarmy year. A good time then to hone ones skills. If you read the books you collect swarms in a skep and then walk them up a plank into the hive. I have never done it like that. Added to which about halfway through this season I, and every one else I know, ran out of hives to put them in.

Here is my method.

I use a Correx nucleus box as part of my standard beekeeping equipment (to carry spare frames, dummy board and as a place to put a frame I wish to separate during inspections), it thus seems only sensible to also use it for swarm collection.. If you own a Correx box your first nucleus probably came in it , if not they are cheap to buy. Mine have hand holes and ventilation at the ends and an entrance on the side which can be easily closed with a rotating flap (a bit of spare Correx and a bolt).

No two swarms are the same so how you get the main swarm



into your empty box is up to you. If it will not drop neatly in, I often use the lid to guide shaken bees in. When the main swarm is in the box gently slide a couple of frames of foundation in, close the lid and open the

entrance. Place the box near the swarm but out of direct sun (you do not want roast bees) and watch whether bees are entering or leaving. If they are entering and bees round the entrance are fanning then the queen is inside and the remaining frames can be slid gently into the box. If not the remaining cluster needs to be shaken into the box and this procedure continued until the queen is inside. When the remaining bees have transferred themselves to the box the entrance can be closed and the whole lot transferred to the apiary. To transfer the swarm to a permanent hive or neuc box it is now a simple matter of transferring the frames and shaking out the few remaining bees.

This year I ran out of hives and so came up with this solution. Instead of five frames of foundation use four and a plastic frame feeder. Put the box on a couple of bricks in a sheltered place, again out of direct sun, with a couple of bricks on top. This can then be safely left until they have drawn some comb and the queen is laying. It is now a viable nucleus and needs a permanent home.

Graham Clarke

Constructing a hybrid Top Bar Hive

There has been a lot of interest in recent years in keeping bees in Top Bar Hives (TBH). The usual reasons given are that the bees are kept in a more "natural" way, and the bees can enlarge the brood nest as required, instead of keeping the queen in a limited space with a queen excluder. Those who keep bees without a queen excluder might say that their queens can enlarge the brood area as required too, but that's for a different discussion. What is beyond doubt is that a TBH can easily be built by a beekeeper with only basic wood working skills. Other advantages are that the legs of the TBH can be made to provide a good working height for those with limited mobility or those with a bad back, and the internal workings of the hive lend themselves to making easier splits and to swarm control. The main drawback is the difficulty in extracting honey; compare the traditional hive where the super frames only have honey and the mix of brood and honey stored in a lot of TBH combs which makes honey extraction so messy. Even on honey only TBH combs, using a centrifugal extractor will cause damage to the un-framed wax.

If you're thinking of building a TBH then I would suggest a pragmatic approach and alter the plans slightly to accommodate the following points:

Use standard easily bought top bars such as Smith, National or Langstroth. Add an outer lip on both long sides of the TBH so that the ends of the top bars are not exposed.

The width of the TBH hive should match the dimensions of a Smith, National or Langstroth queen excluder or super.

The length of the hive should equal 2 or 3 supers as required.

You can now use standard supers on your hive, adding side-by-side queen excluders if you choose. You can use commercially available frames in the supers to make honey extraction easier, rather than TBH style ones.

If you make the TBH 3 supers long then it is unlikely that the bees will ever expand fully into the supers during our typical summers. To encourage the bees to store excess honey in the supers the main body will have to be restricted internally to 2 supers long using tightly fitting follower boards.

Your TBH can now be used as originally intended, or you can mix and match as required with traditional supers, with and without queen excluders.

There are plenty of articles and free plans available on the internet, a particularly good site is at <http://www.biobees.com/>.

Sal Mancina

Please remember that subs are due in October, the level will be set at the AGM, please help by paying promptly and make life easier for our treasurer!



Secretary: Derek Herring, 8 Wardale Avenue, Acklam

Tel 01642 282030

Meetings are held in the Southlands Leisure Centre, Ormesby Road, Middlesbrough,

TS3 OHG on the third Monday of the month from September to April at 7:15pm. Visitors and new members welcome.

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