



CBKA Newsletter

February 2013

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Chairman's Note

At last there is a hint of Spring in the air with the appearance of snowdrops in the garden and longer daylight hours. There seems to be some movement in my hives so it is time to make sure there is enough food available. I have fondant and pollen patties on all of my hives at the moment.

The trip to the Bee Unit at the Central Science Laboratory in Sand Hutton in May is now fully booked. Please let me know if you wish to go on the reserve list in case anyone drops out.

Our speaker next month is Dr David Aston, the current chairman of BBKA, who will be talking about Integrated Bee Health Management. **Please note: This meeting will be on the second Monday of the month, the 11th March, and not on our usual 3rd Monday of the month** due to Dr Aston's business commitments.

We will shortly be reviewing the swarm call-out list for 2013 and if any experienced member would like to be included please let a member of the committee know.

Here's hoping we all have a bumper year with the bees. Best regards, *Rob Andrews*

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In the Apiary

Now is the time to clean frames, floors, supers and brood boxes. Scrape the wood free of propolis and wax while using the heat of an electric paint stripper to kill any undesirable organisms and disinfect the wood. A strong solution of washing soda and hot water will finish the cleaning regime, and then air the woodwork to dry thoroughly, but be careful if you have ply crown boards - ply doesn't like getting wet! Check frames with drawn comb and decide which frames you're keeping and which you're going to clean and re-wax with new foundation.

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An ill wind

On the evening of Wednesday 13th of February there was a blizzard with gale force winds in the area of Swainby, with the wind bringing power lines down on the outskirts of nearby Potto. The next morning brought bright sunshine with no wind at all, it was as if nothing had happened the previous night... except two of my hives had been blown completely upside down. The strong straps had stopped the hives from



separating, but the lid, brood body and floor had skewed away from each other. All the bees in one hive had died, but in the other hive though there were lots of dead bees there was still a cluster of live bees. No damage was done to the woodwork, though the frames had obviously been

thrown about. Time will tell if the colony will make it through until spring. Note the single hive to one side - nothing happened to that. I had heavy paving slabs on all three hives. *Sal Mancina*

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A Desensitising Story

I retired in 2011 and decided I really would like to do something new. One day, while listening to the radio, I heard that Cleveland Beekeepers were having a meeting and that anyone interested in keeping bees could attend – it was just what I needed. It resulted in me attending a beginners course run by CBKA and that was it – I was hooked! I bought my initial colony of bees from Tony Jefferson in May 2011 and had a very interesting first year of bee keeping that involved chasing and catching swarms around in neighbours gardens, and a lot of varroa farming!

I went into winter not happy with my two colonies as I was convinced that at least one was queenless, but Allan Jefferson assured me there was nothing we could do until spring and to my relief both colonies made it through the winter. Unfortunately both colonies were queenless, but with advice from Allan I combined them and introduced a small nuc with a queen to the new, larger colony. By now I was a regular assistant at the Jefferson's apiaries in Staithes. One day when I was helping check through Allan's colonies I was stung. It wasn't the first time I'd been stung of course so I wasn't alarmed, in fact we continued working for another

half hour or so before packing up. As I got back to my car I realised my chest was a bit tight. Being an asthmatic I took my inhaler, and I noticed that my throat felt a bit sore, but I still wasn't concerned. However as I drove home from Staithes to Redcar my journey became a bit more exciting! Stopping at traffic lights in Loftus I felt a pounding in my ears and noticed that my face was as red as a fire-engine – I realised I needed help, but still decided to head for home. On the way I noticed the sign for East Cleveland Hospital and decided to go there for advice – it was a good decision. The duty nurse gave me some antihistamine and I thought that would solve the problem, but my symptoms continued to develop, hives all over my body and breathlessness. When my hands and feet started to swell up the nurse called in reinforcements – a paramedic ambulance! Before they could take me to James Cook Hospital they had to stabilise me with injections of adrenaline and hydrocortisone – then off I went to hospital where my husband was waiting. The medics insisted I stay overnight in hospital, (which at the time I remember thinking was a bit of an overreaction) but at about 3am, probably 12 hours since I had been stung, my symptoms started to reappear – itchy hives all over my body, so thank goodness I hadn't gone home! I now carry two adrenaline Epi-Pens everywhere I go, and my doctor ordered that my bees be removed from our garden. Allan and Tony said my three colonies could go into one of their apiaries until we decided what to do. Lots of people thought I should give up my hobby, and I know it would have been what my husband would have preferred but beekeeping is just so fascinating, and I love it so much I just don't want to give up!

I was told that there is a desensitising treatment available and my doctor referred me, even though she cannot understand my decision. I attended an assessment clinic in November 2012 at North Tees Hospital where I met Dr G. Sprickett from Newcastle's RVI Hospital. He has agreed to me taking part in the Venom Desensitising Treatment.

The treatment is a major commitment. It involves attending the clinic every week for at least the first 15 weeks for an injection of venom solution, and then continued appointments for the next three years. I'm going to spend a lot of time in Newcastle over the next few years. Fingers crossed that it is successful, as I don't want to give up being a beekeeper. About a month after my bees were removed from our garden a swarm of bees moved into some empty boxes that were left there, making me think that the bees don't want me to give up either! My first appointment at the RVI is on the 28th February so I will let you know how I get on. *Glynis Reynolds*

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Master Beekeeper

Congratulations to Tom Rettig on passing his final module exam and achieving the title of Master Beekeeper. We are pleased to have someone with Tom's knowledge as our Technical Officer and Exam Secretary.

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Coming Events

Further details of these coming events on the internet. Make sure you book well in advance.

*Whitby Beekeepers Evening Lecture, 6th March, Sneaton Castle, Whitby

*North of England Beekeepers Convention, 23rd March, The Beacon, Newcastle City Centre

*BBKA Spring Convention, 12 to 14th April, Harper Adams College, Shropshire

*Yorkshire Beekeepers Convention, 20th April, York 6th Form College, York

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Jars

At the risk of jinxing the summer.. last year we bulk bought and sold 20 gross of jars at a very good price to our members. We plan to purchase both 1lb and 8oz jars this year. Please register your interest with Derek Passmore if you are interested in buying jars, giving an estimate of how many you require.

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Happy beekeeping!

Secretary: Derek Herring, 8 Wardale Avenue, Acklam, Middlesbrough. Tel 01642 282030

Winter meetings (September to April) are held on the 3rd Monday of the month at 7:15pm in the:

Middlesbrough Bowling Club, Cornfield Rd, Middlesbrough TS5 5QL (Near the Little Theatre). Visitors and new members welcome.

BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES

Allan, Tony & Richard Jefferson

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

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