



CBKA Newsletter

January 2014

Year 28/ 5. Download our Newsletters from www.teesbees.co.uk

Chairman's Note

May I first wish everyone a Happy and Prosperous New Year and looking forward to another year of good and interesting beekeeping.

So far we have not had too much bad weather although I have had to replace the roofs on my hives a couple of times following the high winds and they are now all sporting a couple of heavy bricks on top. Our 2014 programme is now out and if you have not yet received one of the printed programmes it can be found on our website www.teesbees.co.uk together with many useful beekeeping links.

I realise that it is still a long way away from the proposed trip to Chain Bridge Honey farm on Sunday 29th June 2014 but if you would like to go on this trip could you please let me know as soon as possible so that transport and costs can be sorted out. I have 18 names down to go so far.

We are still looking for a replacement treasurer for Derek Passmore and if anyone would like to volunteer for this post please let any of the committee know.

Our next meeting is on Monday 17th of February when the speaker will be Ken Smith from INCA talking about Bees, Butterflies and Nature Conservation in Industrial Settings.

Best regards *Rob Andrews, Chairman*

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In the Apiary

While it has been mild the weather has brought some ferocious winds which have caused some tree damage. Keep checking your hives to make sure they haven't blown over and that they haven't been dislodged by falling branches. The mild weather

had meant that the bees are quite active, flying at least a few hours every few days. This is good news in that they are able to evacuate their bowels regularly, so there should be less signs of dysentery this year, but on the other hand they are consuming their stores at a higher rate than in a very cold year. Last year a lot of colonies starved even with a lot of stores in the hive if the clustering bees were

"trapped" in a corner and immobile away from where the food was. The mild weather this year means that they will explore the whole hive for food. Keep hefting the hives and be prepared to feed fondant if they need it. Do not feed syrup yet! Previously I have never been able to make soft pliable fondant like the commercial variety, mine has always ended up a pretty solid mass after a few days. After a lot of research I have found a way of making soft fondant which remains pliable. I made a batch over a week ago and it is still as soft as on day one. The liquid glucose I used came in a 140g squeeze tube and cost about £1 from a supermarket. 140g divided by 6 gives approx 23g, so you can make 6 portions of the recipe with one tube of liquid glucose. Glucose is a natural constituent of honey, so you are not introducing anything the bees cannot digest.

Soft Fondant recipe:

Into a stainless steel pan add:

1kg of sugar

250ml of water

23g of liquid glucose

Bring the water to the boil, stirring all the time.

Caution: Hot syrup scalds very badly!

Boil until the mixture reaches 117C. This will not happen until some of the water has evaporated off.

To check the temperature I used an electronic cooking thermometer which was bought very cheaply online.

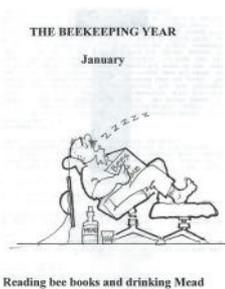
Take off the heat and float the pan in a sink of cold water, stirring as the mixture cools and starts to crystallise into a white paste.

Measure the temperature every so often while stirring. When down to 40C mix the fondant with your hands until it feels smooth.

Cut into two roughly equal pieces and wrap each in cling film.

To use: Remove the clingfilm, pack a piece into a margarine tub and invert it over the feed hole in the crown board. Alternatively tear a hole in the cling film and put the package, hole down, over the feed hole. *By Sal Mancina*

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New Association Spinner/Extractor



Last summer and autumn saw our association honey extractor getting a lot of use. At times there was such a high demand that people were queuing to borrow it. Hoping for a good crop of honey again this year, the association has invested in another new extractor. Here are the

details, taken from Thornes' catalogue :

Manual Universal Radial Spinner:

Heavy duty food grade polythene barrel with 1.5 inch nylon honey valve. Capacity for honey under the cage is 80 lbs. It has a removable stand which raises the machine 12" off the ground. The radial cage holds nine B.S. or Langstroth shallow, six Commercial (16" x 6") or M.D. shallow, or six Manley frames of any size. This cage will only take brood frames when screens are fitted. Overall height 29"; diameter 18".

The association extractors are available for use by any CBKA member.

By Graham Clarke

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Honey bee shortage in Europe

Recent research shows that there are insufficient pollinating insects in Europe. The area used for growing biofuel crops such as oilseed rape, sunflowers and soybeans has gone up a third in the last 10 years or so. The overall number of honeybee colonies has only increased by about 7% in the same period, leaving a huge deficit. In some countries pollination is now mainly being done by wild pollinators such as bumblees, solitary bees and

hoverflies. However increasing pressures on the countryside have reduced the numbers of these important insects.

One of the countries with the biggest shortfall is the UK, and it is believed that UK crops are at risk due to insufficient pollinators.

The government says that by 2020 10% of our vehicle fuel must come from renewable sources, which will lead to increasing amounts of crops like oilseed rape and soybeans being grown so farmers are encouraged to grow them, yet there isn't a plan to increase the numbers of pollinators required to fulfill these demands. Monocultures of acres and acres of one crop while reducing hedgerows and wild areas of land reduces the natural availability of wild pollinators, while we all know the difficulties of sustaining colonies of bees from year to year.

Some insecticides have been banned, and while we were concerned about their possible effects on honey bees, who knows what they have done to wild pollinators. It would appear that there isn't a lot of joined up thinking here, encouraging the planting of crops that need pollinating without making provision for the armies of pollinators that will be required. What plans do the legislators have to help wild pollinator habitats?

Also, perhaps it is about time beekeepers were properly recognised as important agents in helping produce the crops on which we are putting so much emphasis.

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Beekeeping Exams

We had great success in 2013 with quite a few CBKA members passing the Basic Exam. If you want to sit the Basic exam in 2014 look on the BBKA website for a syllabus or ask someone who sat it recently for their experiences.

If you are studying the BBKA Modules, the exams are on Saturday 22nd March 2014. Applications must be in by 10th February 2014.

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Happy beekeeping!

Secretary: Steve Jacklin, 34 Juntion Rd, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees, TS20 1PL Tel: 01642 866240

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

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