



CBKA NEWSLETTER

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Year 30/4
December 2015

CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLE

the Bees have been eating their stores faster than normal, so we need to be extra vigilant and feed them some fondant if they are getting light.

As beekeepers we find over time that we develop a large pile of old wax that can't be reused. The trick is turning it back into a useable form. Normally I would recommend a solar wax extractor, but at our latitude they don't tend to work this time of year, although last winter I stored mine in the greenhouse and found it was still working in February.

So I started looking through the various catalogues for some sort of inspiration (preferably cheap). Looking through one catalogue I found a device being sold for melting wax in the hive which was essentially a modified roof and a steam generator. The steam generator looked like the one supplied with a wall paper stripper and having got one gathering dust in the garage I started experimenting. I found that if you removed the head of the stripper the thread on the connection would fit an M12 Machine Screw (bolt without a shank). So taking said machine screw I managed to drill a hole through the centre of the bolt to create a nozzle and then drilled an appropriate hole in an old roof. The result was a steam steriliser for free.



Figure 1 - Steam Steriliser



Figure 2 - Modified Solar Extractor

presto it worked and actually rendered the wax down nicely. The only issue I had was that the condensate collected in the bottom of the box, but that was fixed by drilling a small drain hole in the bottom.

That was fine for a couple of years but the quality of the wax produced wasn't brilliant. The steam seemed to dissolve the Propolis which then mixed with the wax. So the wax wasn't the wonderful golden yellow that we all like, but rather a muddy brown even after filtering. So the steam was an issue now, so time for another re-think. So instead of using steam I thought about using air.

Finally, I ought to mention one of my early attempts at refining. I decided to make a giant size Bain-Marie using a Burco Boiler with a Garden Trug floating in the top. It worked fine until the Trug split and spilt molten wax over the Patio. I'm still scraping the wax of the patio. I had wanted a warming cabinet for a while to combat an excess of oil seed rape honey. So I made one using some sheets of Kingspan and ply wood. I bought a cheap temperature controller from eBay and used that to turn a 100W bulb on and off in the cabinet which controlled the temperature very well. Beeswax has a melting point of 61-65C. So I set the controller to 65C and it melted the wax beautifully controlling the temperature to within 2 degrees. I can now do all my wax refining and filtering in the warming cabinet, and so far I'm very happy with the result. But I'm always thinking of improvements; at the moment I've got ideas around a continuous forced air process so watch this space. **Steve Jacklin**



Figure 3 - Warming Cabinet in full wax production



Figure 4 - Bars of Gold

BEEKEEPING IN AFRICA

At the AGM there was a question asking what, if anything, our Association could do to develop Beekeeping skills in Africa. The committee has decided that the money raised at the December Raffle will be donated to Self Help Africa, a UK based charity which doesn't provide aid, but works to develop knowledge and skills. Details of the charity are available [here](#). If you were not at the meeting on Monday 14 December, but would like to contribute please contact either the [Treasurer](#) or the charity directly.

WINTER READING & VIEWING

Winter is a less busy time than the other seasons, and whilst there is cleaning, ordering and preparing to be done—and for some perhaps even a Holiday—there should be time to learn about more about our hobby. There are lots of books available, many

of which are in the in the CBKA Library. The internet hosts a hoard of articles, videos and fora full of good advice and opportunities. This month and next the Newsletter will include some ideas but we also need your suggestions from your experience. Please share your ideas. It needn't be a fully written piece an idea or web address will do. Just email newsletter@teesbees.co.uk.

As promised last month here are some more links from the talks at the 2015 National Honey Show:
[Honey Bee Pests by Debbie Delaney](#)
[The Biology of Mating by Juliana Rangel](#)
[Honey Marketing by Debbie Delaney](#)

SAVE £5

For those that haven't yet renewed their 2016 membership—if you re-new before the 31st of December

2015 it will cost you £26—if your payment gets to the bank after 1st of January renewal will cost you £31.

EVENTS

There are plenty of opportunities to keep up to date with your beekeeping during the winter.

18 January: **Question Time** with a panel of experienced beekeepers. *Middlesbrough Bowling Club - 715 pm*

9 February: Geraldine Wright, Professor of Insect Neuroethology, Newcastle, will talk on **Bees**. *Café Scientifique, The Arc, Stockton—8 pm*

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HEALTH & HYGIENE

The Committee have decided to hold a winter Practical Training Day on Hive Hygiene and Cleaning for members of every level of experience. The day will cover Frame Cleaning, Hive Sterilisation and how to reduce the risk of pests and disease in the next year.

This will be on a Saturday in February, If you are interested please let us know by email to newsletter@teesbees.co.uk so that we can plan the day.

Cleveland Beekeepers Association

Secretary: Iain Makinson Tel 01287 634995

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.

AUTUMN?

What a strange autumn and winter we've had. As I write it is cold and pouring down, and it has been doing so on and off for days. But it was only a week ago that the bees were busily flying around, as you can see in the photo taken on the 19th of November. I'm not sure if they were gathering enough nectar to replace what they had been consuming for their flying. While it might sound good that the bees were flying so late in the year it might have been doing them no good at all, they were probably using precious stores that will be needed when winter finally bites.

It is important that we now keep an eye on our hives, I think starvation might be a problem in the early part of the new year. Go and heft your hives by very gently lifting a side a quarter of an inch or so and judge what the weight is. Do this every week and plan to feed fondant (*see the recipe below*) if the weight seems low.



As considerate and responsible beekeepers you consider the effect your bees might have on your neighbours, but do you consider what effect your colonies might have on other beekeepers? If you have swarmy or bad tempered bees, or maybe a lovely combination of both, you can be certain that the drones from your hives will mate with the new generation of queens from other colonies and perpetuate the problem. As responsible beekeepers extend your considerations to your fellow beekeepers and cull the bad queens in your colonies. Replace with better queens donated by your fellow beekeepers, or there are always queen cells going spare in May and June from better colonies. Read up on how to replace a bad queen and also how to insert a queen cell from another colony. It will be doing yourself a favour too, no one likes opening up bad tempered colonies and swarmy bees won't give you much honey – they just abscond with all your honey. **Sal Mancina**

Fondant (also known as Candy)

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!!!** Stir and boil until the mix reaches 117C (use a cooking thermometer). 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. Break into two lumps and wrap each piece in cling film until you need it.

To use: Pack a lump into a margarine tub and invert it over the feed hole in the crown board or open up the cling film package a little and put it hole down on the feed hole.