



# CBKA NEWSLETTER

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Year 30/5  
January 2016

## CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLE

Happy New Year Everyone.

First of all can I thank all those members who passed on their thoughts to Sal in regards to the recent BBKA Annual Delegate Meeting propositions. The ADM is a vital part of the BBKA year as it allows the Associations to pass on their thoughts as to how the BBKA should be governed.

Well, I hope we are all out there regularly hefting our hives and checking feed levels. If they are beginning to feel a bit light give them a slab of fondant. Mine all have a slab on them and two hives are already onto their second.

Also now is the time for applying oxalic acid based varroa treatments. Oxalic acid in itself has been used to treat for Varroa for many years, and has proven very effective, with an efficacy in excess of 90%. The downside is that it is not approved under the Veterinary Medicines Directive (VMD), but this hasn't stopped many Beekeepers.

The problem with oxalic acid is that because it is a generic chemical that has been around for many years it is not worth a pharmaceutical company paying to get it approved for use under the VMD. A process that can run into millions. For a company to go through the process of approval they need to hold the patent so they can make their money back. Luckily Laif who produce ApiVar Life have now produced an Oxalic Acid based medicine we can use call Api-Bioxal, which contains 886mg/g of oxalic acid and 114mg/g of something else. The something else allows Laif to patent Api-Bioxal and make some money out of us Beekeepers.

This year I thought I'd give Api-Bioxal a try. I've used normal oxalic acid in the past, bought from Thornes premade up into a liquid. With Api-Bioxal, it comes in a powder, and you have to make it up yourself into a liquid before you can use it. You can use it as a powder with a Vaporiser but I prefer to use the trickle method and reading the information that is supplied with the packet it is actual more effective using the trickle method.

To make up the liquid you need 500ml of 1:1 sugar syrup. This equates to roughly 300ml of water to 300g of sugar. Then mix with the Api-Bioxal powder. The resulting solution will treat about 10 hives.

To treat a hive. Fill a syringe with the solution (I use a 50ml Syringe). Remove the roof and crown board from the hive. Then using the syringe trickle about 5ml onto each seam of bees. A seam being the space between the frames. Then quickly replace the crown board and Roof. Job done and the hive was only open for a couple minutes. Don't worry if you open the hive and can't see any bees they may be at the bottom of the Hive and you will always get the odd one coming up to see what's going on. You can always use a torch to find where they are.

Don't forget that when handling Oxalic Acid to wear the proper safety gear. I normally use rubber gloves over my normal bee gloves and wear goggles under my veil. **Steve Jacklin**

## SWARM LIST 2016

Swarm Collecting can be one of the most rewarding aspects of Beekeeping as not only do you end up with a few extra colonies, you also have an opportunity to educate the general public about bees.

It's that time of year when your Committee needs to start to pull together

the list of members willing to be called to help members of the public with swarms. As the Committee is also setting up a training day for officials from the four local councils on honey bees and swarms, there should, we hope, be fewer calls for wasps and bumble bees than in recent years.

Any of our members are welcome to join providing they are willing to abide by the [BBKA's Swarm Collectors Protocol](#) and have the necessary experience, which usually includes having passed the Basic Assessment. A description of the Associations swarm collection is on our [web-site](#). If you wish to be on the CBKA Swarm Collector list please email our Swarm Coordinator, [Steve Jacklin](#)

## BEEKEEPERS HYGIENE COURSE

A half-day, predominantly practical, course to cover all aspects of beekeeping hygiene will be on at Middlesbrough Bowling Club, TS5 5QL on Saturday 5th March commencing at 1000 and finishing at 1430 in . Tea

and coffee will be available but attendees should bring a packed lunch.

The practical elements of the course will rotate round three sessions covering the cleaning and sterilisation of hive components, frames and polystyrene, plastic and apiary tools.

It would be helpful if participants were to bring a small selection of apiary tools, old frames, an empty super or brood box, floor or queen excluder (the muckier the better). Protective equipment will be provided. Places are limited and there is a charge of £10.00 to cover costs. Contact [training@teesbees.co.uk](mailto:training@teesbees.co.uk). Places will be

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# IMPROVE YOUR BEEKEEPING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

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There are plenty of opportunities to keep up to date with your beekeeping and learn something new. Here are some of the ones we know about. If there are others which you have found helpful please [email me](#) know so I can include them in a future edition of the CBKA Newsletter. **John Canning—Newsletter Compiler**

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## EVENTS MEETINGS COURSES

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*9 February:* Geraldine Wright, Professor of Insect Neuroethology, Newcastle, will give a talk entitled **Sipping from a poisoned chalice: plant drugs, toxins, and pesticides in nectar and their influence on bee behaviour.** [Café Scientifique](#), The Arc,

Strockton—8 pm. All welcome. Entrance is free although participants are invited to make a donation of £4 towards the expenses of the evening.

*15 February:* Cleveland BKA's next meeting will cover two areas. **Preparing for and taking the basic assessment** with local beekeepers explaining "The Basic" and recent candidate others sharing their experience of taking it. The second part of the meeting, **Bee-ing Safe**, will cover aspects of first aid, anaphylaxis and other areas of personal safety. All welcome.

*21 March:* Cleveland BKA course **Beekeepers Hygiene**—as on the first page—booking essential.

*8 to 10 April:* BBKA Annual Spring Convention includes Lectures, Workshops, Partner Programme and Beekeeping Trade Show at Harper Adams University, Shropshire. Details and booking arrangements on the website [BBKA website](#)

*16 April:* North of England Beekeepers Convention—Newcastle: **Better Beekeeping**. Full details are available on the website [www.nebees.org](#).

If any members are interested in sharing transport to either of these Conventions please send us an [email](#).

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## FROM THE BBKA

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Sal Mancina attended the BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting as our representative on Saturday, 9 January. The meeting was less controversial compared to some recent ones and whilst a full report can be expected in a future BBKA News the following headlines may be of interest.

BeeConnected. A web based system for spray liaison. Similar to an existing Australian scheme, BeeConnected is intended to inform registered beekeepers of the spraying activities of nearby farmers and contractors. Contractors and farmers (who will be required to register) have to say what crop, when, where and which chemical they are spraying, the information will be stored in a central database. Beekeepers can voluntarily register, giving their apiary location and a chosen radius of interest from their hives, to receive email information from this database. Beekeeper information remains confidential and data flow is one way only, from the farmers/contractors to the database, then from the database to the beekeeper. No one will know where your hives are. Farmers will not know who receives their spraying details. Testing is to start in March and beekeepers will be able to register from June onwards.

The Neonicotinoid report is still not ready as there are concerns that reducing their use leads to increased use of other insecticides with, perhaps, greater damage to bees.

Other items of interest included the delegates rejecting Subscriptions rising by £2, yet at the same time voting for a £1 increase to go towards the International Meeting of Young Beekeepers in 2017 to be held in Worcester, something Sal opposed in line with your Committee's advice as at £80,000 cost, partly funded by the £1 per member increase it was felt to be excessive as there will only be 3 young English Beekeepers involved. The BBKA executive and education committees have been instructed to consider splitting the General Husbandry Assessment by introducing an Intermediate Assessment, whilst this is attractive it would be expensive as the assessment fees go nowhere near covering the cost of the process. John Hendrie of Kent is to be the new BBKA President.

The National Honey Show lecture videos on YouTube have been updated and the most recent ones include some fascinating talks. Just click on the link in the PDF to access the ones you are interested in viewing.

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## READING LISTENING VIEWING

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[The Behavioural Ecology of Swarming in Honey Bees by Juliana Rangel](#)

[Africanised Honey Bee Biology by Juliana Rangel](#)

[Honey Bee Pests by Debbie Delaney](#).

**How do bees choose a new home? *Honey Bee Democracy*** is a fairly thick hardback by Tom Seeley a professor at Cornell University in the USA. The book is, however, very readable and explains how bees communicate using the waggle dance and pheromones.

The description of how a swarm decides on its home is gripping. When I try to explain the complexity of the supra organism and its communication to non beekeepers they scarcely believe it. The book is available from the usual sources, but for the 'more careful' who don't want to spend their money a YouTube film of the key messages is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnnjY823e-w>

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Cleveland Beekeepers has a Facebook Page. Why not [follow us?](#)

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## SELF HELP AFRICA

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For most of us, beekeeping is an engaging hobby that we take up for a variety of reasons, but rarely because we have to rely on bees to pollinate our crops, or to make income from selling honey to pay for our children to go to school. However, if you live in a developing country this can be an imperative that can encourage you to take up beekeeping.

Over the past few years I have been donating to a UK based charity, Self Help Africa, that specialises in supporting agriculture and rural development in ten regions across Sub-Saharan Africa, tackling poverty and improving the lives of local communities. The charity doesn't give handouts, instead it provides skills and knowledge to communities so they can feed themselves, lift themselves out of poverty and manage their own lives. One of their many projects helps local people to become beekeepers.



A major problem is that farmers do not see the value in tree planting as they use up valuable agricultural land, and further deforestation for fuel adds to a process of soil degradation. Bees, on the other hand rely on trees for food and for habitat. Farmers are being shown that planting trees on the edges of their land does not take up valuable growing areas, whilst planting fruiting trees can add valuable variety to diets and present

opportunities to accommodate bee hives.

In Benin, work with communities to increase the valuable cashew nut harvest has demonstrated that integrating beekeeping with agronomic training increased nut yields from 2.2kg to 6.8kg per season. And who doesn't like a cashew nut?

Pictured here are Evalyne and Tito, a couple with four children, all needing food, clothing and schooling. When Self Help Africa began recruiting local farmers to get involved in a beekeeping training project in the isolated community of Nyabanni, Uganda they jumped at the chance. Evalyne and Tito attended every training and demonstration workshop with enthusiasm. 'We saw that we could still grow all our other crops and just keep the bees amongst them. We could make more money without needing more land.'

A five year project to increase beekeeping is due to come to an end in December 2016. The main aims are to support beekeepers to set up tree and fruit tree nurseries, to strengthen beekeeper associations in management and good governance and to train beekeepers associations in techniques and practice.

In 2015 a project in Benin, using less than £10,000 was expected to fund the training of 120 farmers, set up 360 hives and provide processing equipment for honey products, working out at less than £30 per hive. Even a Thornes January Sale can't beat that!



After a minimum of pestering the CBKA committee kindly agreed to donate the proceeds of our Christmas Social raffle to the project and a total of £160 was raised. Wouldn't it be great if we could help fund further development of our fellow beekeepers, where this can be so obviously beneficial? Other agencies supporting beekeepers are available but if you would like to donate to this cause you can make a one-off donation via the website, or maybe set up a small direct debit, badged with our name so that we can be recognised as an association that looks beyond its own backyard? I have some forms and would be happy to co-ordinate any offers. **Jan Lewis**

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## JUST BEE-CAUSE

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Dear fellow Cleveland BKA members I am one of the newest members on your committee and wish you a happy new year. I have been interested in bees since boyhood when a ground nest was found by my curious dog who, to my amusement, was thankfully content to sit and watch these creatures come and go for hours on end from their ground entrance hole adjacent a garden shed. What fascinated me in particular was their busyness and work commitment in gathering all things necessary for survival then returning to some mysterious underground nest that was, according to the family set of Encyclopaedias (as the only further source of information available to me then) headed by an equally mysterious queen in hiding.

I resisted the typical boy temptation to literally 'dig' further into their habitat to find out how they 'worked' but expanded my knowledge by observation and even handling live bees, sometimes finding tired and exhausted bumblebees (sic) and feeding them on golden syrup, watching them unfurl their proboscis to sip this free manna from heaven and then being amazed by their recovery when revitalised, they flew off from my hand in search of more nest sustenance.

When I was about 12 years old, I was introduced to a retired farmer neighbour who kept honey bees. He was happy to take me to his apiary colonies and my interest was further upgraded to amazement by this completely different but equally fascinating species. In those days his bee protection was merely a hat with face veil for inspection so consequently, ever eager to be an aid to his colony inspections, mine consisted of a utility version of this sewn together on a hat by my granny from some old net curtains. This same man became a font of all knowledge to me on questions from a wide variety of subjects but not least on honey bees, their hierarchy, peck-

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ing order, productivity and of course, he knew very well their value as pollinators whilst foraging, resulting in the liquid gold they produced from nectar as honey.

**Where is all this leading?** Well! In those 'good old days' I remember our garden being an active high with pollinators of all types buzzing and flitting around from flower to flower with a seemingly unending workload. Sadly, as all of you surely will be aware, these vital pollinators are on the decrease. Although we as beekeepers, whether intentionally or not, do our part to at least help *Apis mellifera* as a species to stay in contention. Unfortunately, most other pollinators are now in decline for reasons too numerous to mention here but nevertheless, are fast decreasing in numbers and in some cases are even threatened and near to extinction. So much so that (after much lobbying from prospective action groups) the Government introduced a Pollinator Strategy.

Although this sounds good on paper, like all strategies; it's only as good as the action taken after the strategical plan intent is written. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act and Highways Agency Biodiversity action Plan *HABAP* places a duty on government departments and public authorities in England and Wales to show regard for conserving biodiversity in all their actions. In particular, this regard must be shown on public authority managed land, including roads and verges. Typically, this strategy places the onus with local councils who in turn, tend to re-shuffle the buck with the local wildlife trust and other charitable organisations. In the words of one knowledgeable professional "this subject is a minefield" the buck just keeps passing, with little policing from central government and consequently not a lot achieved to provide the vital expanded national corridor of habitat so much needed nationwide.

Personally, as a beekeeper, Wildlife Trust and Bumblebee Conservation Trust volunteer, I am active in helping promote the importance of all pollinators as a valued asset to our nations biodiversity and food production. I have apiaries in Hartlepool and Guisborough and of late, have been fortunate enough to produce some of the finest general wildflower honey I've ever tasted. This being largely due to the fact that some three years ago Hartlepool council adopted a national road verge scheme where suitable tracts of road verge were seeded and naturalised with a variety of wild flowers. This was so successful that year on year they have expanded this scheme to other suitable areas within the town. My Hartlepool apiary happens to be smack in the middle of two of these wildflower tracts.

To view click on: <http://www.hartlepoolmail.co.uk/what-s-on/hartlepool-gardeners-wild-idea-is-a-blooming-success-1-7402505> or just Google 'Hartlepool wildflowers' and follow the links to delve as deeply as you need to go, or simply look at the many photographs and positive comments this scheme has generated.

**And so finally ..... Here's the point.** There are about 400,000 square miles of managed roadside verge in the UK alone. Imagine how beneficial it would be to biodiversity infrastructure if local councils adopted this scheme with the same positivity as Hartlepool and similar other councils do throughout the UK?

Surely it's a no brainer, right? Councils save on grass cutting, motorists save on single lane delays necessary throughout this grass verge cutting period and the public benefit with stunning visual wild flower displays better than any parks department could hope to achieve with a formal display, and at a fraction of the cost. Most importantly, biodiversity regeneration for all wildlife, animals, birds and pollinators receives a major boost. Just why some local councils drag their heels in implementing this is beyond belief to me and many others striving to get the message through.

Try Googling [Countryside Strategy.pdf](#) for a typically long list of all encompassing pdf format council strategy plans. [Redcar and Cleveland's strategy](#) in particular, subsection 5 on page 19. Subtitle; 'Implementing the strategy'. Once you have read this, **please**, if not for the sake of wildlife and pollinators generally, then for the quality of your honey, I urge you as Cleveland Beekeepers to make your voice heard this year and continue until our local councils see sense, take notice and act positively. Keep telling them what we would like and why. Enough voices will eventually trigger some action, collectively we can make a big difference.

You can do this in many ways, either as a personal short enquiry email similar to the following draft suggestion:-

Dear whoever ?

As a local beekeeper I'm interested in any biodiversity roadside verge management schemes (your local Council have under central governments Pollinator Strategy Plan.

Do you have direct involvement in this strategy? If so, could you please provide information of any current or planned action relating to this?

Thank you for your attention,

Regards

You have a right to know this under the freedom of information act. Or you can sign up to campaigns directly at: <http://www.plantlife.org.uk/roadvergecampaign> or/and <https://home.38degrees.org.uk/?s=bees>

**Please!....take a little of your time and just do it for the buzz** and Let me know how you get on at [bee-cause@virginmedia.com](mailto:bee-cause@virginmedia.com). **James Turnbull**

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.