



CBKA NEWSLETTER

Available online at
www.teesbees.co.uk

Year 30/7
March 2016

OBSERVATION HIVES

As members will remember, the committee has decided to substitute the Observation Hive class at Cleveland Show owing to an excess of hives in the 2015 show. The replacement class will be a blanked out jar of honey which will be subjected to a taste test. The new schedule should be available on the Cleveland Show website very soon.

This does not mean that Observation Hives will disappear from our shows – far from it. It is considered that Observation Hives are an excellent education resource as well as a draw to the public. With that in mind and supported by comments from Tony Jefferson, the Deputy Chief Steward for the Yorkshire BKA Honey Show, who has complimented Cleveland Beekeepers on having an almost unique class in the Observation Hive class, we have decided to continue judging observation hives.

New and inexperienced members will not be excluded from this process on the basis that they do not have/cannot afford an Observation Hive, as the Association has a number of Observation Hives which can be borrowed for preparation at any time. These hives will be available to borrow for one week before an event to one week after an event to give time to prepare the exhibit and transfer bees back afterwards

The new arrangements will be that we will request members to present Observation Hives at all the Shows and Public events at which we exhibit or display including the Cleveland and Stokesley Shows, the Middlesbrough Town Meal, Preston Park event, and the Imagineer Days at Middlesbrough College. The arrangements will be:

- ◆ According to their readiness Cleveland BKA members will offer to prepare an Observation Hive and these volunteers will be accepted per event show on a “first come, first accepted” basis
- ◆ Any member who has already exhibited an Observation Hive will go to the bottom of the list to allow a fair chance for all members to exhibit equally
- ◆ For members with their own Observation Hive, there is no restriction on the type of Observation Hive which must be used, all are equally acceptable
- ◆ Each show will accept up to two Observation Hives at a time
- ◆ At the Cleveland and Stokesley Shows, the judges will be the appointed Judges for those events
- ◆ At all other shows, the judges will be 2 experienced members who are not presenting an Observation Hive at that event
- ◆ The marking procedure will follow the mark scheme published on the [Association website](#) under [Observation Hive Marking Template](#)

Spot prizes will be awarded at the Cleveland and Stokesley shows by the appointed Judges. These prizes have been very generously provided by Tony Jefferson to support us in the continuance of Observation Hive judging.

For all shows, the chosen judges will complete judging and hand the completed judging form, in a sealed envelope, to the Show Secretary at the end of the event. The Show Secretary will keep all results secure and then compile the results at the end of the showing year. All Observation Hive results will be collated and a final winner will be presented at the AGM. A newly inaugurated trophy will be awarded to the overall winner.

If more members wish to enter the Observation Hive class than there is space at the shows, they can present their hives at one of the summer outdoor sessions on a Sunday afternoon and they will be judged in the same way.

We hope that this is a fair and clear explanation of the process. We look forward to seeing a wider range of exhibits in the coming showing year. Happy Beekeeping.

Julie Saxton, Show Secretary

SHOW DATES

	Spring food festival, Stewart Park	22 May	Stokesley Show	17 Sept
	Preston Park Family Day	3 June	<i>If needed the following may be available</i>	
The events with the opportunity to show Observation Hives are shown here	Cleveland Show, Stewart Park	23 July	Outdoor Meet	15 May, 17 July, 21 Aug
	Middlesbrough Town Meal	10 Sept	The Indoor meeting	20 June

CHAIRMAN'S RAMBLE

Here we are verging on a new Beekeeping Season. I don't know about other members, but I am almost ready and raring to go.

I've already had a very quick look at my hives and found that of my 20 colonies I have lost 3. That's 15% colony loss my highest ever. One I know died of starvation; the warm weather in December caused them to eat all of their stores up before I managed to get some fondant on them. The other two are a little more intriguing. Both had lots of stores and a lot of dead bees and it looks like the Queens had failed. One had certainly started laying drones. Looking back through my records both Queens were hatched in 2015. So I am suspicious of how well they were mated.

I'm now thinking about which queens I want to breed from. I generally look for colonies that have a nice temperament, are calm when the hive is opened up and produce lots of honey. I have a few now that fit this bill and in past years I have selected these Queens to breed from, but this year I'm going to change the direction I work in. This year I'm going to raise Queen cells from my second best Queens. My best Queens I'm going to setup to raise Drones. Unless you're doing artificial insemination when raising Queens, you can control which colonies you raise Queens from, but you can't control which drones the virgin Queens mate with. So my plan is to place a frame of Drone foundation in each of my best colonies and try and flood the area around my apiaries with my drones. Then hopefully the traits of my best colonies will be passed via the paternal line to my second best colonies. Ensuring there are plenty of drones in the area will also make it more likely that my Queens are mated well enough to get themselves through the winter.

I sometime wonder if this is something all our members should consider. You may have a nice well-tempered colony now, but the odds are that your virgins will mate with Drones from a beekeeper down the road, or even feral bees, which may be horrible vicious bees. Your bees then inherit the same unwanted traits. *Steve Jacklin*

IT'S NOT TO LATE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR BEES

The Beekeeping season is nearly on us, and it will doubtless be another different one after an interesting winter.

But just because we are getting ready to don the bee-suit and open the hive doesn't mean its time to stop learning and there are still opportunities to attend courses and conventions, or in the summer our own outdoor meetings.

The [Northern Beekeepers Convention](#) will be held on 16 April in Newcastle. There are a series of talks including *Treatment Free Beekeeping*, *How to be a Proficient Beekeeper* and *Emergent Properties in the Honeybee Colony*. An application form is [here](#). If you have the chance do try to go—last year was reported as an excellent day. Elsewhere in this newsletter there is a report of a

fascinating and helpful day spent at the Yorkshire Beekeepers Spring Conference held in York on 19 March.

Further afield the [BBKA Spring Convention](#) is being held at Harper Adams University, Shropshire from April 8 to 10th. Tickets are available on the day, but are cheaper in advance. Various workshops are also available, but its getting late to book these as they can be popular.

If you would prefer to stay at home the National Honey Show series of videos are now all uploaded to YouTube. Many of these have been mentioned already, but here is a full list of the 2015 series, earlier years are still available.

[Why Genetics are Important to the Beekeeper](#)

[The Sustainability of Honeybees by Debbie Delaney](#)

[Bumblebees Their Ecology and Conservation](#)

[Queens I Have Known by Robert Pickard HD 1:14](#)

[Biology of the Colony by Juliana Range](#)

[Bees in Winter by Ben Harden HD 43:13](#)

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

[Africanised Honey Bee Biology by Juliana Rangel HD 1:00](#)

[Honey Bee Pests by Debbie Delaney HD 1:02](#)

[Honey Marketing](#)

[The Biology of Mating](#)

Happy and Successful Learning

TEES BEES HONEY RECIPES

Do you have a favourite recipe or dish that includes your honey, or other products from your bees? We are planning publication of a recipe booklet that will share the best of dishes including honey.

These will be available for sale to members, friends and especially at shows not only to help raise funds for CBKA, but also to promote the use and sale of local honey. If we all make a concerted effort and everyone can chip in with a recipe or an interesting short article we will be able to produce an interesting booklet.

Please pass any recipes or short articles to Kate Brennan at the next meeting, or better still e-mail: brennan@yellowhammer.me.uk before the end of April. Thanks!

Kate Brennan

THE PURSUIT OF APINESS

The pursuit of Apiness was the homophonic pun used as the title for the Yorkshire Beekeepers Spring Conference held a few days ago. The day was chaired by Tony Jefferson and included local and national speakers all of whom were enthusiastic, clear and helped the audience to understand the topic. There were a number of local and national bee equipment suppliers there, as well as a bookseller, suppliers of wild seeds, glass jars and plants. The two things which I thought most interesting in the trade stands were a 'ventilated' bee suit and a new design national polystyrene hive which has the same external and internal dimensions as wooden components and is therefore entirely compatible with existing wooden parts—even rooves and floors; sadly it's not possible to lower the beespace.

The day started with a presentation from Dr Matthew Helbert who has recently retired as a Consultant Immunologist in Manchester. Matthew took us through the different types of reaction, including the difference between allergies and large local reactions, and their causes and treatment. He demonstrated the skin prick allergy testing method on a volunteer, who didn't demonstrate an allergic reaction to bee venom.

The second speaker was John Whittaker a local Beekeeper, who is a recently elected member of the education committee of the BBKA, John took us through the Educational Opportunities available to BBKA members. He also pointed out that there is discussion about an Intermediate Assessment between the Basic and General Assessments. Do you have a view? Let us know.

The final speakers before lunch were from the NBU. Giles Budge, head of science at the unit, spoke on Pesticides, Pathogens, Pest and Pollinators. He took us through the ten top 'enemies' of bees in reverse order: -

- 10 Nosema—*N. ceranae* more of a problem than *N. apis*
- 9 Pesticides—neonicotinoids do reduce bee life in the lab
- 8 Honeybee genetics—experimentally imported bees live for less time than local bees
- 7 Chronic bee paralysis—can be devastating, and may be increasing
- 6 EFB—does it need an explanation
- 5 AFB—rare but devastating
- 4 Wasps
- 3 Varroa and DWV
- 2 Weather—its wet springs which do the most harm
- 1 Management—Beekeepers. A surprise?

Monday April 18

**Bumbling through
Beekeeping**

John Holland

7:15pm in Middlesbrough Bowling Club, Cornfield Rd, Middlesbrough TS5 5QL (Near the Little Theatre). Visitors and new members welcome.

Ben Jones then gave a presentation on his PhD work describing the effect of dietary pollen on the health and behaviours of honey bees. My previous understanding was that the dietary change from pollen to nectar in an adult bee was caused by the move to be a forager, whereas it seems it is the cause of the changed role.

The final talk was more of a demonstration. One of YBKAs own members, Jim Pearson, produced a brood box, super and a range of boards. He then talked, at a very rapid pace, about swarm control, and swarm prevention explaining what was wrong and what was good with the various methods we use such as pagden, establishing nucs and the demaree. He was scathing on Snelgrove Boards, he only inspected each colony 4 times a year, the rest of the time he was opening and closing doors", Horsley Boards "its merely a means to get a colony strong enough for the heather". All the time he was moving boxes and Boards about. My take home message was to give the Demaree a go again this year.

The afternoon closed with a Question time, of course as ever there were as many different answers as panellists, and a prize draw for a beesuit. I didn't win, but I don't need one this year...

The day was well worth the £25 I paid and I saw 5 other members of our Association there, although they were all either full members of YBKA and associate members of Cleveland, or the other way round. If YBKA organise it again next year I will try to make sure the details are circulated well in advance.

John Canning

FERTILE QUEENS

I have been investigating failing and failed Queens by dissection for a while. However the last Queen I dissected was still laying and just spare at the end of the season. I removed her spermatheca soon after death and immediately viewed its contents under (1000 x) magnification. The resulting video is available on YouTube [here](#).

We are often told, and it had always seemed reasonable to me, that a queen would produce different bees - both in colour and temperament—as she used each packet of sperm from her multiple matings. When you watch this video it is immediately obvious that the sperm form a seething mass and are well mixed even over the short period viewed - how much more so in the months and years after mating. We often seem to see this variation of offspring in our hives and I now find it very hard to find a convincing explanation. I am always happy to receive failing or failed queens to dissect, if possible alive, if not, frozen.

Graham Clarke

CLEVELAND BEEKEEPERS & THE BBKA

Margaret Wilson is the BBKA Trustee appointed to link with Cleveland Beekeepers. She sent us this report just

after the February Newsletter was compiled, so some of the dates may seem confusing. Margaret has committed to send quarterly reports, which will be incorporated in our Newsletters, or in the summer, sent out as an email.

It is now March and the weather is still awful, the poor bees are getting out when they can but they are not getting the opportunity to do any serious foraging. I cannot blame them, if I am out in the garden for any length of time, my fingers and toes are really cold and I am glad to get back inside again.

What is happening at the BBKA? Well, a lot of getting to know how it all works has been the start for me, I have spent some time in the office joining in and seeing how things are organised and despite them being one member of staff down, they are doing a very good job.

The phone is ringing all the time with queries and the first call I took was a lady who said 'I have a bee on my sink, what shall I do' so you can imagine the type of call that they have to take. I told the lady the bee just needed warming so it could fly and perhaps a drop of syrup water as a feed, she was reluctant to have a bee on her finger so what to advise??? My solution was to warm a spoon in hot water then coax the bee onto it to warm it up and then to take it outside. She did not call back so hopefully the bee survived to tell the tale.

The call took about 6 minutes, not long but you can imagine how such calls disrupt the work in the office.

The office is busy getting the capitation lists out and taking bookings for the Spring Convention, this is in addition to the regular work they have to do. Whatever their prime task is, they are all hands on for the telephone calls.

The Trustees have had a couple of meetings where proposals have been suggested, each area of responsibility is allocated a budget holder and it is that person who arranges the meetings. As you can imagine, with several areas of responsibility it is difficult to fit all the meetings in. I am going down to Stoneleigh on 3rd March and will spend more time in the office then the following day there are two meetings, one for HR and hopefully news of a new office Manager and the other is OPMS where we will discuss a more efficient method of membership recording. The following weekend there is a Finance meeting where we are hoping that Howard has managed to change the reporting system to a more efficient one, then there is an EC meeting where all the Trustees attend and everyone accounts for the progress of their individual area of responsibility.

Dates for the Summer Diary:

May 15

June 20

July 17

July 23

August 21

September 17

Most Trustees are involved in more than one area of responsibility. I am on 6 boards so the timing of the meetings is not easy especially as some of us have a long way to travel and the cost of that travel and the time involved have to be managed, therefore email and telephones are a must in order that we can all keep up.

Last year the trustees organised a survey of beekeepers and the results are now available and will be e mailed out within the next couple of weeks. It is interesting reading and the response rate was good, there are 54 pages of information, so a sit down and a cup of tea could be useful when you start to read it all.

It is my intention to try to get a quarterly letter out giving you as much news as I can, in the meantime if you need any information or can offer any good idea's for the development of the BBKA, please let me know. My e mail is margaret@sector-security.net.
Margaret Wilson, BBKA Trustee

WINKIE'S CASTLE

Our association will be presenting a two month display at Winkie's Castle Folk Museum Marske; starting Good Friday through to the end of May. <http://winkiescastle.co.uk/forth-coming-events/>. This is a delightfully small museum housed in a 16th century 'Half-Cruck' cottage but packed with interesting facts, features and artefacts collected by well known local character and local shoemaker Jack Anderson. The museum is completely run by volunteers, who took the name from his equally well known one eyed cat *Winkie* who made it

his Castle in Jack's latter days.

We are looking for volunteers to man displays at weekends Friday through Sunday and be able to answer general beekeeping questions from the general public or be interactive with candlemaking sessions etc. Please! any time you can afford for a 2 to 4 hours on any weekend day would be greatly appreciated. Further details of how you can help from committee member Jim Turnbull on 0771 187 0918 bee_cause@virginmedia.com

SHOW SECRETARY

Julie Saxton has decided to step down. We need a volunteer replacement.

Email [Steve Jacklin](mailto:Steve.Jacklin) if you may be interested or want to know more.

Find us on 

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

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.