



CBKA NEWSLETTER

Available online at
www.teesbees.co.uk

Year 31/7
March 2017

Bad news emerged on Friday when it was announced that there had been a positive sighting of an Asian Hornet in the Central belt of Scotland. We now have had these pests confirmed 150 miles north and 200 miles south of Cleveland. This is worrying and I hope that everyone already has their hornet traps in place. We mustn't forget that one queen killed now will prevent the production of a thousand for 2018. Details of how to put up a trap are on the [website](#).

In my garden the flowering current is out; supposedly the time to consider the first inspection. I had intended to wait, but events overtook me. A couple of weeks ago I put in the varroa board to get an idea of the size of the colony and if brood or just stores were being uncapped. I found mouse droppings on the boards in more than one colony! Fortunately the weather was benign but dull, about 14C, so I had a look. There were no mice, but one of the colonies had pepper-pot distributed drone brood. I thought I would wait a few days and recheck as I hadn't been able to see eggs and had forgotten a torch. A quick look a few days later showed there were multiple eggs per cell; so it was laying workers, not a worn out queen. As there wasn't time to shake them out then I destroyed the drone brood to reduce the varroa breeding. Today I have just shaken them out at the other end of the garden before settling down to finalise the newsletter; it was a bit breezy but the thermometer was on 15C and the sun was out.



Is your BeeBase entry up to date?

Please check and make sure, so that if there is a local outbreak you are fully informed and protected

As I was in the apiary and the weather wasn't too bad I couldn't resist a look at the three remaining colonies. The first one had 5 frames of capped brood, a couple of frames of stores and 2 frames full of eggs and uncapped brood. More surprisingly there was a patch of nicely distributed drone brood in the bottom of a couple of frames. Looks like I have a prolific early layer there, but surely it must be a high risk colony for an early swarm.

With the emailing of this newsletter there will be some more information about areas the members' survey showed were of interest, including informal apiary visits and local support. *John Canning, Chair CBKA*

We have been approached by someone looking for wax for food production. Please contact Angela Mathews at: beesewresponsible@gmail.com if you're interested.

Show opportunities in 2017 for your honey, wax and mead in 2017 range from local through regional to national.

It's not difficult to show. As is often said *if it's good enough to sell it's good enough to show*. Last year we had a record number of entries in the Cleveland Show and we hope to get some new classes in the Stokesley Show. Peter Lewis, chief steward at the Great Yorkshire Show, is keen to get more entries from Cleveland—we have the right to enter the County Classes as well as the open ones. If you're not sure, talk to a member of the committee.

BEE INFORMED

The *at a glance* quick guide to local, regional and national beekeeping events and other important information.

Carry on Beekeeping Saturday March 25 in Poppleton, York. £25 Full details [here](#).

North East Beekeepers Convention 1 April, at The Beacon, Newcastle. Internationally recognised speakers. Cost £28—full details [here](#).

BBKA Spring Convention 7 to 9 April. includes Lectures, Workshops, Partner Programme and Beekeeping Trade Show at Harper Adams University, Shropshire. Booking now open on the [BBKA website](#).

From Comb to Candle is the title of Shirley Bond's presentation and demonstration on Monday 10 April at Middlesbrough Bowling Club. *NB 2nd Monday*.

Visit to the NBU, York Monday 15 May. Depart Middlesbrough Bowling club at 5pm. **Booking essential** contact [Ian Peacock](#). There is a £10 fee to cover transport costs.

Summer outdoor meetings start in June year. These are at 2pm on:

Sunday 18 June

Sunday 16 July

Sunday 20 August

The apiary location will be circulated a couple of weeks in advance.

Honey Shows in 2017 include:

Great Yorkshire—11 to 13 July

Cleveland—22 July

Egton (Whitby BKA)—23 August

Stokesley—23 September

Countryside Live—21,22 October

National—26 to 28 October

Cleveland Beekeepers Association

Registered Charity 1168761

Secretary: [Steven Jacklin](#)

All welcome to both our Winter Indoor and Summer Outdoor meetings

Full details at www.teesbees.co.uk

Exam Time By the time you read this I will have endured my biannual hell day. By that I mean its BBKA exam time again. Time was when three stalwart members of our Association would gather round a convenient kitchen table, normally Tom Rettig's, and undergo an hour and a half of hell. Sadly I now find that I am the only member of Cleveland taking the module exams. The other two, through no fault of their own, have managed to pass all the exams.

There are 7 module exams 1-8. The sharp eyed among you will think I've miscounted, but we no longer have a module 4 as it was combined with module 5. This time around I'm taking module 6 which is Honey Bee behaviour and if I pass that will only have two exams left.

So why do I do it? I'd be the first to admit that I am not the most academically minded person in this world. The wife would disagree with that, but I think that studying has certainly improved my beekeeping. It makes you think about what you are doing with your bees and why, and imparts a greater understanding of what is going on in our hives. I would encourage any of our members to take part in the BBKA education program. Even if you don't want to take the theory modules the BBKA do practical exams as well.

One of the things that I think would have been beneficial would be some form of study group where a number of beekeepers could study for the exams together. This is something the rest of the committee agrees on. To this end we are proposing to run a study group for Module 1, with the aim of taking the exam in November 2017. Anybody who would be interested in joining the study group please get in touch with either me or one of the other committee members. *Steve Jacklin, Nearly Qualified Beekeeper* secretary@teesbees.co.uk

The Basic With some trepidation and cajoling from fellow beekeepers, I registered for the basic assessment in early 2016. In my 'other life' I set and mark exam papers but it is many years since I was on the other side. Once the date (mid July) was finalised, the exam became a reality and the focussed work began.

I had no need to worry; much of the preparation comes from the knowledge and skills developed during beekeeping itself. However, a sound grasp of the syllabus is important and the precise learning of information, which at other times you may think could be looked up when needed, is necessary. To facilitate this we met as a group of candidates with Sal Mancina whose knowledge of the assessment content and procedure was invaluable. I left this session with a good understanding of what I needed to know and the means to find out i.e. the books written for this purpose and useful websites.

My revision was fairly thorough (we can always do more!) and I found it useful to make my own notes on each of the three theoretical sections of the syllabus. I also made sure that I knew how the fourth section, the practical element, should be done 'by the book'. I had all the equipment needed for this ready several days in advance.

Despite being stung several times before it started (dull rainy day, so angry bees!) the practical went well. The smoker stayed on, (cooled with grass at the start as we all do every time we use one!) and thanks to the good management by Billy of the association hives, there was nothing untoward. Billy was ready with a welcome cup of tea to start the oral session of the assessment. The questioning by the examiner was challenging but non-threatening and with no surprises. The focus was on things we need to know anyway such as disease recognition, how to undertake an artificial swarm and combine colonies, foraging and bee life cycles.

Kate and I had an enjoyable de-brief with each other over lunch a few days later. We discovered that we are not all asked the same questions so beware of any attempt to cheat! Finally note – If you have George as your examiner, remember; healthy brood is not only white and C shaped but also segmented. He delights in his view that no-one in CBKA ever knows this so let's all prove him wrong! *Lynn Taylor*

More opportunities to find out new things about bees and beekeeping are in the internet recordings of the talks given at the National Honey Show each autumn. The 2016 series includes: *Importance of Pollinator Diversity* by Brigit Strawbridge, *Colony Collapse Disorder an American Perspective* by Dave Tarpy, *Can Science Save our Bees - The Role of Apimondia* by Phil McCabe *The Biology of Honey Bee Nutrition and What it Means to the Beekeeper* by David Tarpy. You can find all of these and a selection of presentations from previous years including *Bees in Winter* and *Honey Marketing* at <http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/lecture-videos.php>.

24 Budding beekeepers have started on the beginners course. Even if all of them don't get bees this year we will need more mentors. New mentors will be able to access support from more experienced mentors. Being a mentor to a local beekeeper can be rewarding and an opportunity to both support a new beekeeper and learn yourself. If you are interested please contact one of the committee or email newsletter@teesbees.co.uk.