



# CBKA NEWSLETTER

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Year 32/1  
September 2017

**Winter** is heading our way once again. Some members have suggested that it's going to be a tough one because the bees are propolysing the entrances tightly. I'm not convinced that animals or crops can predict the weather so far in advance. Time will tell what the truth is, but I will be making up some fondant whilst I remember.

It's been an interesting summer. Such an early spring but a disappointing summer with rain when I hoped for a lime honey crop. I had some spring honey, and a decent heather crop. I have taken the honey off the colonies at Comondale and hope to bring the bees home later this week. Then it's get them ready for winter.

Cleveland BKA has been at various events and venues this year, a new one being Ormesby Hall when we have been on one week day and three Sundays. Interestingly there is a wild colony in a tree there. Graham Clarke used his boscope to get some great video footage which is on our Facebook page.

This newsletter has a couple of articles from beekeepers of differing experience; one four weeks in and another who has just passed the General Husbandry assessment. I hope you find them interesting—please let me have your reflections for future newsletters.

The improvers sessions have been reviewed to better reflect the needs of newer beekeepers who have now usually done the Beginners' course. Please let the committee know how you find the new scheme. *John Canning—Chair CBKA*

**Fondant** is made by adding 1kg sugar to a stainless-steel pan then, 250ml of water and 23g of liquid glucose. Bring it to the boil, stirring all the time [Caution: Hot syrup scalds]. Keep stirring till it reaches 117c on your 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. When it's down to 40 c mix the fondant with your hands until it feels smooth. Break into two lumps and wrap each in cling film until needed then 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.

**Anxieties** of a new beekeeper. It is going well as far as I can tell. There are definitely a lot more bees than I started with and they seem very busy foraging and returning with pollen. I have so far given them a supplement of 4Kg of sugar (in syrup).

When I opened the hive for the only inspection I have done so far, there was plenty of brood at various stages, lots of space on frames that were as yet undrawn. Now they seem to drawing out the new frames too. So I'm really just leaving them to get on with it. Now I just worry about everything, else ...

- ◆ Is the stuff that falls onto the removable bottom tray actually indicative of some dreadful problem, or is it just normal?
- ◆ Should I add some supers to the brood box, just in case they think they need more space? But if I do should I use a queen excluder or not...
- ◆ The mouse guard that I purchased will not fit the gap in my WBC hive, so now what .. how important is it anyway.
- ◆ My queen is unmarked, and thus far has proven to be invisible, should I really try to find her, I'm more worried that I'll be likely to hurt her!

I guess these are the concerns that all beekeepers start with and discover as they go along that's why it is such a rewarding activity. *A New Beekeeper*

## BEE INFORMED

The *at a glance* guide to beekeeping events and other important information

**Stokesley Show** is on Saturday 23 September. Its too late to enter, but do come and support our stand

**Question Time** will follow the AGM on **Monday 16 October**

**National Honey Show** takes place from 26 to 28 October. If members wish to enter we may be able to help transport entries

**Mead** will be the subject of the meeting on **Monday, 20 November** when **Tony Jefferson** will talk about and demonstrate mead making

The final meeting in 2017 will be a social evening on **18 December** more details will be available next month

### Cleveland Beekeepers Association Annual General Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held at 1915 on 16 October at Middlesbrough Bowling Club, Cornfield Road Middlesbrough for the following purposes:

- ◆ To receive the report of the executive committee
- ◆ To receive accounts of the Association
- ◆ To elect members to the Executive Committee

### 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

Cleveland Beekeepers Association

Registered Charity 1168761

Secretary: [Steven Jacklin](mailto:Steven.Jacklin@teesbees.co.uk)

All welcome to both our Winter Indoor and Summer Outdoor meetings

Full details at [www.teesbees.co.uk](http://www.teesbees.co.uk)

## Reflections

on 2017: As some of you know I'm always up for trying something new so I thought I'd jot down some of the things I've tried in the last year or so.

A couple of years ago at one of our question and answer sessions I was asked what I thought about plastic foundation, at the time having never used it I couldn't offer an opinion. So, I decided to give ago and bought four supers worth. Overall, I've been impressed. Three of the supers were drawn out very quickly the fourth had issues as the bees decided to ignore the foundation and build comb between the frames, but I think this is more down to the fact that it was a ten-frame box and had greater spacing between the frames. I found when extracting heather, it was easier to scrap it back to the rib and didn't have the issue of damaging the rib when scrapping. I'd heard that there may be issues getting it re drawn out the following years after its been to the heather and the drawn comb has been destroyed but I am pleased to say that I've not had any issues. I will be buying more in the future.

Last year I had a definite shortage of drawn brood combs, so I decided, once I started feeding in August I supered my strongest colonies with a brood box of foundation with a Queen Excluder between and then just fed. This time of year, I'm buying 100kg of sugar per week and literally pouring the feed in. The come the beginning of October I remove the "Supers" and hopefully they are full of drawn brood combs full of stores. This gives me three advantages. For my colonies that are coming back from the heather I can replace some of the combs of heather honey in the brood box with combs of sugar syrup. It also gives me a bank of drawn comb with stores that can be used for making up nucs as part of my breeding regime and finally it means that valuable honey is not being used to draw foundation the following year.

This year as part of the breeding program I decided to give artificial incubation a try. I always seem to have the issue of Queen Cells not hatching when I place them in the nucs. I think sometimes our climate can be too cold for queen rearing. So, I thought I'd give incubation a try. I placed six sealed Queen Cells, segregated using hair roller cages, in an old chicken egg incubator. You need to keep the temperature at about 34°C and just pour a cup of water in everyday to keep the humidity up. Sixteen days later I was sat in my office next to the incubator when suddenly I can hear piping. I spent the next hour with the kids watching five of the cells hatch out. The queens were then introduced the next day into nucs. So far all were successfully mated and are laying well.

End of May this year I noticed a sudden increase in the signs of varroa in a couple of my colonies. Perforated cappings (Sign of the female varroa leaving when the pupae inside are dead) and when I opened the cells the pupae were shrivelled and dried. Oddly there was no significant mite drop from these colonies (< 1/day). Now these were production colonies so I didn't want to remove the supers and treat. I don't like MAQs as in the past when I've used it the colonies absconded or the queen went off lay. Fortunately, I'd seen an article in the Bee Farmers Magazine about using Rhubarb leaves. You crush the ribs on the leaf to make it flat and then place it above the queen excluder and below the supers. The Bees then eat through the leaf which releases oxalic acid. The Oxalic acid vapour percolates through the hive causing the mites to drop off. This seemed to solve the problem and the dead pupae and perforated cells seemed to go away and the colonies returned to strength.

So, what does the future hold. As I mentioned earlier I'm buying 100kg of sugar every week now. Now I make up my syrup in an old Burco Boiler, but using it must be adding a lot to my energy bill, but to make 2:1 syrup you really need to warm the water. So, the thoughts at the moment are that there is occasionally a large yellow free heating source hanging in the sky. If I were to make up some solar panels using some Microbore piping I could then pump water from a water butt through them and heat the water. It might take longer to warm the same amount but I could leave it running through the day and by the time I got home from work it would be ready to add the sugar. I'll let you know how I get on. *Steve Jacklin Qualified Beekeeper*

## Margaret

Wilson, our link Trustee with the BBKA has written to update us on central activities. We must thank Margaret for keeping us informed and for coming over to join us at the Cleveland Show.

Exams and assessments continue to be popular. Last year 518 Beekeepers took the assessment with 97% passing, 348 passed with credits. General Husbandry numbers are much lower with only 33 taking the assessment at a pass rate of 64%, an improvement on the past few years. Advanced Husbandry was taken by 32 taking the test, 18 passed a better rate than previously. DEFRA have sponsored the training for the Husbandry Assessments; please watch for the sessions in your area to be able to take advantage of the sponsorship, it is well worth while. *CBKA will try to notify members of events in the North.* BBKA are trialling two new exams. One on Bee Health and sits between the Basic and the General Husbandry, the other is on Bee Breeding, not to be confused with Queen rearing. This is to improve the quality of Bees in our own apiaries.

The Spring Convention in 2018 will be different as the Committee headed by Joyce Nesbit is looking to get behind what Beekeepers really need and to provide that it. We particularly want to encourage new beekeepers to attend the Convention which will have lectures and workshops aimed at their level of beekeeping to help them to improve their skills. We also want to stretch those who have experience so we are looking to get the mix just right, if you have any suggestions please contact Joyce Nesbit yourself, she will be pleased to hear from you.

There is another book now in print, it is about feeding and is available from the BBKA Shop and will be available at the National Honey Show, there will also be one written by Celia Davis on Plants which it is hoped will be ready at the same time.

Financially we have managed to get a further reduction of £2,500.00, but after last year I did not think I would get any reduction at all and we seem to be on track to have a small surplus this year, (fingers crossed). *Margert Wilson—Link Trustee*