

# Y.B.K.A. eNews

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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## Welcome

Isn't it nice now that the snows of Christmas and the New Year have blown away. We're not out of winter yet but, like all beekeepers, I can't help thinking of the year ahead in a positive light in the knowledge that the bees are stirring and the Queen is ready to build up the numbers towards a bumper season.

February 2010

So much about beekeeping is weather dependent. In a 'normal' February, though the bees will still be clustered, colonies should be showing signs of activity. Queens should be laying patches of eggs in the warmth of the cluster and workers will be taking cleansing flights and bringing in pollen on mild days from snowdrops, crocuses and early willows. The hives will still be drone free and mouse guards can remain in place though clearing the entrance is good practice.

Weekly checks of apiaries should be carried out to see that surrounding fences are stock-proof, no vandalism has taken place and there is no woodpecker damage to the hives.

Each hive should be hefted to check on the quantity of food stores remaining. More colonies are probably lost during this time of year than during all of the other winter months. A colony that is rearing brood will consume about 10 pounds of food per week, and if the weather turns bad, a colony with small food reserves can quickly starve to death. Never allow the food stores to drop below 15 pounds. If they have less than 15 pounds of honey, start feeding them fondant. Remember, once you start feeding, you need to continue feeding until they are bringing their own food supplies in.

If the weather is good and if bees are flying freely and bringing in large pollen loads and, by placing the back of your hand against the crown board, you can detect heat then all should be well. If very small pollen loads are being taken into a particular hive there is either a shortage of plants yielding pollen or the queen may not be laying for some reason. If there are fewer bees flying from this hive compared to others in the apiary or no flying bees at all, a quick check can be made by raising the crown board. If the colony is dead, try to establish the cause and close-up the hive in order to prevent robber bees gaining access to any remaining stores which may be harbouring some infection.

Check the signs at the hive entrance. There should be a considerable amount of fine particles of wax from the uncapping of stores. If large pieces of wax are on the alighting board, you have a lodger in the form of Mr and/or Mrs Mouse.

Spots of faeces may be evident on the front of the brood chamber, caused by the bees' over long confinement due to severe weather; or dysentery caused by fermenting stores or Nosema disease. Bees crawling, with fluttering partially spread wings (K-wing), clinging to plant stems and unable to fly suggests Chronic Bee Paralysis Virus which is common in bees suffering from Acarine disease or one of the viral diseases which are associated with varroa and are becoming more common.

continued....

If you use matches to ventilate the hive then around the middle of the month, in order to assist brood rearing by reducing heat loss, the matches should be removed from the rear of the crown board thus cutting off top ventilation. If you over-winter on open mesh floors then varroa trays should be inserted under open-mesh floors to cut off the cold air.

February is a good time to apply preservative to the hive. Every three or four years, during a spell of cold weather, if the outside of the hives are dry, they can be given a coat of liquid insecticide-free preservative. Choose a cold, windy day when few, if any, bees are flying. Paint, unless it is microporous, should not be used on wooden, single-walled hives as it prevents the wood from 'breathing' thus causing the hive walls to become saturated during winter, leading to a hive which has the comfort of a refrigerator. When the hive walls start to dry out, the paint will blister and flake off.

By the end of the month, new hives which were purchased in January should have been assembled and given a heavy coat of preservative if needed. Repairs should have been carried out on any spare equipment damaged during the previous season. New frames should be assembled and nailed. I have encountered a surprising number of beginners who have never been told to nail their brood and super frames, leading to disastrous consequences. I would advise beginners to purchase Hoffman self-spacing brood frames having 27mm (1 1/16") wide top bars and 35mm (1 3/8") wide side bars with internal grooves. With top bars 27mm wide, very little brace comb will be built between the frames. The grooves in the side bars act as a location for the wax foundation, leading to nice straight combs. Eleven frames will be required for a National brood chamber. Never use castellated spacers in the brood chamber as they make it impossible to slide frames along the runners.

For shallow honey-super frames, I consider Hoffman spacing to be a waste of money and a nuisance when uncapping. The Hoffman side bars get in the way of the uncapping knife. It is far better to purchase the cheaper 22mm (7/8") top and side bar frame. When using this frame with foundation in the super, it must be spaced using narrow plastic ends (35mm) during the first year until the foundation is drawn out, filled with honey, sealed and then extracted. The comb is then stored for use during the following year, when the narrow plastic ends can be replaced by wide plastic ends (47mm) or ten-slot castellated spacers. If wide spacing is used with foundation, the bees will probably draw extra combs in the space between the adjacent sheets of foundation. Eleven frames are required using narrow spacing, these will reduce to nine on wide or castellated spacing. In a good honey year, if you have two hundred supers to extract, a great deal of time is saved by using 22mm flat frames on castellated spacing giving nine frames per super. Only nine frames have to be uncapped and extracted instead of eleven and you get a heavier, more easily uncapped frame. Also, you get a heavier super because the nine-frame super has only ten air-spaces between the combs whereas the eleven-frame super has twelve air-spaces.

### Jobs for February

#### In the Apiary

Monitor hive entrance for build up of dead bees and blockage.

Watch for pollen intake as an indication of egg laying

Preserve equipment

Plant some flowers that will provide food for your bees later in the year

At the hive entrance check for disease

#### At Home

Attend the February district meeting

Bill Cadmore  
Editor

THE HEALTHY HIVE

The BBKA Pictorial Guide to a Healthy Hive - £12.85

Book Revue reply from B.B.K.A.

Thanks for taking the time to study the Guide and I fully appreciate your comments .

The H/H Guide concept was based on the idea of a 'pocket' sized book (admittedly you now need a fairly large pocket!) that could be used as an educational resource for new and improving beekeepers - particularly in an Apiary environment and as such I think it works extremely well. This is surely true as to date you are our only customer who has been disappointed!

The team consulted widely - both amongst fellow beekeepers, Defra, Fera, the NBU and various members of the BBKA Executive and committees before finalising the concept and sourcing the images. A rough draft was available for comment at the Spring Convention, some five months before publication, where it was to say the least enthusiastically received - not least by our sponsors.

Final proof copies - these were exactly as the printed copy you have with the exception of the bio laminate - were sent to Montpellier for entry into the 2009 Apimondia multi-media competition where it was awarded one of only two Gold Medals for a UK product - the other was for a website. This would suggest that it wasn't all that bad!

You probably know that BBKA sell a fully illustrated teaching aid in the Virtual Hive, which contains a full set of picture frames based on the same images of a hive, but none of the disease pictures. Many of these Virtual Hives have been supplied to BK Associations, the National Trust and a few agricultural or horticultural colleges as an educational aid.

I'm pleased to have received your feedback - although a little sad that you are not delighted with the product as so many of our customers clearly are. When we reprint we may be able to incorporate some extra pages - maybe for larger images, together with who knows what other nasties may lurk around the corner for the poor old honey bee.

Best wishes for the New Year

Roger Cullum-Kenyon, MD - BBKA Enterprises Ltd

## Get YBKAEnews Direct!

If you would like us to mail this newsletter directly to your email address then send the following information

Title   FirstName   Surname   Association   emailaddress   to [ybkanews@ntlworld.com](mailto:ybkanews@ntlworld.com)  
This information will be used only to send you YBKA information and will be held securely.

Regional Bee Inspector : Ivor Flatman

NBU office: National Bee Unit, The Food and Environment Research Agency, Sand Hutton, York, UK, YO41 1LZ

Email: [nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01904 462510

Web site: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase/>

## Slugs

### 100 Beekeepers Wanted

If you are a beekeeper who has problems with slugs getting into hives please read on....

Until three years ago I had never seen a slug inside a hive but during these damp years when some colonies have been weak I started to regularly find slugs in colonies. Over winter they are becoming worse pests than mice - at least the mouse guard stops mice - it doesn't stop slugs. And while the slugs don't seem to do a great deal of damage or harm to the colony they do make a mess of combs and the corners of boxes so I would like to prevent slug entry.

So what I'd like from 100 beekeepers is...

1. Suggested ways to stop slugs entering hives. Better still if there is some tale or data to go with the ideas.
2. Volunteers to take part in a research project that I am working on with an M.Sc. postgraduate student.

#### The Research Project

The theory says, and is backed up by experiments with raised beds and copper rings (for plant growing), that slugs will not cross a metal band made from copper. The copper interacts with the chemicals in the mucus trail so that when slugs make contact with copper a toxic reaction occurs between the copper and the slime creating an electric current. The slugs get an electric shock which repels them. The benefits are that it works wet or dry, is very effective, and doesn't kill the slug. The copper must be at least 2" wide, preferably 3" to be a real deterrent.

We would like some beekeepers to volunteer to test this in a controlled trial. We need beekeepers who have colonies kept in pairs (or that can be identified as matched pairs) to apply copper tape (supplied by us) to the legs of one hive in the pair and then to monitor any slug activity within each hive throughout the year during the normal inspection routine.

A protocol sheet and record sheet will be provided so that all participants are applying the copper banding in the same manner and record the same information. If participants could also take photographs to support the research that would be very useful. Assuming useful results are gathered and a paper published then each participant will receive a copy of the paper. Individual participation will not be acknowledged but Y.B.K.A. will.

Want to take part ? If you would like to take part then please email me, Bill Cadmore, using the email address [idlebeekeepers@ntlworld.com](mailto:idlebeekeepers@ntlworld.com)

#### BISHOP BURTON 2010

A GREAT DAYS BEEKEEPING CONFERENCE AND A GREAT LUNCH - £25

A GREAT DAYS BEEKEEPING CONFERENCE AND NO LUNCH - £15

Members come from all over Yorkshire and most have empty seats in their cars so why don't we all try to bring along one or two of the many new members we have ?

Your Secretary has application forms  
Or contact me direct - [bill.cadmore@ntlworld.com](mailto:bill.cadmore@ntlworld.com)

## Report on 2010 BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting (ADM)

The main problem regarding the 50<sup>th</sup> BBKA ADM was in fact, is the meeting to take place of not on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January? It was not until 5pm on the Wednesday prior to the meeting that a decision was made to run the meeting. The poor weather conditions affecting the whole of the country were causing the BBKA quite a few concerns.

As this is my first report and my first experience attending an ADM, I would be only too pleased to get feedback as to the detail you would like reported back on the ADM. It is evident from the ADM delegates pack that there certainly was a lot of business to navigate through on the day. The voting protocol did occasionally not run smoothly and required voting sheets to be destroyed and started again due to a breakdown in procedure. However it does demonstrate that the process is carried out fairly. The day is a certainly a long one, the meeting at BBKA headquarters commenced at 10-30am prompt and finished (eventually) at 6-30pm, with only a short break for lunch and minimal socialising.

The reports from the various committees were presented with only the key points raised to save time in the busy schedule.

Main points are the focus on education and information available to enable training to progress, there is a lot more to come on this subject. More to do with the rapid increase in membership, this is causing some major problems to some of the smaller associations. I don't think in Yorkshire we have the same problems as long as we maintain our education program of events such as our Spring meeting/Bishop Burton/AGM presentations and the vast number of local association lecture and apiary events. The problem is beginning to shift to the newly established beekeepers (i.e. previous beginners) we need to focus on this aspect. A lot of debate was centred on the competence of those doing training - obviously a difficult area to address. The plastic OMLET long hive is bringing in a clutch of new beekeepers and the process is raising its own difficulties, instructions do however come with the hive, but as we all know keeping bees is not a simple as following a set of instructions.

The Technical Committee announced an increase in the funds for research (£28k in budget + £63k donation) and a number of research projects are now commencing to put the cash to use.

I suppose the subject that interest us all the most are the proposals put forward to the ADM. The particularly contentious ones being the "Pesticide Endorsement" and the "Instruction to rejoin the FERA Project Board" Both of these proposals are hugely complex and carry a burden of an enormous amount of politics. The various emails I received on both these subjects and the information from our YBKA AGM formed the basis of what I was to be instructed to vote. I must comment however that the information presented to the Delegates and on the website is only a snippet of the work that the BBKA is involved with, it is also easy to slant your understanding to support your own views. When the fuller picture is explained then the picture clears.

Regarding the pesticide proposal this was defeated by a close margin in the card vote (25f/30a/3abs) it then went to a membership vote (4588f/9829a/1025abs) which became clearer. Had the vote gone in favour then it would have served to stifle any future dialogue on this very complex issue. [Imagine a farmer wanting to spray his crops and none of the products indicated the effect on bees - which one would he choose? (Cheapest), how does he know the

effect? Is it not a good situation to have a note on a product or endorsement?]. A suggestion is that the BBKA logo is not the indication of endorsement was taken on board. The subject of taking monies from pesticide companies is another issue and is part of previous ADM proposals. I personally think the discussion on this subject must continue via the BBKA technical committees.

The rejoining of the FERA project board was also rejected (7f/39a/10abs) the reason this was rejected is to do with the immense amount of time and effort the BBKA Exec have invested in getting close to Government representatives and the Opposition Parties. The ADM thought that this approach actually puts BBKA in a favourable position (due to confidentiality issues further information cannot yet be reported) BBKA have not ruled out rejoining the project board but it is felt to “instruct” rejoining compromises the political effort and position BBKA currently have generated.

YBKA have altered the timing of the next AGM to enable the ADM proposals to be available to members. Comments at the YBKA AGM will be sought to provide further guidance to myself as the Yorkshire Delegate as to how the members of Yorkshire would like me to represent your wishes, hence the timing change to allow more time to collect comments.

In case anyone is confused there are basically 3 options for the ADM Delegate:-

1. “Mandated” by the members as to how to vote, and cannot change.
2. “Instructed” by the members as to the preferred vote but can listen to the comments at the ADM and make a final decision based on what is reported at the meeting.
3. Make up own mind at the meeting.

These options can differ for each ADM proposal.

Tony Jefferson  
Yorkshire Delegate

## Auction Dates

Lincoln Auction is on Sat 3rd of April

held on the Lincoln show ground starting at 10-am

Nottingham BKA Auction is on 10<sup>th</sup> of April

at the Newark showground Winthorpe NG24 2NY starting  
at 10am.

Beverley Auction is on 25th April

at Woodmansey Village Hall, Long Lane (South of  
Woodmansey on A1174) HU17 ORN.

York Auction is on.....tba

## Sad News

I have just heard of the sad death of Bill Spence - a great beekeeper and a very positive and supportive member of YBKA. He had not been well for some time but had deteriorated noticeably since the summer following a nasty dog bite. We send our best wishes to his family and to his association.

### Bill Spence.

Bill's interest in bees began as a youngster over fifty years ago!

His family were farmers and at that time, as many as 1 in 3 farmers kept bees. He grew up appreciating the problems and challenges that faced a struggling farming industry. During the time that he was chairman of SRBKA and also since giving up 'The Chair', Bill had always encouraged new beginners in a practical manner offering 'hands on' experience. He liked to take people 'under his wing' so to speak!

He had a wealth of knowledge that he had gained over the many years that he had kept bees. He was always ready to share his knowledge whilst at the same time remain open minded to any new ideas or initiatives.

After losing his wife, he had decided to step down as chairman and wind down his beekeeping activities but found that the beekeeping gave him a purpose and he was able to devote more time to it. About the same time, aware that beekeeping was a dying craft and that beekeeping associations had been declining in numbers, with a lack of new members replacing older retiring members, he felt that he should do something to encourage newcomers to beekeeping. Coupled with this, he had always felt very strongly that farmers should diversify and he particularly felt that he would like to reach the farming community. He had been in touch with agricultural correspondents, NFU secretaries, and Country File but although interest was expressed, nothing came of it. He then had the idea of setting up an apiary and running training courses within the Association.

From January 2003 onwards, Bill had a mission! Since then he worked extremely hard to secure a grant from DEFRA, enabling him, with help from other SRBKA members, to set up his 'dream' apiary. He had attended seminars to address farmers directly and had put on displays of honey and other by-products of beekeeping, the result being that farmers did show interest - a lot of interest! Bill organised publicity through press, radio, and TV. The result was that he was inundated with calls from people far and wide! He referred large numbers of people to local associations and 24 people were enrolled onto the first training course which included six farmers and three foresters! A second course ran the following September. All course members had been offered a nucleus of bees to start them off in their beekeeping. Bill initiated plans to set up a queen rearing station, the aim being to flood the area with BIBA drones and supply association members with BIBA mated queens free of charge, a small charge being made to non members. "The whole of the programme has taken off beyond my wildest dreams"

Despite setbacks in his health, and he clearly suffered pain which, from time to time was debilitating, he nevertheless continued with relentless enthusiasm and continued to inspire others. His health began to deteriorate noticeably throughout the last six months or so and he died peacefully in his sleep in the early hours of yesterday morning. Needless to say, he was a colourful character and to the many people who knew him well, will be sadly missed, especially by the members of SRBKA.

Monica Coates.  
Secretary of SRBKA

**YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

**EVENTS CALENDAR 2009/10**

<b>EVENT</b>	<b>VENUE</b>	<b>DATE</b>
BBKA Module tutorial	Normanby Pavilion GYS	19 December 2009
BBKA Module tutorial	Normanby Pavilion GYS	9 January 2010
BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting	Stoneleigh Warks	16 January 2010
YBKA GPC meeting	Normanby Pavilion GYS	5 February 2010
BBKA Module tutorial	Normanby Pavilion GYS	20 February 2010
YBKA Spring Conference	Normanby Pavilion GYS	6 March 2010
BBKA Module Examinations	Normanby Pavilion GYS	20 March 2010
YBKA Honey Judges workshop	Normanby Pavilion GYS	27 March 2010
BBKA Stoneleigh Conference	Stoneleigh Warks	16,17,18 April 2010
YBKA Bishop Burton Conference	Bishop Burton College Beverley	24 April 2010
YBKA GPC meeting	Normanby Pavilion GYS	7 May 2010
YBKA Queen Rearing course	Normanby Pavilion GYS	12 & 13 June 2010
YAS Countryside Days	Great Yorkshire Showground	15 & 16 June 2010
YBKA GPC meeting	Normanby Pavilion GYS	18 June 2010
Great Yorkshire Show	Normanby Pavilion GYS	13, 14, 15 July
YBKA GPC meeting	Normanby Pavilion GYS	24 September 2010
YAS Countryside Live	Great Yorkshire Showground	23 & 24 October 2010
YBKA GPC meeting	Normanby Pavilion GYS	3 December 2010
YBKA AGM	Normanby Pavilion GYS	4 December 2010

**March Conference 6th March**

Dr Helen Crews

Head of Inspectorate Programme

The Food and Research Agency

Topic: Healthy Bees Plan



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## FREE TRAINING

Want to have a Trainers Qualification ?

Worth considering for anybody teaching beekeeping.....

The Health Bees Plan board are still willing to take application for the Train the Trainer funding for those wanting to take the C&G 7303 (PTLLS) course Some courses won't start at your local college until September & the offer is likely to be extended into 2010-11.

Yorkshire Beekeepers association

# March Conference

## 6th March

Dr Helen Crews

Head of Inspectorate Programme  
The Food and Research Agency

Topic: Healthy Bees Plan

The YBKA Pavilion  
Yorkshire Showground  
Harrogate

10.00 a.m.

Free buffet lunch  
Tea & Coffee

**THE YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**



In conjunction with Bishop Burton College

**Saturday 24th April 2010**

**YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION  
52nd CONFERENCE  
AT BISHOP BURTON COLLEGE, BEVERLEY  
EAST RIDING of YORKSHIRE**

***"Making the best of Beekeeping knowledge to  
improve your practical skills"***

**Guest Lecturers**

**Dr Giles Budge**  
Research Co-ordinator  
National Bee Unit

**Dr Jamie Ellis**  
Assistant Professor of Entomology  
University of Florida

**Willie Robson**  
Chain Bridge Honey Farm

Sponsored by Northern Bee Books

**Programme**

0900 – 0930	Registration
0930 – 0935	Welcome and Introductions
0935 – 1030	<b>Dr Giles Budge</b> Colony losses
1030 - 1050	Coffee
1050 – 1150	<b>Dr Jamie Ellis</b> Plight of the Honey Bee
1200 – 1300	<b>Willie Robson</b> Practical beekeeping
	<b>Luncheon</b>
1400 – 1500	<b>Dr Jamie Ellis</b> The Ecology of the Small Hive Beetle
1500 - 1545	Discussion
1545– 1615	Tea
	Goodbyes and disperse

Booking Form, please submit by the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010

**THE YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

Saturday 24th April 2010

**AT BISHOP BURTON COLLEGE, BEVERLEY  
EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE**

**"Making the best of Beekeeping knowledge to  
improve your practical skills"**

Name .....  
Address.....  
.....tel.....

~~~~~ No. of tickets @ £25.00 including lunch £.....  
~~~~~ No. of tickets @ £15.00 excluding lunch £.....  
~~~~~ No. of tickets Student and young persons  
@ £20.00 including lunch £.....  
Total £.....

Please advise if you have any dietary requirements.

Please send your remittance to:  
**W Cadmore**, 104 Hall Lane Horsforth Leeds LS18 5JG  
Telephone 0113 216 0482

Please make cheques payable to Yorkshire Beekeepers Association

**Our Speakers for the day**

**Dr Giles Budge**

Dr Giles Budge has worked in plant pathology research and development for 10 years. Giles started work at the National Bee Unit in October 2007 as the research co-ordinator. Prior to this, he was responsible for the development of real-time PCR-based diagnostics for bee pests and diseases and the delivery of the EFB study.

**Dr Jamie Ellis**

Jamie Ellis is Assistant Professor of Entomology and Nematology at the University of Florida USA. He obtained his BSc in Biology from the University of Georgia and his PhD in Entomology from Rhodes University South Africa. His PhD thesis dealt with the Ecology and Control of Small Hive Beetles. Jamie's research experience includes effects of toxins on bees, genetic resistance of honey bees to pests/disease. He has published numerous scientific articles, abstracts and proceedings, trade articles. Jamie has presented at a number of international and national conferences and has collaborated 25 international scientists on various projects.

**Willie Robson**

Willie a commercial beekeeper runs the Chain Bridge Honey Farm, and with his beekeeper son Stephen, keep almost 2,000 hives of bees, all within a 40-mile radius of the honey farm, just west of Berwick-upon-Tweed.

**Other attractions on the day**

**Northern Bee Books**

A variety of the latest beekeeping publications will be on sale.

**National Bee Unit**