

Y.B.K.A. eNews

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Volume 14 : June 2010

Welcome to the June 2010 eNewsletter : Issued 29th May 2010

A short newsletter this month.... I hope that you are all as busy as I am with bees. This weather is driving me crazy with bees bringing in great crops for a few days, then being kept inside during a cold spell, and then wanting to swarm. Still, its better than the last few years isn't it?

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A Message from Our Chairman

Time really seems to fly, and with this year already half way through, most beekeepers I have spoken to seem to be having a far better start than the last two previous years. They seem to be getting in a surplus of honey for the first time in a few years and I think most are top side of their swarm control. The weather has been a little patchy in places - hot one week and cold the next, not perfect but all this considered I think we seem to be having a reasonable start to the year for once. Let's just hope it continues through to autumn.

This is the time of year when a lot of our newer members and some veterans are putting in for their basic exam, so if you have a few within your association this would be a very good time to hold a refresher day for them; going through the things they will need to know for the exam and ensuring all their equipment is up to scratch. Let's try to make it a record number of passes for Yorkshire beekeepers in all aspects of exams including all the modules. The Y.B.K.A committee are trying to support all the B.B.K.A exams and are holding various courses throughout the coming years to help all our members achieve a higher state of excellence with their beekeeping, we got over a dozen members through the No1 module this year. Next year we are asking for members interested in taking modules 2 and 3 to sign up for our support course and we will once again have top tutors there to help you all not forgetting our very good education Officer Wendy Maslin. Further details of the course will be posted in the New Year.

This month we have our "Queen Rearing" course held at our headquarters, the pavilion at Harrogate, when our specialist tutor Clive De Brun will be showing us all the finer point of this craft over two days the 12th and 13th of June. This is a first for Yorkshire, all associations were invited to send a representative, though not all are attending. I hope the weather and bees hold good for all, and a better year is had by all our beekeepers throughout the county

Dave Shannon
Chairman

June

So all of the books say something like this....

The early part of June marks the transition between the Spring flowers and the blooming of the Summer flowers. Nectar may be scarce in some places and seasons. This is the 'June Gap' . Feeding may be necessary, especially if you have removed the Spring honey. Should an extended dry period occur, and they do occasionally, make sure a shallow dish of water is available to the bees. They need it to mobilise their honey stores and to raise brood.

In most districts bees will swarm sometime this month if left to their own devices, earlier to the Southwest and later to the Northeast. All colonies require regular, nine day examination. Queen rearing should be undertaken at this time during a nectar flow. The queens raised this month will get a chance to mate well in warm July weather. Now begin to prepare your heather harvest colonies. Those need vigorous young queens and abundant foragers.

Now for what has really happened and may go on happening.....

May has seen a super period of good weather which has coincided with, firstly the spring tree flowering and then a second period coinciding with the second half of the rape flowering period interrupted by a very cold snap. Colonies have exploded into a frenzy of making queen cells and artificial swarm control has caused many beekeepers to suffer IES - Insufficient Equipment Syndrome.

And forget this phrase "colonies should be examined every 8/9 days" - colonies need to be examined every 6/7 days - if you knock down queen cells they will be rebuilt within hours and the bees can be leaving immediately the cells are sealed. If you want to keep those bees then be ready to artificially swarm at the earliest opportunity!!!!

And don't forget that even an expert can miss a queen cell. Two pairs of eyes are better than one to look over combs where the bees have really gone to town building cells. The chart showing the development stages of the queen, given below, may help.

As mentioned last month the BBKA provides some excellent information on swarming, links to which are provided below;

SWARMS

SWARM CONTROL FOR THE BEGINNER

COLLECTING A SWARM

If you have been able to get a good crop in spring then extract the honey now because the prediction is for continued good weather this summer (just look at the Ash and the Oak) so you may need those frames and boxes.

Make sure that your queens are marked. It makes swarm control much easier.

[Bill Cadmore, Editor](#)
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Brussels and Paris to spend £2m on pesticide-free bee hotels

It sounds like the sort of scheme to whip eurosceptics into a fury — £1 million spent by Brussels on building hotels for French bees. But scientists insist that the project, launched this month in Lyons, could help to slow the decline of the European bee population, saving vegetables, fruit, flowers — and billions of euros.

The theory is that pesticide use has become so widespread in farming regions that wild bees would be better off in towns that have banned pesticides and insecticides in parks and public gardens, said Frédéric Vyghen, of Arthropolia, an environmental association running the project — Urbanbees — with the French National Institute for Agronomic Research and Lyons University.

The five-year programme will cost £2 million, with half coming from the European Union and the rest from French local authorities. Researchers are to build 48 insect “hotels” in and around Lyons. They will be 4m long, 2m high and be made of earth, bricks and plant stalks.

Mr Vyghen said homeowners would be asked to plant indigenous flowers for the benefit of France’s 1,000 species of bees and to mow lawns less. France has 1.3 million hives generating sales of £100 million last year. “If they died out, we’d have no vegetables, fruit — nothing,” said Mr Vyghen.

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Queen Bee

European Honey Bee - Queen Development Stages

R Burns Handout 7/11/2006

	Day	Stage		
Egg is laid	1	egg		Kingdom: Animalia
	2	egg		Phylum: Arthropoda
	3	egg	hatching	Class: Insecta
	4	1st larval	1st instar (moult)	The best queens reared from 1-2 day-old larvae Order: Hymenoptera
	5	2nd larval	2nd instar (moult)	Family: Apidae
	6	3rd larval	3rd instar (moult)	Genus: Apis
	7	4th larval	4th instar (no moult)	Sealing begins Species: Apis mellifera
Cell is sealed	8	larva	gorging	Sealed; gorging on remaining food in cell
	9	larva / pre-pupa		Cocoon spinning begins
	10	pre-pupa	5th moult	Pupal form develops
	11	pupa		
Red eye	12	pupa		Color develops in the eye
Yellowing of thorax	13	pupa		Color begins to develop in the thorax
Yellowing of abdomen	14	pupa		Color begins to develop in the abdomen
Pupa moult	15	pupa	6th moult	The wings, legs, and mouth parts are freed; the pupa becomes an adult and is able to chew thru the cell. The queen emerges
Emergence	16	adult		
Orientation Flights	18-23	adult		Adult takes orientation flights 3-5 days later.
Mating	24-31	adult		Adult takes mating flights
Egg laying	2-5 days	adult		Mated adult begins to lay after mating

Kingdom: Animalia	Order: Hymenoptera	Species: Apis mellifera (common western honey bee)	
Phylum: Arthropoda	Family: Apidae	Apis mellifera carnica	Apis mellifera scutellata
Class: Insecta	Genus: Apis	Apis mellifera ligustica	Apis mellifera adansonii

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The BAD BEEKEEPERS CLUB

Bill Turnbull

ISBN 978-1-84744-398-4,

Published by Sphere

I find this rather confusing - myself writing a review on a book!.

Those who know me will understand I am not one to even read a book, let alone write a review on one. If I admit to being a Chartered Engineer by profession you might understand that I use the index of a book, look up what is required and then get on with getting my hands dirty, usually the books are manuals on tractors, cars or classic bikes - certainly not books on bees.

My experience with beekeeping books is broadly similar, I pride myself on having never read one fully, but I have opened a few up from time to time, I soon seem to disagree with the author, put it aside and go off onto other things. Suppose I have a relatively short attention span (I can't watch a film for the same reason). My beekeeping knowledge is all practical gained from my Father, Allan and attending YBKA/BBKA lectures.

So why did I end up reading this book from cover to cover ?. Simply I could not put it down. I found it written in a humorous style with Bill poking fun at himself, basically I enjoyed it. We all feel we know Bill Turnbull very well from his BBC reporting and his presenter slot on BBC breakfast TV. I even wished him "Good Morning" at the last Stoneleigh Convention and for a moment wondered why he did not recognise me.

The Bad Beekeepers Club (Bill's second "BBC") is about his experiences getting involved in beekeeping, from wondering in amazement at a swarm being collected from his garden, then a few years later embarking on his first beginners class, through his first experience of getting stung and his first honey harvest. It also covers his (brief) involvement in Strictly Come Dancing with the professional dancer Karen Hardy. It is a really amusing reflection on his experiences and the beekeeping detail is basic, accurate and to the point - ideal to concentrate the theoretical details that are spinning around in the heads of all the new beekeepers all associations have at present.

So whilst it is not a beekeeping text book it is a useful read for beginners, as it reduces some of the confusing terms we use in beekeeping which beginners sometimes struggle to get to grips with. Bill does not promote the book as a beekeeping guide, but is a handy guide as to what NOT to do. Hopefully a few new beekeepers can learn from Bill's mistakes.

Generally a good, fun book with fairly accurate and simple beekeeping details that would not be out of place in any association library.

Tony Jefferson BEng CEng FIEE
Stonelea Apiculture

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Calendar

YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**EVENTS CALENDAR 2009/10**

EVENT	VENUE	DATE
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

GPC

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Bee losses lower despite harsh winter

BRITISH beekeepers are breathing a collective sigh of relief as a new study showed a slight improvement in winter survival rates, despite heavy snows in winter.

Figures released by the British Beekeepers' Association (BBKA) show losses at an average of 17 per cent - around one in six colonies - down from 19 per cent last year and 30 per cent during the winter of 2007-8, which followed an exceptionally wet summer. But there was a marked regional variation, with beekeepers in the north of England and Scotland reporting losses of more than a quarter of colonies while those in the balmy south-west suffered only 12.8 per cent losses.

While losses were still painful for individual beekeepers overall the number of colonies had doubled over the past three years, due largely to publicity over the threat to bees attracting new blood - membership of the BBKA has grown by 20 per cent over the past year to 17,500.

The news was less encouraging in the United States, however, where winter losses were reported to have risen again this year. Federal agencies met in San Francisco recently, with regulators from California and Canada to discuss the problem. While losses in Britain are mainly down due to bad weather, poor nutrition and habitat loss, the San Francisco conference has again pointed to pesticides as a contributing factor. A recent study in the scientific journal PLoS (Public Library of Science) One found 121 types of pesticides within 887 wax, pollen, bee and hive samples, and about three out of five pollen and wax samples from 23 states contained at least one systemic pesticide.

Other research in the U.S. has suggested that a 'perfect storm' of a group of pathogens including the microsporidian *Nosema ceranae* and a family of viruses may be working together to cause colony collapse disorder (CCD). Scientists from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) were due to report their results to the American Society for Microbiology in San Diego on May 25. 'There might be a synergism between two very different pathogens', says Jay Evans of the USDA Agricultural Research Service. 'When they show up together there is a significant correlation with colony decline.' Evans' team examined bees from both healthy and declining colonies.

They found a slightly higher incidence of the pathogen *N. ceranae* in sick colonies, but it was not statistically significant until they began pairing it with other pathogens. 'The presence of that fungus and two or three RNA viruses from the Dicistroviridae family is a pretty strong predictor of collapse,' says Evans. The discovery chimes with research in Spain that also blamed *N. ceranae*.

It seems the nosema weakens the bees, allowing the other viruses to gain ground. In colonies with higher nosema numbers virus levels were found to be two or three times greater than in healthy colonies.

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