

Y.B.K.A. eNews

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION



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Our Chairmans message

Bee Breeding, Mead & Propolis

Most of this issue is dedicated to the bee breeding issue - an idea that Y.B.K.A. is trying to promote at district and even 'group of friends' level.

Breeding your own bees has many advantages - you breed from bees that do well, and show good characteristics, in the area in which you live. The process of doing this makes you become a better, more skilled beekeeper. The area around you has a drone population that you are happy to have your queens mate with.

The method of bee breeding you use is up to you - read up on the subject and talk to more experienced people around you - use the simple 'colony split' method, the Miller method, graft, use jenter or cupkit - do what suits you.

There is obviously some discussion about the livestock you start with. Many people will promote the black bee as the most suitable for our area while others sing the praises of carniolians etc. The truth is that many of us have *Apis mellifera* ? and will breed from these hybrids. That's fine as long as the offspring show the characteristics we want.

What Y.B.K.A. would like is for people to think twice before importing mated queens, nucs or

whole colonies from elsewhere.

While we all know that the grass is always greener with another type of bee we should also think about what the introduction of drones from these new colonies might do to the local genepool and what hybrids might be developed as a result.

There is little point you trying to breed varroa tolerant bees if your neighbour keeps introducing new stocks at random.

So - going back to the beginning again - the GPC wants to encourage local groups to work together to breed bees. In doing so beekeepers will improve their husbandry skills, control disease better and have larger honey crops. We would also encourage the production and sale of local bees to new members who join your group. Selling 30 nucs at £100 brings in £3000. It would be much better for a district association to get this money rather than the cash going to a bee breeder - the association could then invest the money in better facilities for members. And members get the bees that the association likes so that the drones in the area are the drones you want.

Feedback from the meeting was encouraging - so lets make it happen.

Bill

APRIL

JOBS FOR THE MONTH

Check through colonies for the condition of the queen

Is disease present ?

Start your swarm prevention inspections



April is the month that your bees should now be developing into good strong colonies, and with the warmer weather conditions that should accompany the month your queens egg laying should be very much on the increase.

This is also the month when your colonies will start to form their first male (Drone) cells in readiness for the beginning of the swarm and supersedure season within your bee colonies. Pollen should now be visible at your entrances in abundance as the queen gets to work on the colony increase, and your bees are replenishing their food supplies that were depleted over the winter months. Never be complaisant in April, for if a sudden cold snap comes along your bees may still need to be fed to keep the queens laying-rate up and ensure all the new bees and brood have sufficient stores. It is very important to now check through your colonies to ensure the queen is laying well and the hive is expanding.

Your queens may also need remarking as this will pay off when the bees start to form queen cells in readiness to swarm, for it is essential to be able to find your queens to allow you to manipulate the colonies correctly to prevent loosing them. Sometimes in these cold snaps you may have a colony with more brood than bees to cover them, and in these circumstances' on your inspection can take extra bees from one of your strongest hives and after first spraying them with a weak sugar syrup, shake an extra frame of bees into a weaker hive to boost them up to cover the whole of the brood.

It is very important to check the frame thoroughly both sides to make sure your queen is not on it before carrying out this procedure, if she is return her to the hive she came from straight away after her inspection and remarking, this will ensure you don't loose any brood through being chilled. You should always ensure you do your inspection on a warm and

preferably windless day around mid day if possible to carry out these procedures, and try to be as quick as possible and at the same time calm and focused. From now on it is vital to keep records and to carry out regular inspection of the brood checking for queen cells.

A 9 day max. cycle between inspections should be sufficient to prevent the colonies from absconding. You should also ensure your bees have sufficient space from now on and don't get overcrowded. If you think they are then add another super.

Here are the things you should be looking for in April.

- 1 Has your colony got a queen present?
- 2 Is she laying well to a good and even pattern?
- 3 Are there any signs of disease or abnormalities? (If so treat them a.s.a.p)
- 4 Are there any queen cells or enlarged cups present? (If so you may need to do a manipulation on the colony.)
- 5 Has the colony got enough room? (If not add a super)
- 6 Has the colony got sufficient food and store to last it until your next inspection? (If not feed)
7. Number your hives if not already done so
- 8 Keep a record for each individual hive and all these pointers to help you on your next inspections
- 9 Ensure you have a supply of new frames all made up both brood and super.
10. Have some nucs. ready with drawn comb preferably for your manipulations

Happy Beekeeping
Dave Shannon

YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION MEAD DAY

Organised in conjunction with the
International Federation of Mead and
Honey Wine Judges



A practical workshop with lectures on “Mead and Honey Wines” undertaken by Erica Osborn – IFMHWJ examination moderator and Michael Badger IFMHWJ examination overseer.

Date 21st May 2011 – Venue – Normanby Pavilion, Great Yorkshire Showground Harrogate.

Proceedings

10:00 – 10:30 Coffee and Tea

10:30 – 10:35 Welcome and introductions

10:35 – 11:00 Types of Meads and Honey Wines for both exhibition and consumption

11:00 – 11:10 Questions

11:10 – 12:20 The making of mead – the honey and ingredients - method

12:20 – 12:30 Questions

12:30 – 13:45 Lunch

13:45 – 15:15 Exhibiting; judging technique; tasting – the common pitfalls of samples and awards

15:15 – 15:30 Open discussion and questions

15:30 Tea & goodbyes & disperse

THE YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

In conjunction with Bishop Burton College
Saturday 9th April 2011

YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
53rd CONFERENCE
AT BISHOP BURTON COLLEGE, BEVERLEY
EAST RIDING of YORKSHIRE

" Honey Bees and Beekeepers in our Natural Environment "

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.

Prof. Keith S. Delaplane

Professor, Department of Entomology, University of Georgia,

Prof. Delaplane's expertise is in honey bee management, sustainable bee health management, bee foraging ecology, social evolution, and crop pollination. He oversees an off-campus lab of one dedicated state-funded technician, one soft-money technician, 1-2 graduate students, and 1-2 hourly workers. The lab work over 200 hives. He is the author of several books on beekeeping.

John Hendrie

John has been involved with bees and beekeeping almost all his life, having been stung at the age of two by one of his father's colonies. Since graduating from university in 1971, he has held many offices in local beekeeping associations, including branch secretary (12 years) and treasurer of Kent BKA (8 years), He was appointed to the exam board of the BBKA in 1991, is a vice chairman of the National Honey show and a director of Bee Craft magazine.

Programme

0900 – 0930	Registration
0930 – 0935	Welcome and Introductions
0935 – 1030	Prof. Keith S. Delaplane Honey bee ecology and its application to beekeepers
1030 - 1050	Coffee
1050 – 1150	Dr Giles Budge Colony losses
1200 – 1300	John Hendrie Communication in bees
	Luncheon
1400 – 1500	Prof. Keith S. Delaplane Honey bee genetics and breeding
1500 - 1545	Discussion Talk with the speakers in smaller groups
1545– 1615	Tea Goodbyes and disperse

Other Attractions**Northern Bee Books**

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

National Bee Unit

An information stand will be available.

Stamfordham Beekeeping Supplies

Suppliers of quality beekeeping supplies

Yorkshire Beehives

Hive made to order by local craftsman

Compak-Spink

Suppliers of all sorts of containers and honey jars

Application Form

THE YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Saturday 9th April 2011

BISHOP BURTON COLLEGE - Application Form

Name

Address.....

.....

.....

.....post code.....

tel.....

email

(please print)

..... 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 give names of other people you are buying tickets for so that we can prepare name badges for them.

Phone or email to book
 and pay on the day

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

Bee Breeding Conference

26th March 2011

Normanby Pavillion - Great Yorkshire Showground

10.30 – 15.30

Many beekeepers think that bees are bees are bees.

Since 1919, different strains of bee have been imported into this country and the resultant mating of these bees has produced, within two generations, nasty bad tempered bees. Mr Sherriff's beekeeping "armour" has enabled such bad tempered bees to be tolerated. The other real downside, to these nasty bees, is that the general public are intolerant of hives in back gardens. Another aspect of these mongrels is that beginners do not know what they are acquiring and how prolific they are. They have bought one brood box and find that they need two or three, and they swarm and swarm.

When I have mentioned, to those who buy foreign strains, that they have been bred and reared under Government controlled breeding programmes, they are aghast at the thought of such an "imposition" being instigated by a UK Government.

By working together we can improve the bees in an area, the matings can be compatible and at the same time allow for the selection of colonies for single or double brood box management in National, Langstroth, Dadant, Commercial or 14 X 12 hives or even the Kenyan top bar hive and the Abe Warre hive.

If two or three of you see the sense in working together and improving your bees, then just make a decision and raise queens for all of your hives from one agreed colony, apart from reasonable temperament it does not matter what the bees are so long as enough new queens are produced to have daughter queens and mother queen in all your group hives. In the second season you will (a) have a cloud of related drones and (b) start to compare colonies from one mother. The important thing is to produce related queens.

In bee breeding it is easy to put up barriers to action, ignore them and just go for it. Your beekeeping will become more interesting as you realise that you control your beekeeping environment. When you have nice, hard working bees, show them to your doubting friends, and they will be converted. When they say "can I have some queens" say no. I will give you some eggs; take pride in raising the queens yourself.

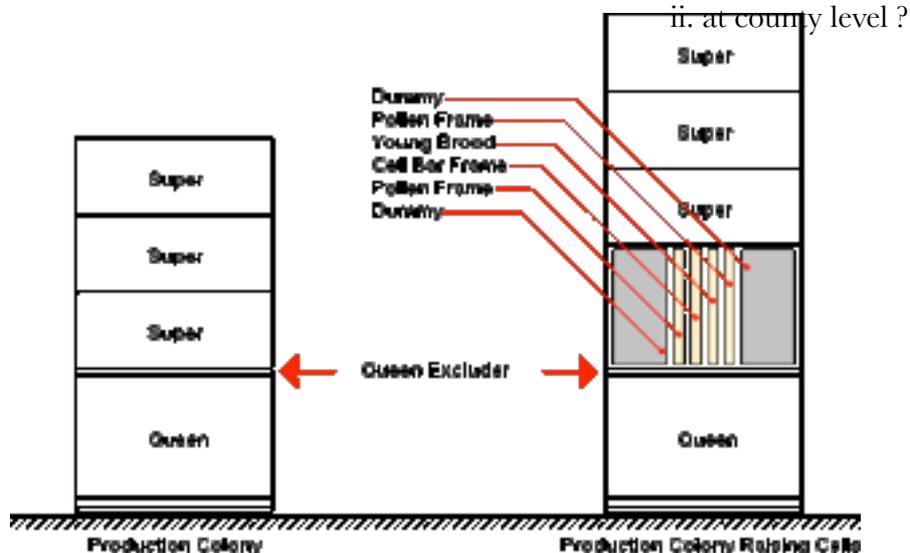
David Allan



Bee Breeding Programme

10 Questions

1. Do you think that a Yorkshire Bee Breeding Programme is a good idea ?
2. Are you prepared to get involved or take a lead in your district ?
Can your district association identify
 - i. experienced experts ?
 - ii. Leaders or champions ?
3. Do you know all the beekeepers who live in your 5 Km square ?
Do you know of any beekeeper in your district who imports queens or bees ?
Are you in a migratory beekeeping area (during the mating season) ?
4. Are the bees in your district healthy ?
Are all of your beekeepers registered on Beebase ?
5. Do you have the hive records needed to be able to select the best colonies to breed from ?
6. Can you identify what help you need in order to breed better bees ?
7. Are you able to identify the bee breeding method that would best suit you ?
Can you list some different methods and the pros and cons of each ?
8. What do you think
 - i. your district committee should do to help take this forward ?
 - ii. Yorkshire BKA should do to help take this forward ?
9. How should we share
 - i. good practice ?
 - ii. information ?
 - iii. tips or how to make things work better ?
10. How should we record progress and results
 - i. locally ?
 - ii. at county level ?



Y. B. K. A. County Bee Breeding Course.

Notes on assessing and recording to improve your bees.

by David Allen March 2011

Before we can decide from which colony we are to raise queens, we have to abandon our “management only” view of Beekeeping and learn other tricks which make the craft more interesting and rewarding.

The first two requirements in strain improvement are deliberately killing a queen (culling) and adopting a method of recording your assessments of colony temperament and performance. As Confucius said” The weakest ink is better than the strongest memory. This was in the days before gel pens and dictaphones.

The nasty temperament found in so many colonies in Britain, is not a natural characteristic of native British Bees. It has been caused by the importation and subsequent cross mating of those imported and local strains subsequent to the Isle of Wight disease outbreak in 1919. For one person to improve their bees is possible but a challenge. For a group of two or preferable three beekeepers or more working together it is a cinch.

What do I really want from my colonies, apart from the best honey harvest possible, my aims are:-

1. Management of colonies without the use of smoke,
2. No following or greeting bees, (such colonies make our beekeeping fraught and the relationship with our neighbours intolerable).
3. Bees steady on the comb, no jumping, no running and no voluntary stinging.
4. Low numbers of queen cells (target 5 or 6)
5. Good collectors and storsers of pollen.
6. Good hygienic behaviour as a prerequisite for good health.

Once the temperament and harvest are scoring high I would seek to select for: -

1. Low use of propolis.
2. Good comb building zeal (necessary for quality cut comb or section honey)

Assessing bee colonies is subjective but in my experience easily learned by beekeepers and assessment criteria quickly understood to become a consensus by a group.

The basic scoring is as follows: -

1. A bad fault
2. A Fault
3. Tolerable
4. Virtuous
5. Virtue.

As we improve our colonies, our award of high scores (5) will change as their virtues improve. The goal posts will, over the years, move. What you thought excellent in 2011 will not match your expectations in 2016. A Two year programme can see a vast improvement in your strain of bee. Stop learning! start dying!

Yorkshire Beekeepers Association Bee Breeding Record Card

Apiary				Mother Ref. No.				Queen ref. No.				Mark				Clip
Date	Non-Jump	Non-Run	Non-Sting	Non-Follow	Frames of Stores	Empty Store Frames	Pollen	Queen Present	Queen Cells	Brood Boxes	Super Boxes	Honey Taken	Sugar Fed	Fondant fed	Pollen Subs. fed	Comment
Queen description				Year Raised				How Raised				Strain		Peculiarities	Drone Description	
Main Virtues				Main Points				Best use of this queen Queen Breeder Drone Breeder Honey Production				Health			Breeder	

Yorkshire Beekeepers Association Bee Breeding Record Card

Apiary				Mother Ref. No.				Queen ref. No.				Mark				Clip
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Queen description				Year Raised				How Raised				Strain		Peculiarities	Drone Description	
Main Virtues				Main Points				Best use of this queen Queen Breeder Drone Breeder Honey Production				Health			Breeder	

Are your bees the best to breed from ?

Bee	Pros	Cons
Carniolan Honey Bee <i>Apis mellifera carnica</i>	Earlier morning forager Forages on colder and wetter days than most other bees Overwinters well on small stores, as queen stops laying in the autumn Explosive build up in early spring Exceptionally gentle and easy to work May interrupt brood rearing during times of drought Does not typically propolize heavily Creates less brace and burr comb Crosses well with other varieties	Likely to swarm unless carefully managed If pollen is scarce brood rearing greatly diminishes
Feral Honey Bee <i>Apis mellifera ...</i>	Genetically diverse Often acclimated to the area they are present in May be captured for free	Not commercially available (must be captured, or obtained through interbreeding with local drones) Not selected by humans Feral nesting cavities may contain American Foulbrood
Western European Honey Bee <i>Apis mellifera mellifera</i>	Overwinter exceptionally well Decent yield also in poor years Good sparetime beekeeping Needs very moderate food supplies	Slow Spring build up
Italian Honey Bee <i>Apis mellifera ligustica</i>	Good beginner bee Readily builds comb Unparalleled comb builders Only moderate tendency to swarm Relatively easy and calm to work with Lower range propolis producer	Continuous brood rearing continues after honey flow ceases More likely to starve during long winters Poor flight orientation, highly prone to drifting Aggressive foragers, causing tendency to rob
Buckfast <i>Apis mellifera: hybrid</i>	Extremely gentle, with low sting instinct Resistant to Chalkbrood Low swarm instinct Overwinters exceptionally well Well suited to cool, wet climates	Not widely available Builds up slowly in spring Poor early spring pollinators

Assessments and Examinations

As we turn our attention to the active beekeeping season then it is time to think about the practical beekeeping assessments.

I would encourage any beekeeper, and especially any new beekeepers who have not taken the basic assessment to consider doing so. It is a measure of beekeeping skill and knowledge at the basic level and is the gateway to the further practical assessments and modular exams.

I would further encourage you to take a look at the BBKA website and view the syllabus. There is everything there to help you prepare for the assessment.

Completed application forms with fee should be sent directly to me.

For the past two winters YBKA have run a series of tutorials in support of the modular examinations. This has enabled a small group of interested beekeepers to meet together for teaching based on the module they were sitting the following March. It has also been a source of shared information and support. Modules 1 – 3 have been covered. The meetings have been held on a Saturday morning in the YBKA pavilion in Harrogate.

As I now look to planning for this autumn, I really need to know what as Yorkshire members you would like in the way of support centrally for the modular examinations. We can continue along current lines or look to varying the sessions or putting on single days teaching around one module – I don't think we should or would be able to cover all 7 but if I know the level of commitment, rather than just a passing interest I can make plans accordingly.

Currently the thoughts are to support module 5 and then plan around your interests. Should we for example cover module 1 again? Please can I invite candidates and any potential tutors to email me with your ideas. I can promise we will not be able to fulfil everyone's wishes, but unless I know what they are I am unable to help.

Wendy,

YBKA exam sec.

WANTED - IT COULD BE YOU!

The modular examinations are held the third Saturday in March every year. For 2012 this will be Saturday March 17th.

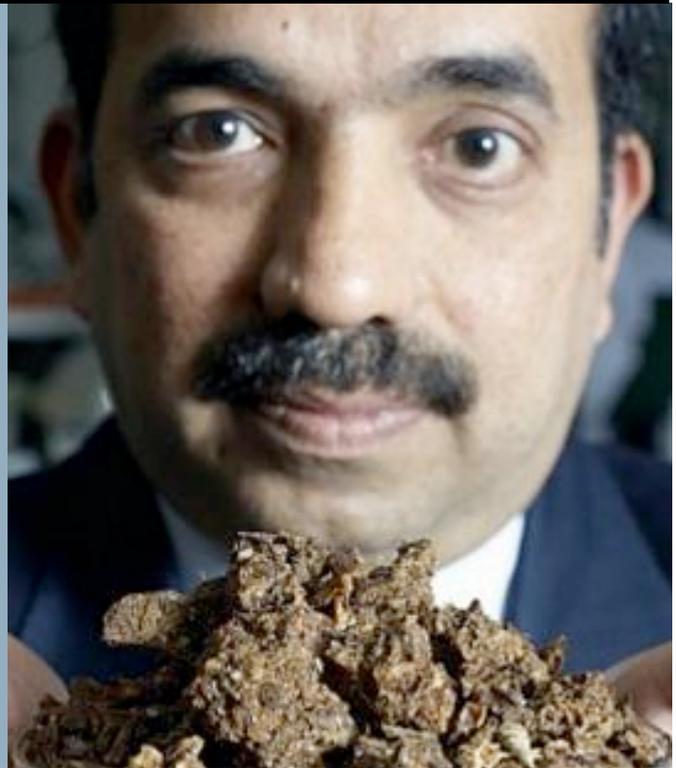
I am looking for a volunteer who would be willing to give their day to invigilating for the examinations.

It is likely that they will be held in Harrogate at the Pavilion.

If you can assist please could you let me know.

Wendy.

Pharmaceutical Engineering Science begins work at the University of Bradford



Researchers at the University of Bradford have developed a way of harnessing the healing powers of propolis – a mixture of resin and wax made by honey bees.

The benefits of propolis in medicine and food supplements has been known for many years, but its use has been limited because the sticky substance is not water soluble and has a strong smell which is off-putting.

Now the university's Centre for Pharmaceutical Engineering Science has developed a way of purifying propolis that retains its medicinal properties, but makes it dissolve in water and gets rid of its pungent smell.

The technique has already led to the development of a new mouth ulcer gel and opens the door to a huge range of other pharmaceutical appliances for the substance.

Centre director Professor Anant Paradkar, who led the research, said: "There is a substantial market for propolis-based products, particularly in China, the US and South Asia. The main stumbling block in developing products has been the solubility and odour issues, which our formulation overcomes."

Professor Anant Paradkar started working at the University in September as the Interdisciplinary Chair in Pharmaceutical Engineering.

The purpose of Anant's role is to lead innovative, high quality research programmes across the disciplines of pharmaceutical drug delivery and advanced polymer engineering, with a view to achieving a sustainable programme which will strengthen the reputation and performance of the Institute of Pharmaceutical Innovation (IPI) and the Interdisciplinary Research Chairs (IRC) in polymer science. Anant will lead high profile research and teaching across the disciplines of pharmaceutical sciences and materials engineering and engage with a wide range of external organisations and networks to consolidate and grow research focused partnerships. He will also provide leadership to attract research students and postdoctoral fellows to the area of research and supervise research students in his area of expertise.

Speaking about the new role, Paul Thorning, director of the Institute of Pharmaceutical Innovation, said: "Advances in drug delivery require exploitation of knowledge and expertise across the boundaries of bioscience, material

science, chemistry, process engineering and pharmaceutical science.

“As therapeutic molecules become more complex and delivery systems more sophisticated there is an increasing need for strong interdisciplinary research. “A particular opportunity exists to explore the interface between pharmaceutical science and advanced materials engineering, both in the design of new drug carriers and release systems, as well as in the development of novel patient delivery devices. “There have recently been some notable advances in collaborative research programmes between the Institute of Pharmaceutical Innovation (IPI), in the School of Life Sciences, and the Interdisciplinary Research Centre (IRC) in polymer engineering, in the School of Engineering Design and Technology (EDT), particularly regarding pharmaceutical melt and reactive extrusion (for which a patent is currently being prepared), and there are significant complementary strengths across the two teams.” Anant said: “I have started working here and there are great areas of complementary strengths across both the discipline and institutions and we are exploring projects across these. “Similarly, with international recognitions and linkages of researchers at IPI, IRC and School of Life Sciences, our focus will be to exploit these linkages to strengthen research in the area of pharmaceutical engineering.”

The healing properties of propolis - a mixture of resin and wax made by honey bees to seal and sterilise their hives - have been known for many years. But its use in medicine and food supplements has been limited because the sticky substance is not water soluble and has a strong, off-putting smell.

Now researchers at the University of Bradford's Centre for Pharmaceutical Engineering Science have developed a way of purifying propolis that retains its medicinal properties, but makes it dissolve in water and eliminates its pungent smell. The technique has already led to the development of a new mouth ulcer gel and opens the door to a huge range of other pharmaceutical and

nutraceutical applications for the substance.

"Propolis is a complex chemical mix and a very useful natural product," explains Centre Director, [Professor Anant Paradkar](#), who led the research. "Propolis has been shown to be anti-microbial, anti-fungal, a strong anti-oxidant, non-allergenic and can boost the immune system. It also promotes wound healing and has anaesthetic properties.

"There is a substantial market for propolis-based products - particularly in China, the USA and South Asia. The main stumbling block in developing products has been the solubility and odour issues, which our formulation overcomes."

Professor Paradkar's team has been developing the new technique to purify propolis in collaboration with natural medicine manufacturer, [Nature's Laboratory](#). The researchers have helped the company develop a new propolis-based mouth ulcer gel, which has better anaesthetic, anti-microbial and anti-fungal properties than gels already on the market and is safe for use in children.

"A problem for mouth gels is that adhesion to the skin membrane inside the mouth is difficult - because of the nature of the surface, the gel can simply slide off," says Professor Paradkar. "As propolis retains some of its stickiness even in a water soluble formulation, when it is applied to specific areas in the mouth, it adheres more effectively."

The Centre has gained funding for a Knowledge Transfer Partnership with Nature's Laboratory, to further develop the purification system for use at a larger scale and support the creation of new propolis-based products. The aim is, through the KTP, that the company will be able to set up a purification process to increase its own manufacturing capacity.

Seasonal Bee Inspector (5 Posts)

circa £20,743pa pro rata

Home based roles in the Wales (Ceredigion and NW Carmarthenshire, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen) North Eastern (Nottinghamshire, East Yorkshire) and Northern (Northumberland, Durham, Tyne & Wear) Regions

REF: CSP 3632 Fixed Term Seasonal Appointment

Appointments will be for 5-6 months (approx.) each year, throughout the bee season.

The Food and Environment Research Agency's role is to support and develop a sustainable food chain, a healthy natural environment, and to protect the community from biological and chemical risks. The Agency employs over 700 scientists and experts and works with over 1000 partners in 102 countries world-wide.

The purpose of this job is to implement a Bee Health Inspection programme on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and the Welsh Assembly Government for specific inspection areas.

Reporting to the Regional Bee Inspector, duties include organising and conducting the inspection of honey bee colonies for diseases currently the subject of EU or UK statutory regulations, e.g. foul brood and small hive beetle; assisting the work of the National Bee Unit (NBU) for the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (bee poisoning incidents) and assisting with research projects; forwarding samples of hive material from suspect diseased colonies to the NBU laboratory for diagnosis and issuing standstill notices on apiary sites from which suspect diseased material has been removed. The Seasonal Bee Inspector will also treat or destroy diseased colonies in accordance with the recommendations of the NBU Laboratory and maintain accurate and up-to-date apiary inspection records.

Candidates will need relevant experience in the field of beekeeping as well as evidence of strong practical beekeeping skills, an in-depth knowledge of bee diseases and their control, including exotic bee pests and effective communication skills. Alternatively a degree or equivalent qualification in a relevant subject will be considered.

Fera is an Equal Opportunities Employer. We have a rural location and a range of excellent benefits that include a choice of valuable pension arrangements, flexible working practices and salary sacrifice child care vouchers.

Closing Date: 17 April 2011

For further information and an application pack visit www.defra.gov.uk/fera/careers/ or call 01904 462302



further information on the link: <http://www.fera.defra.gov.uk/careers/jobVacancies/index.cfm>

Yorkshire Area Representatives

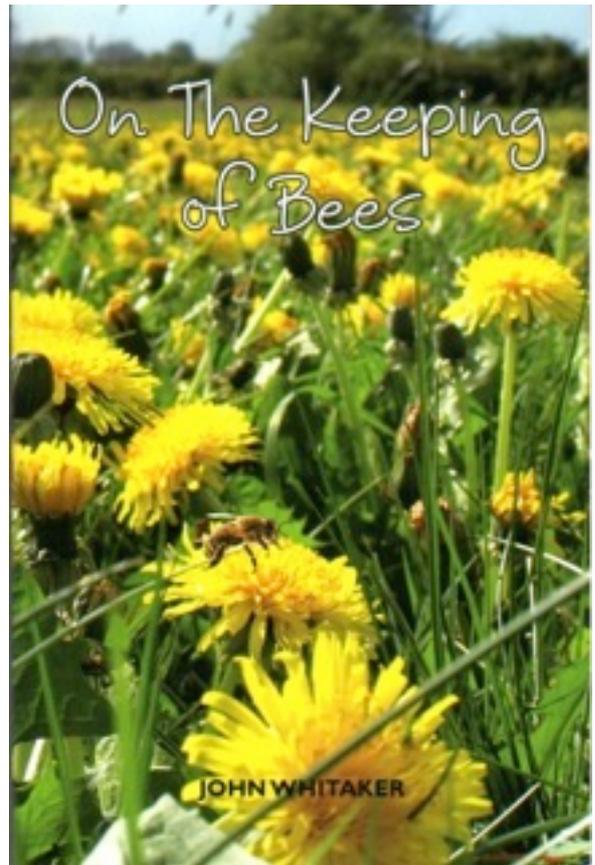
Airedale, Wharfedale, Bradford, Leeds	Bill Cadmore	01132160482
	bill.cadmore@ntlworld.com	
South Riding, Doncaster, Barnsley, Sheffield	Dave Shannon	01302-772837
	dave_aca@tiscali.co.uk	
Halifax, Huddersfield, Wakefield, Pontefract	Phil Gee	01422886114
	pjgphilgee@aol.com	
Beverley	Wendy Maslin	01482656018
	wendy@maslin.karoo.co.uk	
Northallerton, Thirsk & Richmond	Roger Chappel	
	roger@rchappel.orangehome.co.uk	
Easingwold, York & Barkston Ash	Tom robinson	
	mautomrobee@btopenworld.com	
Whitby, Scarborough, Malton & Rydale	Tony Jefferson	07749731945
	stoneleabees@yahoo.co.uk	

On the Keeping of Bees by

John Whitaker

This excellent book for novice
beekeepers can be purchased
from

<http://www.ypdbooks.com/the-natural-world/355-on-the-keeping-of-bees-YPD00325.html>



As well as currently being secretary of Barkston Ash BKA and treasurer of YBKA, John Whitaker is heavily involved in the education beekeepers. From this work and personal experiences, has emerged this recently published, comprehensive introduction to the craft, entitled "On The Keeping of Bees".

Though said to be aimed primarily at new beekeepers, I found the book had a lot to offer the "improver beekeeper" like myself, and contained many intriguing facts of which I was unaware. I immediately empathized with the book when I found myself concurring with John's statements on page 2. Firstly that "... a knowledge of the natural history of the honeybee, both the individual insect and the superorganism, is a prerequisite for good beekeeping" and, secondly, "...the priority of beekeeping husbandry is to do everything that is necessary to keep the bees healthy". John says that the aim of his book is not to tell us how to produce lots of honey but that "... if you keep your bees healthy and strong, if the weather is good, if you have reasonable queens and live in an area with a variety of forage, then you will get honey whether you want it or not!" How many of us have been asked as a first question by aspiring new beekeepers "How much honey do you get?"

The author succeeds in excellent, concise, descriptions of bee biology without being yawningly technical. Throughout the book there are many touches of dry humour which are always welcome in a good manual. I found the style of writing quite lyrical in places and a great pleasure to read.

John sets great store by hygienic practices in beekeeping and explains many excellent ways which a good beekeeper can endeavour to protect his charges from disease. However he also acknowledges recent thinking that by continually treating bees with medications, we are making it difficult for natural selection to occur, thereby preventing our bees evolving to coexist with varroa.

This is a book which I very much enjoyed and feel it would be a great asset to any new beekeeper or an association's library

Sheila Rawson



Yorkshire Beekeepers Association General Purposes Committee

Chairman

Mr William Cadmore
01132160482
bill.cadmore@ntlworld.com

Vice Chairman

Tony Jefferson
07749731945
stoneleabees@yahoo.co.uk

Hon. Secretary

Brian Latham
01132643436
brian.latham@ntlworld.com

Hon. Treasurer

John Whittaker
01937 834688
johnmartinwhittaker@hotmail.com

Equipment Officer

Roger Chappel
roger@rchappel.orangehome.co.uk
01325315741

Education/Examinations

Wendy Maslin
01482 656018
wendy@maslin.karoo.co.uk

Bee Husbandry

Tom Robinson
mautomrobee@btopenworld.com

BBKA ADM Delegate

Tony Jefferson
07749731945
stoneleabees@yahoo.co.uk

Environment and spray liaison officer

Vacant post
Information Officer
Kate Wallace
kate.wallace41@googlemail.com

Web Master

Roger Chappel
roger@rchappel.orangehome.co.uk
01325315741

YAS Representative

Michael Badger
0113 294 5879
buzz.buzz@ntlworld.com

School Day Organiser

Phil Gee
01422886114
07769650059
pjgphilgee@aol.com

NBU Representative

Ivor Flatman
01924 252795
07775 119436
ivor.flatman@fera.gsi.gov.uk

Honey Show Organisation

Dave Shannon
01302-772837
dave_aca@tiscali.co.uk

Newsletter Editor

Bill Cadmore
01132160482

Y.B.K.A. DATES

Bishop Burton
9th April 2011
Bishop Burton College

YBKA Mead Day
21st May
Yorkshire Showground

Schools Days
14th-15th June 2011
Yorkshire Showground

Great Yorkshire Show
12th-14th July 2011
Yorkshire Showground

AGM
December 3rd 2011
Yorkshire Showground

GPC Meetings
4th February 2011
6th May 2011
17th June 2011
23rd September 2011
3rd December 2011

BBKA ADM
Districts and individuals should submit possible motions for Yorkshire to put before the BBKA ADM by the end of May 2011. These will be considered by the GPC and suitable ones put forward to the YBKA AGM.

Regional Bee Inspector **Ivor Flatman**, tel. 01924 252795
e-mail ivor.flatman@fera.gsi.gov.uk

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

Email: nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone: 01904 462510

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