



YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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Editorial

Well April is upon us and for me this is when the season is starting to get in to full swing.

The most important news I've seen this month is a new sighting of an Asian Hornet in Lancashire. This must be a wake-up call for all beekeepers to keep a vigilant watch for this vile bee killing and apiary decimating monster.

And I am still looking forward to the Beverley auction, York auction and Halifax auction.

Please enjoy this edition, Editor



Chairman's Notes

British Summer Time arrived and heralded the start of Spring. Sighs of relief were heard as beekeepers saw their bees emerging from winter with hopefully few losses after such a long Winter.

The consensus of opinion in my part of the world, the Calder Valley, is that forage is about three weeks later than it should be and beekeepers are giving their bees pollen supplements in the hope that this will stimulate the colony if there is a shortage of pollen.

Our annual Spring Conference was held on Saturday 24 March and, from the feedback received, was a resounding success with over 130 people attending. An all-time record I think.

The guest speakers were well received and their talks were extremely entertaining and thought provoking. We had presentations on Palaeontology and the origin of bees, beekeeping in Syria and sustainable beekeeping in Africa.

The workshops were all well attended and covered such topics as Breeding better bees & Queen rearing, re-cycling wax, skep making and the use of honey and wax in cerate.

There were various trade stands selling such things as plants, seeds, beekeeping equipment, glass jars, books and bee suits.

I would like to express my thanks to the organising committee who made the day so interesting.

We also had our own official photographer wandering around the conference and a selection of her work is included in this edition. More will be published in the May edition.

Phil Gee

YBKA Chairman

Asian Hornet Sighting in Lancashire

Read the full story on the NBU website [here](#).

This is the online reporting form if you think you see an Asian Hornet [here](#).

A video [here](#) on how to make an Asian hornet trap.

Yorkshire Beekeeping Association Spring Conference



The conference this year started with an informative and thought-provoking talk by Margaret Murdin who is the current President of the BBKA. John Varker delivered his usual expert outline of how the earth has developed and the species within it including bees. The talks were rounded off when Trisha Marlow with her missionary zeal gave an inspiring view of how beekeeping in Africa makes such a difference to a wide variety of people.

After an excellent lunch provided by the Manor Academy staff, much appreciated by all, we entered the afternoon workshop sessions. The workshops were very much a top request when we ran the follow-up questionnaire last year. Members were keen to stress that there needed to be more of them, a greater variety and with the emphasis on helping



members to gain practical help with their beekeeping. We were happy to oblige and, judging by the results, we seem to have scored a hit. All the workshops were well attended and enjoyed. Geoff Pearson kept everyone entertained on the balcony demonstrating the art of skep-making where Jim Pearson and Tony Jefferson shared their considerable expertise on how to breed better bees – they had a packed audience for all their sessions. Meanwhile Chris Coulson beavered away in the classroom showing that all you need is a bit of basic equipment and a little know-how to save £'s re-cycling surplus wax and utilising it to produce foundation, candles and other objects of use. Sara Robb, enthusiastic as always - this year assisted by her daughter Megan – took over the performing arts studio and enthralled delegates with her skill making and using cerate. They were all please to come away with samples of this much valued by-product. The afternoon concluded with the ever-popular Beekeepers Question time when delegates were able to ask probing questions to the experts before them. This concluded an exceptional conference. We believe we have now hit of the ideal format and fully intend to repeat the pattern next year with experts of the same calibre, interesting speakers and workshop providers committed to helping all our members learn practical skills which will make difference to all our beekeeping.



There were a few small problems. It was difficult to cope well with all the last-minute applications and I take full responsibility for this hiccup. It caused delays but our hard-working receptionists (Annie and Heidi) both worked hard to deal with it. It was just as embarrassing for them as it was for all of us. Though this was not anticipated perhaps we need more 'volunteers' to hand to help in future so this is an appeal: please feel free to step forward



and help, it will always be appreciated. Perhaps I was too slow in asking. It's a lesson to be learned and won't happen again! The situation wasn't helped because of the need for members to choose workshops. Again, with the benefit of hindsight we should have moved this in to the dining area where it would have been easier to sort out. We need to look at the workshop situation and consider whether or not we should allow advance bookings for them. There are a number of complications to take in to consideration but we're sure this can be improved for next year

One of the main objectives of the organising committee is to try to establish the annual conference as a habitual must-go-to event for all our members. We sincerely hope that the talks, activities, food, sales and networking experienced by all delegates were positive and enjoyable and that all district committees will continue to encourage their members to attend future conferences. We genuinely believe it is a great day both socially and educationally. It has to be said that a great deal of research



and effort goes in to running these conferences and it's an occasion which all Yorkshire beekeepers can benefit from. We don't run them for financial reasons and the only thanks we ask for is for members to enjoy their day out. We'd like as many members as possible to benefit from the experience. This is reward enough and I'm sure this applies to all the other members of the team.

Roger Chappel (Conference committee co-ordinator)

Gerald Moxon Obituary

There are many people far more qualified than me to write a meaningful and accurate obituary for Gerald Moxon who died in hospital on Tuesday 24th April and in the fullness of time we hope that such an obituary will be published.

Gerald was a lifelong member of Beverley Beekeepers, a Honey Judge, a basic Assessor and much, much more in beekeeping circles, as well as being awarded the MBE for services to beekeeping.

I can only give a personal account of what he meant to me. My memory is of a man who was very kind when I started out in beekeeping. He willingly gave up his time to help both Simon and I with the basic assessment and he also introduced me to Honey Showing, He had a wealth of expertise and a lifetime of experience. He frequently told us that he started beekeeping at school and I think he would have been pleased about the initiative to introduce beekeeping into more schools once again. He would often ring when Simon was the local secretary and spend half an hour or so regaling him with beekeeping tales before getting to the point of the call or having forgotten why he had made the contact in the first place!

He held many positions in the Association locally and regionally. Many will remember him as auctioneer at the Beverley auction and his own personal style. He contributed hugely to the beekeeping community locally and was at winter meetings as recent as March of this year. I and probably many others have reason to be grateful for his help and support with our bees and beekeeping. He will be missed by all who knew him.

Wendy Maslin

Note from Editor: In the fullness of time we hope to have a complete obituary for Gerald Moxon

The Value of Microscopy

A number of members had requested a lesson in microscopy so one was organised, meeting on a Saturday morning in a room provided by the local college. Little did we know the value that this microscopy lesson would

reveal. We are lucky to count Yvonne Kilvington as one of our members in Huddersfield and District Bee keepers Association who offered to instruct those of us with little knowledge. She supplied some equipment the rest provided by YBKA.



The aim was to learn how to use a microscope whilst at the same time look for nosema in bees and also look at the types of pollen in honey; members providing the bees and honey. One member had a hive that was worrying him. It was a large hive, last year it had supplied over 100lbs of honey. All seemed well as the year progressed. The necessary varroa treatments were administered and the hive locked down for the dark cold winter months. Being a good bee keeper, the hive was regularly checked for stores and all seemed well. However, on a warm February day (yes, we did have one or two) he noticed bees were exiting the hive, presumably on cleansing flights, but were just falling to ground, lethargic and sluggish. All was not well and nosema was suspected. The microscopy session was the perfect opportunity to find the cause of the problem.



He collected some bees which were carefully prepared to test for nosema. Nothing was found. Yvonne suggested other tests and began to demonstrate bee dissection. Looking under the microscope the route of the problem was discovered. Acarine mites (also known as Tracheal mites). You can see the mites in the photo in the bees right tracheal, compare this to the left tracheal which is clear. (photo taken on an iPhone) Acarine, according to Bee Base is rare. How rare? How many bees are tested for it? Do we just assume the route of a problem is something more common? i.e. nosema.

The value of microscopy is invaluable to a bee keeper and is something HDBKA will be promoting amongst its members. The infected hive has now been isolated and necessary treatments administered. Hopefully it will survive and provide a large honey crop again this year. Fingers crossed.

Bryan Butterworth

HDBKA member

Woman dies after alternative 'acupuncture' therapy where live bee stings are used instead of needles

A woman died after undergoing an alternative acupuncture treatment which used live bee stings instead of needles.

The 55-year-old had been receiving the "apitherapy" treatment approximately once a month for two years, in an attempt to treat tight muscles and stress. [Full Independent article here](#)

Eugene Grant obituary



Eugene Grant 11 February 1932 - 5 April 2018

We are very sorry to announce the death of Eugene (“Hughie”) Grant, on 5th April 2018, at the age of 86. Eugene was born in Hillsborough, Sheffield and started his schooling at St Patrick’s Catholic Primary School in Shiregreen. After a stint at the Sheffield Star & Telegraph he joined the RAF when he was 18 for his National Service, and where amongst other things, he learnt to play the accordion. Much of his working life was as a self-employed joiner which skills he put to good use in making and maintaining his beekeeping equipment.

His family were keen consumers of honey, often purchasing it in bucket loads! He took up beekeeping in 1981 on his allotment in Malin Bridge and never looked back. A skilled and consistent performer on the Show bench, Eugene’s name appears repeatedly on Sheffield BKA and Yorkshire BKA trophies, year after year. The quality of his mead and dark honey are known and respected across the region. After learning of the identity of the owner of a bottle of mead that was awarded a 1st, the honey judge remarked “I did wonder if it might be Eugene’s mead”.

He was of course a skilled, knowledgeable and enthusiastic beekeeper. He would often be seen with a beekeeping book in his hands. Seldom wearing gloves (he seemed impervious to the odd sting) he handled his bees with care, bordering on affection, and although he didn’t dally he didn’t miss a trick. He would happily, after more than 30 years of beekeeping, watch the bees flying in and out of a hive, or be enthralled in front of an observation hive, thoroughly transfixed.

When Sheffield BKA was re-launched in 2011, Eugene was instrumental in getting us up to strength - prompting us to establish a respectable Honey Show under his stewardship, extolling the benefits of queen rearing and BIBBA, introducing us to concepts such as “watching the entrance” to gauge the health of a colony. Those of us beekeepers who had the good fortune and joy to work with him learnt much that we will carry with us and hopefully pass on with the same generosity to others. We will miss him.

Eugene leaves behind his wife Fran, his children Margaret, Michael and Katherine, and seven grandchildren to whom we offer our heartfelt condolences.

There will be a funeral service at Saint Vincent's Church, Pickmere Rd, Crookes, Sheffield S10 1GY at 10:30 Saturday 28th April followed by the burial at Saint Michael's Catholic Cemetery, Rivelin, Sheffield and a reception at the Princess Royal, 43 Slinn St, Sheffield S10 1NW. Everybody associated with SBKA and wider will be very welcome.

The family welcome flowers, or donations in lieu to the Saint Wilfrid's Centre which helps to provide homeless and vulnerable adults with opportunities to improve their quality of life.

BBKA Swarm Collectors List

The on-line facility at www.bbka.org.uk is a list of BBKA/Association members who are willing to be contacted by members of the general public in the event of them having a problem with a swarm of honey bees.

As the beekeeper attending a swarm problem, they represent both their Association and therefore the BBKA, this is why only BBKA members are included on the bbka.org.uk swarm collectors list. It is a condition of being accepted on this swarm collection list that the beekeeper will not collect swarms to sell for personal financial gain.

The facility can be used by any member of the general public, using the post-code locator. On inputting their post code into the "find a collectors" part of the website, the system displays the contact details of beekeepers within a ten-mile radius of their stated postcode who are able and willing to collect honey bees. The only personal contact details displayed are the beekeepers name and their preferred contact telephone number.

This protocol is intended to identify the necessary knowledge and standards, which are felt to be required of any beekeeper who undertakes this task on behalf of their Association:

CONSIDERATIONS:

Dealing with a swarm of honey bees can be a difficult task. It is therefore recommended that new or inexperienced beekeepers should not undertake this work until they have received appropriate training within their Association and gained sufficient knowledge and experience of swarm collecting. Telephone calls from the public can relate to all flying insects and not just honey bees i.e. wasps, bumble bees, solitary bees etc so the beekeeper must know what advice to provide should the reported problem not be honey bee related. Members of the public are generally concerned about swarms of honey bees and the beekeeper must be able and confident to deal with the situation and maintain a safe working environment.

As a member of any swarm collecting system, it is expected that a beekeeper whose name is on the collectors list will remain on the list for the whole of the season. If a beekeeper accepts a "swarm call", the beekeeper then owns the problem until it has either been resolved or they pass to a fellow beekeeper to resolve i.e. it must not be ignored.

BBKA Insurance is invalid if the swarm collection is done for commercial gain.

RECOMMENDED PERSON:

A Swarm Collector must be a beekeeper with experience of bees and beekeeping. Be aware of and be able to assess the potential dangers and risks associated with swarm collecting to themselves, the public and property and deal with them appropriately. Have received training & experience of collecting a swarm together with an experienced beekeeper; who will have mentored the beekeeper in the task to ensure that the beekeeper is able to undertake the task correctly and safely. They should be aware of the public liability insurance restrictions associated with their membership, i.e. whilst the beekeeper can request payment of expenses associated with the work or a donation to their Association, the beekeeper cannot:

- ❑Undertake the work for commercial gain i.e. cannot make a charge for the service
- ❑Sell-on the swarm to a third party

The Swarm Collector must be familiar with the BBKA Guidelines on swarm collection, know what to do in respect to the safe disposal of the swarm once collected i.e. hive or pass it to another beekeeper. Must be able to communicate with the public and be prepared to show their BBKA membership card

Yorkshire Beekeepers Association website has an excellent article on the website [here](#) also covering this topic. Well worth reading

Things to consider in the apiary in April

April for most Beekeepers prompts the start of a new season of beekeeping. Hopefully the awful winter wet, cold and this year frosty snow blown weather will become a thing of the past and more pleasant spring like warmer weather is starting to unfold. Up until now you should not have even thought of venturing into your hives brood boxes to carry out your first spring inspection for 2018.

Even now though I must give a caution to this action if the weather and more importantly the temperatures remain below 13°C. Ideally you want the ambient temperature to be around the 14°C/15°C. before you attempt your first inspections of the inner brood boxes.

Patience is the key at this time of year, and impatience can be catastrophic for your colony. Young eggs and larva can quickly become chilled and die when exposed to cold winds and temps. below this figure of 14°C/15°C. So, my message to you all is be patient and allow the temp. to raise before diving in and losing your colonies.

In April there is still very little nectar about for your bees in most areas, plus a very small but vital supply of pollen available also is in short supply. A lot of beginner Beekeepers forget the pollen factor and now it's a vital protein the bees just cannot exist without. Without pollen your colonies will die. The queens will cease to lay and the colonies will collapse. This is a very important asset a beginner often forgets about in the autumn when going into winter and ensuring the colonies have a good food supply to last them through the long winter months. They feed their bees sugar syrup in copious quantities however forget to assess the amount of pollen within the colonies.

A very good idea is to place pollen patties alongside your fondant parcels directly on top of your bees on the brood boxes using an eke. This eliminates the possibility of your bees running out. If they don't require it well ok but it's better to have too much than too little. Especially now when most queens increase their laying actions as temps. rise.

When a good nice warm day arrives. It's then we do our first inspections. We check the queens are laying good healthy-looking brood at all stages, eggs and large and small larva and that all their capped brood is a nice light brown colour evenly capped with no perforations. We also look quickly for any signs of disease by checking our larva are all nice and glistening white and not twisted and distorted within their cells. Plus, they are not yellow or brownish and sickly looking. If any of this is found call your local bees officer straight away, better to be safe than sorry. If you actually see your queens and on the first inspection this is not always the case, then make sure she is still marked well. If not re mark her, this will assist you greatly in the months to come.

We should also be checking our varroa floors for any varroa mites and doing a count on them. For those of you who didn't use oxalic acid in mid-winter then this is another vital thing to check and clear up prior to the honey flows beginning.

I always say if I find more than three mites on this inspection then I treat, before the problem escalates. There are many treatments on the market now, but for those beginners out there, ask and ensure the treatment you have is suitable to the ambient temp. at the time as a lot of treatments are very temperature active. Clean off any debris from between your frames and frame lugs and for those who removed their queen excluders for winter, make sure firstly your queen is down in the brood box then re place your queen excluders. If they were not removed, clean them off to ensure your bees have a clean access through them then replace them. Also, after this clean off your floors whether they are solid or varroa floors, cleaning off any debris or dead bees. You can now open up your entrances a little. Not fully yet but to about two / three inches as the bees start to get more active and remove mouse guards.

Another thing now is to start building up your new frames for the season ahead. Both for brood boxes and supers. Build them up but, don't put in your wax foundation at this stage. Far better you have all your woodwork completed and then just a matter of popping in the foundation nice and fresh later when your actually ready to use it. By doing this the wax stays nice and fresh with a good aroma. This stimulates the bees to draw it out. If it's very old and dry the bees are more reluctant to draw it out and very often you get holes within if where the bees have chewed it rather than drew it out.

For new Beekeepers out there, check you have enough boxes for the new coming season. For every hive you should have at least 3 supers plus an extra brood box and or a nuc box. This will ensure you're not caught out later when queen cells start to appear and you need to split your colonies. Make sure your extractors are all fully functional, oiled, cleaned and ready to go. Also check all your honey labels, for those of you who sell your honey in jars.

Make sure your dates are correct and the labels conform to British honey labelling standards, very important and something that should be checked now before any flows start. If these tips are carried out your hopefully on your way to a successful season but keep a close eye on the weather as we aren't out of the woods yet temp. wise. Your bees still need you to be on the ball for anything that comes along and thinking ahead is the name of the beekeeping game.

Happy beekeeping, Dave Shannon.



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A day out at the Auctions (Lincoln BKA Auction on the 24th March 2018)

The 24th March was indeed a good beekeeping day. Not only was it the day of the Yorkshire BKA Spring Conference but it was also the day of the Lincoln Beekeepers Association annual auction. I opted in this case to pop down to Lincoln because I do love a good auction where I can buy and sell stuff that I think I either desperately need or desperately want to sell.



It was a good day. The wind was light, the sun was out and temperature was around 10°C, which is bee flying weather. There was a lot of buyers and sellers, if you hadn't managed to buy all your new beekeeping kit for the season of 2018 during the Winter sales then the Lincoln beekeeping auction could have been for you. This is even the 35th year it has been running, however only the second time I have attended. There were nearly 500 lots, everything was honey bee related, there was everything there you could think of new and old, I had a good gander round. Roofs, broods, supers, frames, extractors, filters, books, stands, foundation, castellations, smokers, hive tools, uncapping forks, buckets of honey (30lbs buckets and smaller), bees wax, jars, jar lids, crown boards, rapid feeders, frame feeders, mini mating nucs (Warnholz & Apidea), poly nucs (Payne's style), hive straps, observations hives... I do hope you're getting the idea! The hive types catered for were National (new wood and old wood), Langstroth (new wood), Commercial (new poly), WBC (old wood and new wood) and Smith (new wood). Some items looked like they had been kept in the back of a coil 'oil, most were good or mint condition. There were just over 30 colonies outside in the field flying, ranging from 6 frame poly nucs, 6 frame wooden nucs, wooden 14*12's with supers and wooden nationals. These were a mix of brand new kit with bees, older kit that was well maintained and some home made wooden nuc boxes. There was Carniolans, Buckfast and local bred bees available.

Let's talk about prices though. I find at auctions some times you see great bargains and other times you see the people buying stuff that they clearly have not researched properly and in my not so humble opinion are paying over the odds, I always feel flummoxed at this. Also bear in mind that what ever the fall of the hammer price is, there is a 10% buyers commission (well there is at Lincoln anyway).



So, the colonies, these were making from between £100 to £160 plus 10%, all the colonies and nucs were either tilted so you could see the volume of bees inside or opened up and a frame pulled out to give you an idea of content. The hives were open and the bees were flying, even when it started getting parky out. At these sorts of

prices if you needed to make up your stocks early in the season then this would have been a great place to be. Some of these colonies and nucs were in great shape for March, no doubt about it.

Kit prices, some of the kit was making good money, others were bargains. There was 15lb blocks of wax there making around the £46 mark, if you wanted beeswax then that's not bad. The new supers and brood boxes, some with new frames and some with new frames and wax were selling for between £10 to £30 depending on the lot. I bought an observation hive, the type with 5 frames underneath and one on top, made from cedar with no knots, these retail at Thornes for £350, the one I bought was £160 including commission, so I was happy as I'd been looking for one for years. A poly Maisemore commercial poly box with frames made £12 plus commission, which was an absolute steal, but then a steel smoker sold at £19.80 including commission. New cedar crown boards were selling for between £5 and £10 plus commission, depending which price you paid, depends how much of a bargain you got. Other items I bought included a Maisemore 3.5gallon feeder for £19.80, packs of 5 new castellations (11's) for £5.50, 25 hoffman brood frames for £11.00 and ratchet straps for £3.30 each, all these prices included commission. I think I got lots of bargains for kit (some much better than others) that I will actually use and be helpful in my beekeeping, So, I was very happy. The extra plus for me was that I sold several colonies, supers, super frames and super foundation as well. All stuff that I had previously bought and thought was a bargain and then changed my mind!

The best bargain I saw all day was a brand new western red cedar WBC made by a local craftsman which looked immaculate and went for £160 plus commission. It was a pearler, this would have been over £400 at Thornes.

On the way down, me and my mate always get a full English breakfast and drink plenty of coffee during the day. We are always chatting in each other's lug 'oil about what to buy, what prices are to be paid, what bargains are had or not. By the end of the day we were flaggin', we left about 3pm with about 100 lots left to go. A truly great day was had by all.



Bee Keeping Apps – Apiary Book

I am always eager to try new things especially if they might help with an area in my beekeeping that I know I am weak at. My one main weakness in the craft is keeping records. I can just about manage scraps of paper under the roof with scribbles on them but occasionally these get lost. So, I thought I might have a look and see if there are any hive record apps that I can use on my phone when I am out and about beekeeping. I did a bit of research on google and found there are lots out there but one stood out head and shoulders above the rest was "Apiary Book". Its totally free with no hidden costs or adverts and it's clear that over the last couple of years the developer has been making regular tweaks to the system. You can list apiaries and individual hives, keep inspections records on there, document individual queens, record feeding, swarming, box configurations and hive movements between sites. I thought this sounded like an app which would just suit my purposes. However, I have not used it in anger just yet, so fingers crossed for the season ahead.

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