



# YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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## Editorial

Wow, what a hot Summer its been so far. The weather is amazing but will it stop the flowers yielding nectar as the grounds dries out. I suspect if we don't get rain soon, that may well happen. I do know my bees seem a little cranky and I never thought I would say this but I think the hot weather is to blame. Is anyone else experiencing this?

## Chairman's Notes

Welcome to the July edition of the YBKA newsletter. Summer arrived with a vengeance and beekeepers were walking round with smiles on their faces at long last.

June saw the annual two-day Schools Day event at the Yorkshire Agricultural Society showground at Harrogate where we entertained 350 potential young beekeepers.

Schools exhibited models on a bee base theme and the two 1<sup>st</sup> prize winners (one each day of the event) had their winning entries displayed at the Great Yorkshire Show. A big thank-you to those who gave up their time to help out and to keep the children entertained.

The two winners, Horbury Academy from Wakefield and Belmont Grosvenor School from Harrogate were invited along to collect their prize at the Great Yorkshire Show.

A group photograph shows the happy winners.

That leads nicely on to the Great Yorkshire Show where a team of beekeepers professionally fended off such questions as "I have a bee in my garden – what do you think it is" and "Can you come round and remove some wasps next week".

We spoke to many beekeepers who were seeking advice and from talking with them many were having not so good a time with their bees despite the good weather.

Some were having to feed the bees, some were giving pollen supplements and some had queens who had stopped laying. Others were having the best season in a long time with no problems at all. What's going on I hear you say – who knows!



### Education Officer

I'd like to introduce myself to Members of Yorkshire beekeepers. I've recently agree to take on the role of Education Officer for Yorkshire Beekeeper Association (YBKA) from Yvonne Kilvington. Many of you will know Yvonne and please join me in thanking Yvonne for all her hard work for the Association. I know she'll be a hard act to follow!

A few words about me. I live in Hebden Bridge and I'm an enthusiastic member of Halifax Beekeepers Association. I'm relatively new to beekeeping having started last year. Currently I have 3 hives, two hives at 1000ft in the Pennines, close to the Heather & I've just set up a colony in a friend's garden in Hebden Bridge, close to the Balsam. So, two completely different situations to learn from!

I'm learning fast and thoroughly enjoying the challenge of beekeeping. My background is I have a Biology degree and I specialised in Plant Biology. Many of the subjects I studied such as Microbiology and Genetics are slowly coming back to me, as I read beekeeping books. I spent most of my career working in Retail (Supermarkets) in Buying and Marketing.

I'm passionate about gardening & over the last few years I've been developing a wildflower meadow and creating a garden attractive to wildlife. This is why I decided to become a beekeeper, after observing so many beneficial insects in our garden. Already we're seeing the benefit of more fruit to pick and more flowers to deadhead!

During my first year of beekeeping, I had a lot of advice from my Mentor and other 'adopted' mentors in the Halifax Association. I've learnt so much from experienced Members and I'd like to help other beginners and less experienced beekeepers like me, who want to further their education. Whether formally through exams or by simply coming to talks, apiary visits and networking with others Members in their local Association.

I'm really keen to hear from Members & the Associations in Yorkshire, how we can improve the education we offer and how the broader YBKA can support the Regions in this respect. If you have any feedback on what we do well to educate, what we can improve on, or any ideas on how YBKA can support you or your Association become better beekeepers, please contact me. My e mail is [education@ybka.org.uk](mailto:education@ybka.org.uk)

I'd love to hear from you. I plan to visit as many Associations as I can, probably at your Winter meetings, to introduce myself and promote what the BBKA and Yorkshire can offer, to help further your education, in the wonderful subject of the honeybee.



## **Education News**

### **Deadlines for the 2018 Basic Assessment!**

Have you kept bees now for a full year and you're keen to become a better beekeeper? A great way to do this is to enter for the BBKA Basic assessment. This involves spending an hour or so with a BBKA approved assessor to work through a hive and for him / her to ask questions about your beekeeping knowledge. You'll have learnt most of this in your first year and it's a great opportunity to brush up on your knowledge beforehand. Full details including the application form and syllabus are on the BBKA website link below

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/learn>

This year, all assessments must be completed by **31 August**. If you'd like to apply, talk to your local education officer, as there may be other candidates interested who can attend an assessment with you. Then via your local Education officer, send applications to Elaine Robinson at the following address by **Friday 27th July**.

### **Roger Patterson YBKA Event Save the date!**

Roger Patterson, who owns and manages Dave Cushman's famous beekeeping website & talks extensively on the subject of bee improvement, for Bibba, is coming to Yorkshire across 2 dates in November, to spend a full day with YBKA members, talking on the subject of Bee Improvement. One event will be held at York on Saturday 10th November and the second in Huddersfield on Sunday 11th November. We've selected 2 venues as this event will be very popular and given our geography, to offer YBKA members a choice of venues.

Further details of the full day program and venue to follow on the YBKA website soon!

### **Study days**

November seems a long way away, given recent fantastic weather. You may wish to start planning your education over the autumn and enter for one of the Module exams. Check the options on the BBKA website, link below, which also gives full syllabus and application forms.

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/learn>

The deadline for November Module exams is September 30th. YBKA are considering running some Study days, to be held in Harrogate this Autumn and Winter. They are likely to take the format of a 1/2 day tutorial focussing on one of the Modules. You'll be able to brush up your knowledge and meet fellow beekeepers, who also want to increase their knowledge. They will also be free! Whilst we will probably focus on a couple of Modules this Autumn, we need to know which would be most popular, so we can find some experts to help you! If you'd like to attend a study day, please mail Elaine Robinson on [education@ybka.org.uk](mailto:education@ybka.org.uk) advising which Module you're interested in studying & why.

Equally, you may have passed all your Modules and be willing to share your knowledge and help others become better beekeepers. If you have good communication skills, want to help others improve and could help coach a Module, pls email Elaine on [education@ybka.org.uk](mailto:education@ybka.org.uk) advising which Modules you could support

Regards Elaine

### **Things to do in July**

Well what a mixed season we are having up and down the county this year. The Spring was a wash out with heavy rain flooding the crops in the fields, then this long long dry spell that most of us have had to endure. This has resulted in a lot of areas whereby plants and trees have just shot down, flowers opening as normal however not many days afterwards all shriveling up due to total lack of water. Even the limes, chestnut and brambles in my own area have produced almost nothing. Just enough coming in to sustain the colonies but very little surplus for us Beekeepers. On the other hand, in some areas that have had a moister climate mainly in the

North, this hot spell is producing a glut of nectar coming in. Clover in these areas is very prolific and they have not suffered this drought to the same degree.

All this said there are still lots to do in our apiary's in July. Taking off any or some of the surplus honey and getting it extracted and stored away all filtered and clean is one task. Before doing this don't forget to use a hydrometer on the honey to assess the water content of your precious honey.

Don't want to store it away if the water content is too high. 17/18 is the figure in the R/H column we are aiming for when reading our hydrometer. 19 is just acceptable but anything higher than this really needs feeding back to the bees to re process, getting that water content down.

Check that all your super and brood boxes are all alighted correctly and there are no gaps where robber bees can get in.

This can be a major problem in some areas. Also close down the entrances to enable your bees to defend better against an attack from robber bees and wasps. Honey is far better taken off the clearer boards in the evenings at this time of year, when all the flying potential robbers are in house and not as many bees trying to get back into the supers when once they are off.

This time of the season is also a time of year when a lot of Beekeepers run out of vital equipment, underestimating the need to hold extra boxes and foundation to keep up with heavy cropping.

July is also a time for all Beekeepers to check the buildup of the dreaded varroa mites and treat where applicable. If you still have supers on and your varroa levels are high, there are still treatments that can be applied that are safe to use. Check with your local stockists all you beginner Beekeepers prior to purchase of these treatments to get the best possible results. Remember left unchecked varroa can devastate a colony and wipe it out. Be aware.

Check your colony's food supplies and ensure your bees have sufficient food stores. If not get those feeders out, filled and on your hive/s. This is always done late evening again when all or most of the flying bees are in the hive.

Check your colonies are all queen right and where possible mark your queens for easier identification when inspecting the colonies. Some of our more experienced Beekeepers are still raising new queens so, don't forget those beginners who may need help with identifying if their colonies are queen right or not. If they're not and you have an extra queen, give one to a new beekeeper to help them out, and ensure they don't buy bees/queens from abroad. Keep the local bee populated thriving please. I hope this helps a few of our Beekeepers.

Happy beekeeping and full supers.

Dave Shannon.

## **The Science Behind Bee Keeping**

There are various science journals available to read on the intranet and there is an awful lot of research around honey bees. Below are just some excerpts from the last few weeks

### **Honeybees are struggling to get enough good bacteria - April 17, 2018**

Modern monoculture farming, commercial forestry and even well-intentioned gardeners could be making it harder for honeybees to store food and fight off diseases, a new study suggests. Human changes to the landscape, such as large areas of monoculture grassland for livestock grazing, and coniferous forests for timber production, is affecting the diversity of the 'microbiome' associated with honeybees' long-term food supply. [Click here for the full report.](#)

### **How royal jelly helps honeybee larvae defy gravity and become queens - March 15, 2018**

Honeybee larvae develop into queen bees if they are fed large quantities of a food called royal jelly. But royal jelly does more than determine whether a larva becomes a queen: it also keeps her safely anchored to the roof of the queen cell in which she develops. Research explains how the pH of royal jelly helps make the substance viscous enough to keep the queen-to-be from falling. [Click here for the full report.](#)

### **Honeybees may unlock the secrets of how the human brain works - March 27, 2018**

Academics have discovered honeybee colonies adhere to the same laws as the brain when making collective decisions. The team studied a theoretical model of how honeybees decide where to build their nest and viewed the bee colony as a single superorganism which displays a coordinated response to external stimuli -- similar to the human brain. The study concluded that the way in which bees "speak" with each other and make decisions is comparable to the way the many individual neurons in the human brain interact with each other. [Click here for the full report.](#)

### **EU member states support near-total neonicotinoids ban**

Member states have voted in favour of an almost complete ban on the use of neonicotinoid insecticides across the EU. Scientific studies have long linked their use to the decline of honeybees, wild bees and other pollinators.

The move represents a major extension of existing restrictions, in place since 2013. Manufacturers and some farming groups have opposed the move, saying the science remains uncertain.

[Full story on the BBC here.](#)

## **Asian Hornet**

Asian hornets are public enemy number one as far beekeepers are concerned. We have had several incursions in the last few years but thanks to the good work of the NBU and the members of the public, we are hopefully still Asian hornet free in the mainland UK.

These are some interesting online sites that help you the beekeeper become more aware of what the Asian hornet looks like and what other beekeepers in others part of the world are doing to deal with it.

*Here are some snippets*

A Jersey beekeeper called John De Carteret has set up a YouTube channel dedicated to Asian hornets, His YouTube channel can be viewed [here](#).

An English beekeeping living and beekeeping in France where Asian hornet is already established has made a couple of excellent you tube videos on how to make traps. See [here](#) and [here](#).

An excellent article here from the Jersey post describing the Asian hornet and how it has progressed on Jersey. Full article [here](#).

And of course, here is what the NBU have to say online. Full details [here](#).

## **The hot weather and the Moors**

It amazing how warm the weather has been this last few weeks but there are down sides as our beekeeper friends in Calderdale are all to aware of.

A firefighter helping to tackle a large moorland fire says crews in the UK are "becoming stretched" because of the number of similar blazes.

Martyn Hughes commented on social media after more than 50 firefighters were called in "extreme heat" to a blaze in West Yorkshire on Sunday. Full article [Here](#).

An article here from the Huddersfield examiner showing more dramatic pictures of the fires around Denshaw Moor. Click [here](#).

## **The Ethics of Beekeeping' by John M Whitaker**

The ethics of beekeeping are complicated and multi-faceted. Beekeeping is beset by choices and choice by its very nature could involve, to a greater or lesser extent, ethics. This small book is an attempt to clarify where, in beekeeping, there are ethical choices to be made. It is not about trying to persuade the reader of the rightness or wrongness of one choice as opposed to another. Nor is it an exposition of what the author thinks is right or wrong in beekeeping, though it is difficult, indeed impossible, to completely hide his own beliefs. The choices are complicated as they impinge not just on the beekeeper, but also on the welfare of the bees, other beekeepers and society in general. Due to the very nature of ethical choices, there will be contradictions and counter arguments. This is not a book to tell you how to keep bees ethically. How you chose to keep your bees is your decision. This book simply rehearses for the reader the ethical arguments that may arise when keeping bees. Whatever choices you make, there will inevitably be compromises. If you are looking for absolute values in life do not keep bees.

The author, John Whitaker, now lives and keeps bees in Herefordshire, but, prior to moving there, kept bees in Yorkshire for over twenty years. He served time on the YBKA exec for about ten years, most of that time as treasurer.

The book is available from Northern Bee Books, who are the publishers, and also on-line from Amazon.



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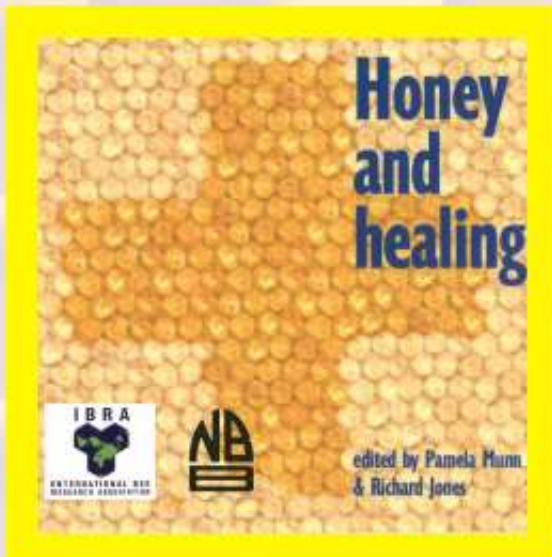
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Do you have any beekeeping related equipment or livestock you want to sell, then if so, why not put it here in the new YBKA Newsletter classifieds section.