



YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

The Yorkshire National

March 2018

Edition 02

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Editorial

At last Spring is in sight, only just though!

I've regularly been hefting my hives and nucs in the apiaries, making sure there is enough food (read Dave Shannon's guide on page 5). I am a big fan of pollen substitutes, so these have also been going on as well. I put one on weekly this month.

I will be taking the mouse guards off later in the month.

Even in Winter I still like to pop down and just watch the hive entrance on warmer days to see the entrance activity, this is a great indicator of strong hives and weak ones.

Events to look forwards to in the coming weeks are the YBKA Spring Conference and several BKA Auctions in Lincoln, Beverley, York and Halifax.

The winter weather conditions have been a challenge this month; I am located in North Wakefield which tends to have it quite easy, but I suspect some folk in this fair Shire have had it far worse.

Please enjoy this edition, Editor



River Calder

March 2018

Chairman's Notes

Well, the bees were out flying and leaving little deposits on my car and all seemed well with the world.

Tuesday 20 March was to be the first day of Spring and the bees seemed to be getting ready for its arrival.

Then the Beast from the East arrived, no not Mr. Putin, and the temperatures dropped well into negative numbers and we are sat wondering when Spring will arrive.

So, I am off into the Arctic blizzard, here on the Pennines, with my wellies, thermals and survival clothing so that I can clear away the snow from my hives – clearing the driveway can wait!

Saturday 24 February saw our Annual Delegates meeting take place where the coming year's activities were discussed. A lively debate took place regarding the collection of swarms and advice will soon be sent out to all associations.

Our annual Spring Conference is being held on Saturday 24 March so put this date in your diary, book your ticket and look forward to a great day out.

Phil Gee

YBKA Chairman

Preparations for the YBKA Spring Conference by Katey Slater – Leeds BKA

The Spring Conference is one of the outstanding events in the calendar of Yorkshire BKA - a fantastic day out for beekeepers, some of whom may be located in far flung or isolated corners of this - God's own county. It's a great chance to meet other beekeepers, to top up on supplies at the trade stands, to listen to some brilliant talks and to attend some of the workshops to improve your skills. Attendance has fallen off in recent years, which is a great shame, as it is an excellent day out – especially for new beekeepers.

Preparation starts many months beforehand, with a special subcommittee formed through the General Purposes Committee. The team is led by Roger Chappel, YBKA Secretary, and goes roughly along these lines:

1. Review the previous Conference – what went well, what went not so well.
2. Ideas for next year – theme, speakers, design, location, catering, etc.
3. Apportioning of responsibilities. Someone needs to be in charge of catering, brochure printing, venue liaison, exhibitors, speakers, workshops, etc.
4. Nearer the time, the finer details need attention – collating bookings and printing name badges, collating lunch orders/liasing with caterers, following up exhibitors (making sure they haven't

forgotten!), visits to the venue to decide location of workshops, placements of exhibitors, welcome desk, signage, etc.

5. Finally, on the day – make sure everyone is where they should be and doing what they should be doing. An extremely tiring day for the organizers but well worth the effort!

My own responsibility for the last couple of Conferences has been to organize the trade exhibitors. Not a straightforward task.

These tend to fall into two distinct groups – those who have attended before, had a good day, and are ready and willing to attend again. These include our lovely Northern Bee Books, Spinks Compaq, bee friendly plants, wildflower seed suppliers, and of course, the National Bee Unit, among others.

But there is a lot of emailing and ringing round trying to get more people. Unfortunately, it does seem that the majority of beekeeping supply companies are in the far south of the country. We have one dependable supplier based in Sheffield (thank you), but although we love our conference, it is too much to expect a supplier in Devon or Kent to travel to Yorkshire for one day, for what is after all a relatively small event – we haven't yet been able to successfully compete with Bee Tradex or the BBKA Conference (but you never know what the future holds!)

There are also special interest groups and universities, who are hard to pin down to attend, due to shortage of manpower and the fact that it's outside normal working hours.

My favourite part of this particular job though, is letting the exhibitors know that they are entitled to a free lunch – the lunches are good hearty dinners, featuring pies, curries, crumbles, custard.... Also available of course to all attendees!

So, make a note in your diary to attend next year – if you haven't been before, I know you will find this is a day well spent.

Katey Slater

Leeds BKA/YBKA GPC

Yorkshire BKA Facts

Working bees when leaving the hive can fly up to 20mph and when they return laden up to 12mph

YBKA General Purposes Committee

Wanted! New Education Officer, Contact YBKA Secretary if interested

Education Officer:

- Keep members up-to-date with all examination and qualification potential through the BBKA Education Department.
- Co-ordinate applications for modules and assessments,
- Co-ordinate candidate/assessor appointments
- Arrange distribution of certificates
- Promoting examination/assessment statistics
- Provide advice to members regarding examination or assessment issues
- Organise courses/tuition to assist members preparing for examinations, qualifications, modules and assessments.

Additional Desired skills and abilities:

- *Good communication skills for a varied audience*
- *Enthusiastic and enjoy speaking to people*
- *Ability to use Internet and email*
- *Beekeeping experience - not a necessity but it would be advantageous.*
- *May suit a non-beekeeper member of a beekeeping household*
- *Use own initiative to develop role as appropriate*
- *Supported & welcomed by the YBKA GPC*
- *The posts are voluntary, time required for the post [approximately 2 hours per week]*
- *Reasonable expenses can be claimed*
- *Promote beekeeping and what needs to do to become a beekeeper*
- *Most roles are elected annually at the AGM and appointed to the General Purposes Committee – post holders are expected to attend GPC meetings.*
- *Serve as a Trustee of YBKA if required*
- *Enjoy working as a group and contribute to a friendly and relaxed environment*

The above description is neither intended to be complete, exhaustive or final and are for guidance only. It is expected that the roles will become more specific as time goes on and it is expected that the role will be adapted to suit the specific skills of the holder as appropriate.

A little help for beginner Beekeepers by Dave Shannon – Doncaster BKA

Great tips for feeding honey bees at this cold time of year

This year our winter months have been very long and at times very cold. This has kept our bees indoors and semi clustered for the majority of the past 5 months. This is now culminating in some of our older plus our weaker bees dying off. There are one or two major factors that enhance this process and ones we should be aware of as Beekeepers to eliminate further deaths in our colonies.

First of these is damp, bees do not like damp conditions. Ensure your hive is dry and free of damp but with good ventilation throughout. Secondly and vitally the colony must have a good stock of food available to them.

Now for the beginner's identification of this, it comes in two forms. Honey and, most importantly, Pollen (something many Beekeepers forget about). Without these two ingredients your colony will not thrive and will die out.

To check both these elements within your hives is something that only comes with experience. This entails ensuring that each colony has at least 50lb of stores at the close of the last season. This includes honey and pollen both!

Ask an experienced beekeeper to check and make sure you have done this correctly. However now after all these months these stores may be running low. So, we need to ensure our colonies needs are tended to.

Liquid feed (syrup) is a no-no at this time of year as this causes dysentery in the bees, plus most will not move up to the feeder to drink it up in cold weather. So, we feed them with sugar fondant. This can be purchased through your association store or any beekeeping supplier, coming in small sealed bags of varying weights. It is also very important to feed them a pollen substitute also in the form of a sealed patty. These are made to ensure your bees get the amino acids and vitamins required to make them thrive.

You can now buy bags of fondant and pollen ready mixed at some suppliers. When doing this it is absolutely no good at all placing these bags on top of the crown board holes and expecting the bees to move up and take it down into the brood box. This will not happen and your bees may still die if you do.

We need to use what is called an 'eke'. This is just an 18-inch by 1 to 2-inch piece of square timber that is placed on top of the brood box after the supers have been removed. This creates a small space between brood box and supers.

You then place your bags of sugar fondant and pollen substitute directly on the top of the bees in the brood box in the space your eke has made. Then replace your super's quilts and lids.

Whilst the weather remains cold and wet these additional stores should be checked every couple of weeks, and replaced where required. This process should be carried out as quick as possible and it's always best for a new beekeeper to have another more experienced person to help.

Here's hoping your bees are fine but keep a good check on those stores and let's hope spring and better weather comes soon. I'm expecting heavy losses where these things are ignored. 🐝 🐝 Bee aware,

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

How honey bee gut bacteria help to digest their pollen-rich diet

Summary:

The honey bee gut is colonized by specialized bacteria that help digest components of the floral pollen diet and produce molecules that likely promote bee health. Researchers have now uncovered which bacterial species perform which specific digestive functions in the bee gut.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/12/171212141506.htm>

Wild Sri Lankan elephants retreat from sound of disturbed Asian honey bees

Summary:

A new study using playbacks, has for the first time shown that Asian elephants in Sri Lanka are scared of honey bees, much like their African counterparts. The study showed that Asian elephants responded with alarm to the bee simulations. They also retreated significantly further away and vocalized more in response to the bee sounds compared to controls.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/01/180122150157.htm>

Queen mandibular pheromone modulates hemolymph ecdysteroid titers in adult *Apis mellifera* workers

Summary:

To test the hypothesis that exposure to queen mandibular pheromone (QMP) modulates ecdysteroid production in adult worker honey bees, ecdysteroids were measured in hemolymph and other tissues of individual adult worker honey bees reared with or without QMP in cages and field colonies

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s13592-018-0562-6>

Sick bees eat healthier

Scientists have shown that sick bees try to look after themselves by eating healthy food.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/02/180207110106.htm>

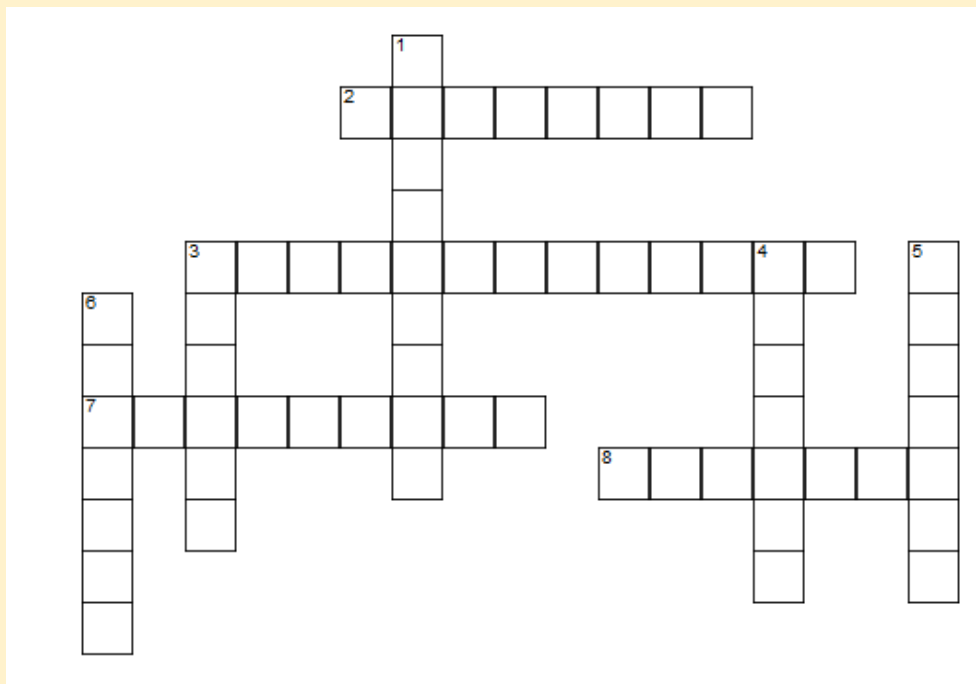
All the buzz: Bigger honeybee colonies have quieter combs

When honeybee colonies get larger, common sense suggests it would be noisier with more bees buzzing around. But a study now reports that bigger honeybee colonies actually have quieter combs than smaller ones.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/01/180123171430.htm>

March 2018 YBKA Crossword Quiz

Flowers that the honey bee work



ACROSS

- 2 An old ladies favourite
- 3 Carpets the ground at the start of the year with bright, buttercup-like flowers
- 7 shade-tolerant perennials that produce flowers from mid- to late winter
- 8 You will find this plant in the North Yorkshire moors

DOWN

- 1 Yellow flower that can appears most months of the year
- 3 Catkins appear before the leaves in spring
- 4 Floral emblem of Scotland
- 5 Solidago common name
- 6 An oregan grape

Answers at the end of the newsletter

Yorkshire BKA Facts

Apis is the Latin word for bee. *Mellifera* comes from the Greek melli, honey, and ferre, to bear.

The scientific name means the honey-bearing bee.

*Annual Spring Conference
Saturday, March 24th, 2018
8.30 am to 4.30 pm
VENUE: Manor Academy in York*

08.30 – 09.15	Registration and refreshments
09.15 – 09.30	Welcome and Introduction
09.30 – 10.15	Margaret Murdin (NDB). The BBKA and what it stands for.
10.15 – 10.30	Workshops and how you can book them. Introduction of Dr. Ryad Al Sous.
10.30 – 11.00	Coffee Break [Delegates opt for workshops & discussion groups]
11.00 – 11.45	Dr. John Varker. This lecture sets the scene for the evolutionary history of bees.
11.45 – 12.30	Trisha Marlow. How Bees help development in rural communities abroad.
12.30 – 13.30	LUNCH
13.30 – 15.30	Workshops and Discussion Groups:

Breeding better Bees & Queen-rearing - Tony Jefferson & Jim Pearson

The use of honey and beeswax in Cerate - Sara Robb

Skep-making - Geoff Pearson

Re-cycling wax - Chris Coulson

Discussion groups headed by Trisha Marlow, Dr Ryad Al Sous and John Varker.

15.30 – 16.00 Beekeepers question time. The YBKA Chairman (Phil Gee) will chair this section. The panel will consist of the speakers, the Regional Bee Inspector and members of the General Purposes Committee. An opportunity to question the speakers on what you have heard during the day and any other beekeeping issues that you may have.

Ticket price is either
£10 per ticket but does not include lunch and refreshments
£20 and includes all refreshments and lunch.
To book your ticket please contact Roger Chappel the YBKA secretary
By post 4, The Green, Brafferton, Darlington, Co. Durham DL1 3LB or
By email: secretary@ybka.org.uk
By phone 01325 315741 or 07905 190 701
You can pay by card over the phone or by cheque (payable to YBKA)
Please remember to inform us if you have any special dietary requirements.
Address for conference:
Manor Academy, Millfield Lane, Nether Poppleton, YORK, YO26 6PA



YBKA Annual Spring Conference on Saturday 24th March 2018

at the Manor Academy in York.

YBKA Spring Conference 2018

www.ybka.org.uk/event/spring-conference-2018/

Our main speakers at the conference

Dr. Sara Robb is an award-winning scientist, professional speaker, author and managing director of her company Bath Potions. Sara moved to the United Kingdom to continue her research. In 2003, Sara left academic research and founded her company Bath Potions, which specialises in honey soaps and beeswax creams. Recipes are available in her first book: "Dr Sara's Honey Potions". Sara lives in North London with her family and runs workshops at the British Beekeepers Association Spring Convention and The National Honey Show each year. Sara has a continued interest in aging and anti-oxidants, particularly, the anti-oxidants in bee products and how they can slow the aging process.

Margaret Murdin (NDB) is a Master Beekeeper and is just completing her second year as Chairman of the BBKA. She has been a trustee of the BBKA for the last 6 years and is Assistant Moderator for the written exams. She assesses practical assessments at Basic, General Husbandry and Advanced Husbandry levels and tutors for the Correspondence Course. Margaret teaches beekeeping quite extensively. She moved from Merseyside to Oxfordshire last year and downsized her beekeeping operation because of the demands of the Chairmanship. Margaret keeps 9 colonies locally to where she lives and whenever possible escapes from the BBKA to enjoy her bees. She also likes to work with the BBKA staff and trustees as a whole integrated team and, using this approach, has taken the BBKA from years of losses to two years of significant surpluses without the need for an increase in capitation.

Dr. W. John Varker is a retired Leeds University Palaeontologist (Earth Sciences Department), who for 36 years lectured student groups of from 4 to over 300. He also has experience in Adult Education. His research concerned microfossils used for dating rocks which is obtained by dissolving limestones. For five years he was a member of an International Committee visiting sites in Germany, France, Ukraine, China, Mongolia and several parts of the United States. John came to beekeeping only recently when he inherited a single empty hive and so consequently joined the Leeds BKA, had his garden vetted for suitability and bought his first nucleus colony and set to work....

Trisha Marlow is a BBKA Master Beekeeper and assessor for the BBKA Basic assessment in England, Wales (through the WBKA) and Africa (BBKA Basic in Modern African Beekeeping). She lives on the family farm in the Welsh Marches with partner Paul. As volunteer Project Manager for the UK poverty alleviation charity Bees Abroad, her focus is mainly on projects in Ghana at this time as well as various sub-committee work at home. Trisha is also the Vice-County bee recorder for Montgomeryshire, records moths for the County and in her "spare time" likes to grow things, travel, and is finally learning to ride horses.

WORKSHOPS

A variety of workshops will be taking place throughout the day covering such wide topics as cerate and soap production (**Dr Sara Robb**), Skep making (**Geoff Pearson**) and making the best use of re-cycled wax (**Chris Coulson**). **Tony Jefferson** and **Jim Pearson** will give their own unique views on how best to develop good-natured colonies and how to rear your own queens with the very best characteristics.

Simple methods of making increase

By Wally Shaw

This title is meant for those with two or three hives who wish to make small increases without influencing the eventual honey crop.



Splits and Varroa

By William Hesbach

A very useful book for the reduction in varroa in your colonies. Bill Hesbach is a beekeeper and honey producer in Cheshire, where he owns and operates Wind Dance Apiary.

An Apiary guide to swarm control

By Wally Shaw

The title tells it all. This booklet originally published by the Welsh Beekeepers Association is a very sound introduction to swarm control for all small scale beekeepers.



The Beekeepers Quarterly

The Beekeepers Quarterly - 4 Issues per Year

The BKQ is an international English language beekeeping journal which has been published since 1984 by Northern Bee Books and edited by John Phipps. Over the years it has developed into a 60 page full colour magazine which is available both in print and online.

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A short colony inspection guide by Chris Barlow

When I inspect colonies, I look for my rule of 5

1. Is the queen present and laying (brood in all 3 stages)?
 - a. As long as I can see eggs, I am happy there is a queen present even if I don't see her.
2. Has the colony got enough room?
 - a. When there is 70%-80% of the frames filled with brood and/or stores, I add more room
3. Does the colony have sufficient stores of pollen and honey until the next inspection?
 - a. Will the stores present be enough for another week, if not consider feeding depending time of year
4. Is the colony healthy?
 - a. I looked for deformed wing virus and uncap a few drone cells and check for varroa.
5. Are there any queen cells?
 - a. If queen cells are present then I implement a swarm management technique

Considerations before I start

What's the ideal time to do an inspection? When it is warm and sunny with minimal wind and during the day when lots of the bees are out foraging. Note: this is an ideal choice which is not always possible, I have inspected in drizzling rain.

Temperature should be above 15°C for a full inspection

Always have a reason to go in to your bees?

Think about the rule of 5 reasons

Light your smoker if you are going to use one, or have a water spray handy

Decide if you are going to use cover clothes or not (if you are, get them ready)

External

Before I open the hive up, I watch the outside, it can be a great indicator of what's potentially happening on the inside.

- I monitor the bees coming and going through the entrance
 - this can indicate the strength of the colony
- Check the ground in front of the hive for dead bees or any crawling upwards looking ill
 - This can indicate diseases/pests/problems present inside
- Check the hive and stand for any signs of damage or wear and tear
 - This can indicate problems before they occur like holes for pests to enter through
- Check the varroa tray for varroa or any other signs of other problems
 - A quick pull out and have a count, clean the tray so next time you know the count is from the last 7 days only

- In Winter it might be appropriate to put a brick on the roof or tie the hive down depending where you have your hive.

Internal – as you start

Remove lid and put on floor at side of the hive.

Remove the crown board (check for queen)

Internal - After you open the box

Check the supers - (If any) to see if you need to add one - depends on time of year

The queen - Sometimes you won't find her but that's fine.

If you find the queen and she is not marked, mark her (correct year)

Eggs - If you see eggs, that's good, the queen has been laying within the last 3 days

Check for eggs, larvae and sealed brood across the frames

See if you can spot any drone brood cells

Check egg laying pattern - Is it patchy or is there excessive drone brood

Honey/Nectar - Is there sufficient present until your next inspection?

If not, feed appropriately for time of year

Queen cells or supersedure cells - Are there any present?

If so, implement swarm management

Frame and Comb condition - Age, colour or damage

Can any be replaced

Signs of diseases - Foul brood, chalkbrood, deformed bees, nosema

Deformed wings on worker bees and seeing varroa on bees are indications of a possible high varroa count,

If this is the case then medicate for varroa

Do you have any tips for colony inspections? If you do, please share them.

We are asking you

to give some of your precious time

to help us with:

- Contributing to the newsletter and website
- Joining the YBKA committee as Education officer
- PR Officer - shout it loud for the beekeepers of Yorkshire. Can you do that?

If you have any stories about your bee keeping that you wish to share then please email it to the newsletter editor

We are looking for a replacement Education Officer for the wonderful Yvonne Kilvington. If you are interested in the role please email Roger Chappel on secretary@ybka.org.uk

Flowers For Honey Bees

