

Y.B.K.A. eNews

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Volume 14 : August

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A Message from Our Chairman

All is going well so far this season - after a worrying start for some with hives going missing and colonies being lost during the winter the good weather has meant that all of us have done well and that with have good strong colonies to take to the moors.

My thanks to all who entered the Honey Show as a part of the Great Yorkshire Show and my congratulations to the winners. I would like to encourage you all to enter your local shows, and don't forget our own YBKA show as a part of the Countryside Days.

Lets hope for more warm weather for a crop of heather honey and a balsam crop.

Happy Beekeeping
Dave Shannon

August

So the weather has changed and the bees should be slowing down a little - consolidating. Don't relax your guard too much but do relax a little as you get time to take a breathe and check where you are and what equipment you still have that doesn't have bees in.

If your bees have been bringing a crop in after the rape then plan to extract it (the bramble has finished but the willowherb is still going), if you live near balsam then plan to collect a good nectar flow if the weather returns to decent and if you have your bees at the heather then pray for good weather. It is not too late to get hives onto the moors - the bell is flowering but not the ling.

As with everything 'bee' related then you should have a plan of what you're going to do as the season heads towards the autumn: When are you going to check for varroa and what treatment will you use; when do you need to give smaller entrances to some hives to stop wasps and robbers and are you prepared to feed any hives that might need it.

You should also be planning on controlling the number of colonies you go into winter with. It is better to have few, strong colonies rather than many weak ones. All those artificial (or not so artificial) swarms may well have made good growth and be strong colonies - but do you want to expand to that number ? By uniting colonies you get good strong bees with young queens going into winter with lots of stores and you have spare equipment which can be readied, over winter, to allow you to control swarming next year. It will all be in your plan.

Jobs for the month

Continue inspections
Watch for swarms
Add supers if needed for balsam
Prepare extraction equipment and storage
Place nucs into full hives or combine with current colonies
Render wax scrapings, burr comb and brace comb

Monitor mite drop - if you get more than 10 per day consider treatment but if colony is going to produce honey only dust with icing sugar

[Bill Cadmore, Editor](#)
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Uniting colonies

Swarm controls will have resulted in an increase in numbers. Getting back to the number you thought of first is simple: put two colonies together, but do it carefully. The accepted way to unite two colonies is using a sheet of newspaper.

The books will tell you to move the colonies close together, moving one of them a yard at a time each day, but my experience is that this is unnecessary. Simply wait until the bees have stopped flying in the evening, remove the crown board from one hive and lay a sheet of newspaper directly over all the frames of the brood box, (use a broadsheet not a tabloid) then place the second colony over the top of the newspaper. You can make a few small holes in the paper but I never do. Close up and leave for a week before inspecting and reassembling into one unit. If there are supers, ensure that there is a sheet of newspaper wherever adjacent boxes contain different bees.

Before joining the colonies, preferably earlier in the day, loosen all hive parts and take any brace comb off the bottom of the frames of the top box beforehand. At the same time remove the queen you do not wish to keep.

Put a queen excluder on top of the newspaper so that the queen is confined in the lower box and also to hold down the newspaper. A fine water spray will keep the bees in the bottom box from flying for the short time they are exposed.

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Tips on Harvesting Honey

The following is courtesy of John Caldeira, Dallas, Texas, USA. The original can be found on his website at www.outdoorplace.org/beekeeping/.

18 Things a Beginning Beekeeper Should Know to Help Things Run Smoothly on Extracting Day
The following suggestions are offered for the benefit of beekeepers with a few hives who do not have a permanent honey house. They are meant to supplement the information in books where everything seems so simple and easy. Many beekeepers, including myself, have learned some of these self-evident truths the hard way.

1. Honey is sticky. It will drip. Every doorknob, shoelace, telephone and radio button that is touched while uncapping or handling wet frames will become sticky. Walking spreads the honey around on the floor.
Solution: A bucket of water to rinse hands and a dishtowel are essential in the extracting room, especially if you are married and want to stay that way. Turn on the fan and radio, and get everything else ready, before getting all sticky. The garage, basement, barn or porch are usually better places to extract than the kitchen, providing you can keep the honey clean. Watch the kids.
2. Bees in the extracting room are attracted to light. Straggler bees left in the supers will find their way into the extracting room and will tend to fly towards a window or light bulb.
Solution: A small exit near the top of a window will allow them to return to their hives if they are nearby. If the hives are not nearby and you have a lot of bees in the room, hanging a few drawn frames near the top of the window with a caged queen will provide a place for them to settle and create a nice nucleus colony when you're done. A vacuum

cleaner hose is an alternative. Don't extract directly under the only light bulb in the room.

3. Bees away from their hive are not inclined to sting. Bees carried into the extracting room in supers are normally extremely gentle, with no brood or queen present. However, they are very adept at stinging the finger that accidentally crushes them while picking up a frame or super. Beware.
4. Household items can serve as good alternatives to supplies found in beekeeping catalogs.
 - o A serrated bread knife makes a good uncapping knife. Use a sawing motion. No need to heat it. Change directions if it catches the wood. Some beekeepers really like using a hot-air electric paint stripper to quickly melt the cappings, but I haven't tried it.
 - o Kitchen strainers, nylon paint strainers, and women's nylon stockings can serve as good honey filters. Clean ones, of course.
 - o Tupperware and Rubbermaid both make good plastic containers to hold honey and cappings. Honey is acidic, so don't use items such as aluminum and galvanized steel that will react with the honey acids. Stick with plastic, stainless steel or glass.

While there is a good household substitute for most extracting equipment, there is no good substitute for a good centrifugal extractor.

5. Let the honey settle. Honey that rests for a few days after extracting will not leave tiny bubbles around the rim of a jar. Be patient. Almost all debris left in the honey after filtering will either float or sink within a few days. A spigot just off the bottom of a container will prevent both floating and sunken debris from being accidentally bottled.
6. If there is no nectar flow, bees will rob honey. If the honey in an extracting room is more appealing than local flowers, the neighborhood bees will try to feast on it and tell all their friends.

Extracting is best performed in a closed screened room such as a garage, basement or barn, or outside after dark. I heard a story about a guy that brought some supers into his basement to extract the next day, but he left a window open. The next day he found that his bees had brought half the honey back to their hives.

7. Uncapping is easier with only 8 or 9 frames spaced evenly in a 10-frame super. The thicker comb means almost no scraping with the fork. After bees have drawn out the foundation the first season, return only 8 or 9 frames into each extracted super to make the next crop easier to uncap. Uncap all the way down to the wood on the top and bottom bar, regardless of how far the comb is drawn out, so the comb will be nice and even next year.
8. Propolis sticks to shoes and almost everything else. Extracting is a great time to clean propolis off the box edges and frame-rests, but if they are going to be scraped it is best to cover the floor with old cardboard, newspaper or a plastic painter's tarp so there won't be little propolis reminders of the extracting experience. Wax isn't quite as bad.
9. Butyric acid (Bee Go) really stinks. It works great, and is the best way for most hobby beekeepers to clear bees from the supers. The bees don't get as angry as brushing or blowing them, but that smelly fume board belongs behind the garage or near the fence when you're done. The chemical bottle belongs in a plastic bag inside an old coffee can or something else that won't tip over; this is stuff you do not ever want to spill. The almond-smelling Benzaldehyde smells better and works okay in cooler weather, but it still belongs outside. Bee escape boards work okay too, if you can install them the day before extracting, have enough escapes for every hive, and don't have too many holes between the boxes where the bees can enter and rob the honey. My equipment is old and leaks.
10. Extractors, uncapping tanks and other extracting equipment are best borrowed or shared. Most hobby beekeepers will only use their extracting equipment one or two days each year. The rest of the year it typically gathers dust in an attic, garage or basement. Thus it is very practical and economical for several beekeepers or a beekeeping

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association to share equipment. The expense is avoided, and it eliminates the need for storage space. So borrow or share, and use some of that money saved to buy a few of the nice non-stick polyurethane candle molds. If you must buy, a good quality hand-crank 4 frame extractor will suit most beekeepers better than 2 or 3 frame models, since it reduces the spinning work and thus greatly shortens the extracting time.

11. Extracting honey is best accomplished with two people. One person uncapping frames while the other spins the honey. Very efficient and the conversation can be good. It's not very stressful to a relationship either, unlike hanging wallpaper. If you have clean wax from an earlier extraction, a side candle-making operation is an effective use of time since candles take time to cool.
12. Warm honey flows best. Warm honey spins out of the comb faster and more thoroughly than does cold honey in an extractor. Warm honey also strains faster through a filter. Honey at 80 degrees Fahrenheit (27 c) or higher will be extracted most easily. This is normally not a problem in the summer, but in cool weather a light bulb under a stack of supers overnight can provide a lot of heat if the escape of the heat is controlled. Don't melt the wax!
13. Extracted honey absorbs moisture from the air. Uncovered honey also catches insects, so keep the honey covered.
14. Sufficient honey containers are needed on extracting day. Enough containers need to be on hand when extracting, so it is good to learn how much capacity you'll need before extracting. In rough numbers:
 - o A shallow super will typically yield between 25 and 30 pounds of honey, or 2 to 2 ½ gallons.
 - o A medium (6 5/8") depth super will typically yield between 35 and 40 pounds, or 3 to 4 gallons.
 - o A full-depth box will typically yield between 60 and 70 pounds, or 5 to 6 gallons.

Actual yields vary due to the number of frames, how well they are extracted, age of comb and other variables.
15. Wax cappings hold a lot of honey. Wax cappings typically hold 10% or more of a beekeeper's honey crop. Cappings should be drained of honey through screening. After draining, the cappings wax can be melted into a block. Melting is best accomplished using a solar wax melter, or by heating the cappings in an inch of water in an old pot. Feed the honey-water back to the bees.
Solar wax melters really do work well - use double-paned framed window glass and build around it. Alternatively, the cappings can be left outside for the bees to feed on and then thrown away
16. Utensils that are used with melted wax will not be used for anything else. Melted wax leaves a waxy film on every pot, spoon, dipping cup or strainer it comes into contact with.
Crock pots with an inch of water are good for melting cappings that have been drained of honey, but the pot will never be the same. Old crock pots are also near-perfect for melting wax during candle making, and they are often available at garage sales. Heat to between 150 and 180 degrees Fahrenheit; no need to boil.
17. Bad comb and rotten boxes should be replaced while extracting. Extracting provides the perfect opportunity to cull bad combs, frames and boxes that need paint or replacing. Have replacements on hand on extracting day. When short a few frames, frame feeders (also called division-board feeders; the kind that normally replace a frame or two) can be put in the empty spaces in the supers so any burr comb built there will be inside the feeder where it will actually be useful to prevent drowning when it is time to feed.
18. Let the bees clean the "wet" empty supers after extracting. Whether intending to return the supers to the bees or store them off the hives, the bees do a great job of drying supers after extracting. A stack of supers can be placed on a hive, over an inner cover that has a hole, and they will usually be dry the next day. Best to put them on the hives late in the day, to reduce robbing. [back](#)

G.Y.S 2010 Honey Show

Once again a very successful 2010 Great Yorkshire Show for all with record crowds for the fourth year in succession. Attendances for the show this year reached a staggering 131, 382 visitors. The Y.A.S honey show was also up on exhibitors and exhibits again with more than 44 + exhibitors taking part this year and 395 exhibits. The standard of the show overall was excellent, and with the closure of the Royal show last year this is now the north's most prestigious show. Trophies from the Royal show were brought up by special arrangement to be presented to winners of sections throughout the show along with our own Y.A.S trophies and prize cards for all section and individual classes. Here is the list of winners and what they achieved. A list of winners has been sent with this newsletter.



Our
successful
exhibitors.



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Australian Visitor to Great Yorkshire Show



It was nice to welcome Tiffane Bates to the Yorkshire BKA pavillion. Tiff is a very successful queen breeder and beekeeper from Perth, Australia, where she works on bee research at the university. Tiff was in the U.K. to help researchers at Leeds University improve their skills and techniques in grafting and artificial insemination - she proved to be a very good teacher. While here she was keen to meet as many beekeepers as she could - varroa is an ever present threat to the australians and she wanted to know how we worked to limit the effects of the mite and to find out about progress we have made towards developing bees that can live with it.

Tiff missed the good weather we've been having and is now convinced that the UK has no sunshine at all.

She enthused about the show and was very pleased to be able to chat with members working in the pavilion.

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Succession plans at the Great Yorkshire Show

Things are changing, its Anno Domini

Michael Badger and Gerald Moxon are looking ahead for two persons to take over from them as part of their succession / exit plans from their roles as senior stewards at the hives and honey section Great Yorkshire Show.

The persons need not to be experts in in exhibition of honey, but a knowledge is of great help. They need to be fit and able, have presence, affability and lead from the front. In addition, be atuned to meeting the public and public dignitaries from Lord Lieutenants to Foreign diplomats and people from public life who visit the honey show.

The new appointee will in time become the YAS Representative for beekeeping. This role includes chairing the Hives and Honey meetings at the YAS and attending briefings as and when required.

It is envisaged that the persons will become an assistant steward to learn the ropes and over time take charge. It is not time consuming other than you need to set aside six days for the Great Yorkshire Show and three days Countryside Live.

Next year the honey show is moving into new accommodation, this is part of the succession plan to ease in the new candidate to the new role.

If you would like more information please email buzz.buzz@ntlworld.com

Queen excluders - To be or not to be...

Following an interesting talk given last year by Tony Jefferson, at one of our Winter meetings, I was surprised and interested to hear that he did not use queen excluders at all. After thinking about this, I suggested to my husband, Ian, that we experiment with this idea.

For the last couple of years, we have taken queen excluders off the hives whilst the hives have been 'on the heather' and then left them off over the winter months.

There are arguments for and against this!

Last Spring we decided to leave the q.e. off two of our colonies. This was mainly due to the fact that we could not find the queens on the initial Spring inspection and they were both laying in the supers anyway! We thought it would be interesting to see what happened in comparison to the other colonies that had q.e. put on them.

What we found was:

- The colonies built up in strength & numbers much more rapidly than those colonies with q. e. Much honey was produced.
- The bees were much more ill tempered and aggressive (but that may have had nothing whatsoever to do with queen excluders!)Also, the reason why they produced much honey may have been because we were much less inclined to open them up!
- When we did get around to looking at them, both colonies had produced several beautiful queen cells, all good sized and neatly spaced out hanging from the underside of the top brood boxes - much better than anything that could have been humanly engineered (in my opinion!)

This year I suggested to Ian that we experiment, not only by leaving queen excluders off, but also to use brood boxes instead of supers. My supposition was that the bees would store honey in the combs on the outside frames and the brood nest would expand upwards 'chimney like' This would enable us to make up nucs for the many new members who had been on the two beekeeping courses that we have held this year. In effect, we would be producing bees this year, rather than honey.

What we found was that the bees did not expand upwards as anticipated! It was much more difficult to find the queen. Also, some of the frames of honey had small patches of brood in them so we did not like to take them off.

For practical reasons and to save frustration, Ian made the decision to put the queen excluders back on! We continued our beekeeping in the conventional way!

However, we also found this year that bees in a number of our colonies seemed most reluctant to venture into the supers and were storing pollen and nectar in the brood frames, thereby restricting the space available to the laying queen (another reason for the high number of swarms we've lost this year?)

Ian took off the queen excluders to encourage the bees up into the supers. This worked a treat! The bees moved very readily into the supers, rapidly drawing out the wax and storing nectar and pollen. I realise that this operation coincided with a prolonged spell of fine warm weather and a healthy nectar flow! Once the bees had started to work these frames, we put the queen excluders back on.

I suppose this would not be practical if you had many hives situated in an out apiary. It has certainly worked in our favour - so far....

Monica Coates
Secretary of SRBKA
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Sniffer Bees

Specially trained 'Sniffer' Bees could be used by investigators to detect substances such as explosives or drugs according to research. Carol Jenkins reports. Cutting edge research by biotechnology company Inscentinel Ltd could change the way substances such as drugs or explosives are detected at a potential crime scene.

The company, which is affiliated to the world renowned Rothamsted Research Centre in Hertfordshire has been development what it describes as a 'new generation' of handheld portable detectors that contains live honeybees for vapour detection. Harry Townshend, Business Development and Engineering Manager at Inscentinel explained that the science is based on the acute olfactory sense of honeybees. Bees are trained to recognise particular odours (e.g. that of explosives) and associate that smell with a food reward. When the bees detect the odour, they extend their tongue or proboscis (the Proboscis Extension Reflex or PER) in expectation of food. "Honeybees make excellent detectors because they are inexpensive, quick to train (a few minutes per bee) and have extremely low limits of detection (odours can be detected to parts per trillion levels)," he said. "Our system has the potential to be deployed rapidly and quickly retargeted to new compounds when required. There is a large scope of possible applications ranging from explosives and drug detection to the diagnosis of tuberculosis and food spoilage."

The bees are not harmed in the process. A honeybee lives for a month and each bee is used for a few days and then marked and replaced back into the hive to ensure its long term future. The prototype handheld detection that is being trialled in a device called a 'buzz box' that contains trained bees harnessed into a removable drawer. An electric fan draws air into the box, while a video camera records the bees' response, which can alert the handler to even the faintest trace of explosives. Researchers say that the bees are able to detect the scent of explosives at concentrations as low as two parts per trillion. If you give them the smell, and then reward them with a sugar solution, they quickly make the association between the smell and the food. After training, bees will react to even the smallest trace of an explosive by extending their tongue-like proboscis in anticipation of food. Bees are also quick to learn, cheap to maintain and they do not need a dedicated handler. They also cannot be distracted from their task. When the hand held detector containing the bees is being used for vapour detection, a special screen means that they cannot be seen by potential offenders when the exercise is being carried out.

The detectors are so simple to operate that frontline officers are able to use them in operations and still be able to ensure an accurate reading. The bees could also be used as part of Security screening - for plastic explosives, drugs and chemical weapons; counterfeit goods detection the detection of smuggled goods such as tobacco and alcohol and discrimination of fraudulent goods. They can also be used for food quality control to detect the ripeness of fruit and vegetables before visible signs of deterioration through molecular recognition of specific indicator molecules as well as early medical diagnosis of cancers and diseases through the detection of characteristic indicator molecules in breath, blood and urine.

The bees could act as complimentary to the work already carried out by sniffer dogs and Mr Townshend is keen to emphasise that they are not being developed to replace dogs. "This is isn't as far-fetched as it sounds," said Mr Townshend. "If we can get people over the 'giggle factor' then we hope to show that honeybees could have a real role to play in policing."

Now that the research has proved how effective the bees can be in detecting trace substances, the company is looking for forces to come forward and take part in field trials to help illustrate their use in a law enforcement context. "We would be keen to talk to police forces who are interested in carrying out field trials of the honeybees to help us further our research by looking at their use in a range of policing tasks," said Mr Townshend. [back](#)

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YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

EVENTS CALENDAR 2009/10

EVENT	VENUE	DATE
BBKA Module tutorial	Normanby Pavilion GYS	19 December 2009
BBKA Module tutorial	Normanby Pavilion GYS	9 January 2010
BBKA Annual Delegates Meeting	Stoneleigh Warks	16 January 2010
YBKA GPC meeting	Normanby Pavilion GYS	5 February 2010
BBKA Module tutorial	Normanby Pavilion GYS	20 February 2010
YBKA Spring Conference	Normanby Pavilion GYS	6 March 2010
BBKA Module Examinations	Normanby Pavilion GYS	20 March 2010
YBKA Honey Judges workshop	Normanby Pavilion GYS	27 March 2010
BBKA Stoneleigh Conference	Stoneleigh Warks	16,17,18 April 2010
YBKA Bishop Burton Conference	Bishop Burton College Beverley	24 April 2010
YBKA GPC meeting	Normanby Pavilion GYS	7 May 2010
YBKA Queen Rearing course	Normanby Pavilion GYS	12 & 13 June 2010
YAS Countryside Days	Great Yorkshire Showground	15 & 16 June 2010
YBKA GPC meeting	Normanby Pavilion GYS	18 June 2010
Great Yorkshire Show	Normanby Pavilion GYS	13, 14, 15 July
YBKA GPC meeting	Normanby Pavilion GYS	24 September 2010
YAS Countryside Live	Great Yorkshire Showground	23 & 24 October 2010
YBKA GPC meeting	Normanby Pavilion GYS	3 December 2010
YBKA AGM	Normanby Pavilion GYS	4 December 2010

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Winter Tutorial for Modules 2 & 3

As promised in the last enews here are the provisional dates for the tutorials covering Modules 2 & 3.

These dates are not all confirmed so please let me know if you are coming along and let me have your contact details - email is preferable. Places are limited and will be on a first come first served basis.

The sessions will be held in the Pavilion at Harrogate starting at 10.00 am and run for about 2 hours.

Module 2 Honey bee Products and Forage.

9 th October	To be confirmed	
6 th November	To be confirmed	
11 th December	Gerry Collins	2.18 - 2.29

Module 3 Honeybee Diseases, Pests and Poisoning.

January 8 th	Ivor Flatman	3.1 - 3.10
February 5 th	John Whitaker	3.11 - 3.18
March 5 th	To be confirmed	

The modules do not necessarily need to be taken in numerical order and the fact that you may not have taken Module 1 does not preclude anyone from doing Modules 2 or 3. You must have passed the basic assessment to be eligible to sit the module(s).

All details of examinations and the syllabuses, reading lists etc can be found on the BBKA website.

The written papers will be held on 19th March 2011 and the closing date for entries will be about the 10th February 2011.

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Wendy J. Maslin

YBKA Examination and Education sec.

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