

# Y.B.K.A. eNews

AFFILIATED TO THE BRITISH BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

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Volume 14 : September 2010

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## CHAIRMANS LETTER

As this is my last year as the chairman of Y.B.K.A and I hand over the reigns' to my successor, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the committee for all they have done to make my time as chairman run smoothly. We have had quite a few changes over the last 4 years with retirements and new appointments on the committee and I believe we now have a very balanced committee all working together to achieve a better overall association. Wendy Maslin took over from Dudley Gue as our Examinations and Education officer, and what a sterling job she is doing. Candidates have achieved record exam passes with Husbandry, Modules and Basics over the last two years, supported by our programme of tutorials run at the pavilion. A new annual programme of module tutorial sessions will be rolled out for the coming year ahead. Details of next years sessions (modules 2 and 3) will be sent out to secretaries very shortly for you to apply. These tutorials are run in conjunction with the B.B.K.A correspondence courses for the best pass possibility. Also through our programme we have achieved, I believe, 10 new basic assessors who can take on the task of putting new members through their basic exams within the county ensuring a greater education of the craft for all our beginners. We have also appointed Kate Wallace as our new Spray Liaison Officer, taking over from Alan Woodward. Kate will liaise with association members, Fera officials and farmers when a case of suspected poisoning occurs to bee colonies, hopefully achieving a mutual conclusion to the matter and getting the member compensation where appropriate. Roger Chapel is our new Equipment Officer who has now joined our ranks taking over from Peter Hoskins. He will now deal with your Spring Foundation orders and anyone wishing to purchase jars, apiguard, boxes of gloves or other equipment then he is the man to contact. Roger has also taken on the temporary role of Press Officer until someone applies to take on the role on a permanent basis - we have sent out a request for this to all associations but as yet without success. Rogers's role here is to notify associations of any events, changes to current policies and liaise with the press in general to give us a higher enhanced profile. I have this year also had to stand down from running the Y.A.S Schools day's event held each year around the beginning of June. I have run this for the last 7-8 years since its start. This event allows us to fill the pavilion with all manners of bee's related things to try to gain the early

interest by children 9 to 11 years of age into the craft of beekeeping... We ask every year for a number of volunteer to help with this project and it's been very successful to date. We also run a competition for all the schools based on a particular bee's related theme, this year was a model of a bee garden won by "Chase school of Harrogate" who received a check for £150 from Y.B.K.A towards their schools equipment.

Phil Gee has now taken over this project after being involved with me for the last three or four years. Phil will be contacting all associations next year for volunteers to step up and help for just one or the two days the event is held over, so please give him your support. All the new contact details for these positions are posted on our Y.B.K.A web site.

With this season of 2010 now coming to an end regarding honey collecting by our bee colonies, and only Heather and Balsam now to finish and process, this is a good time to select any honey gathered throughout the season that you feel is of a good quality and take three or four of pounds from each and place this after filtering into separate containers for next years honey shows before selling it all. At the same time fill a couple of jars of each for the Yorkshire honey show held at the Yorkshire showground on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of Oct at the Countryside Live event. Schedules for this event will be available to download on our Y.B.K.A web site and a copy sent to all association secretaries for them to copy and distribute to their members. These can also be used for your own local association shows and hopefully gain you some prize cards and accreditation from other beekeepers for winning the class.

This is also the time when we must ensure our colonies go into winter clean and free from disease, so as soon as the last flow stops and you have taken off any surplus. Your first thoughts then must be to treat for varroa, and then feed any colonies that don't come up to the 50lb per colony weight for winter you may also wish to add a little fumidil B to the mixture to help prevent Nosema. For if we have a long drawn out winter as last year with the bees confined for a very long time this may be advantageous. This can be purchased through Thornes or your local equipment rep. with instructions attached.

I look forward to seeing many more of you at next years honey shows as with the upsurge of new beekeepers this is a great opportunity for you to show off your own and your bees hard work and produce. Don't forget small shops and members of the public really appreciate award winning honey, and a few appropriately positioned rosettes and prize cards or a photo of them work wonders with sales.

Good luck to you all

[Dave Shannon](#)

Y.B.K.A Chairman  
Happy Beekeeping

### District Associations

Both Bradford (Idle) and Sheffield BKA's will apply to become official districts of the Yorkshire BKA at the coming AGM. Both associations have previously been district associations of YBKA.

In order to apply for membership both will have to have a functioning committee, constitution and programme. Both also have to have at least four full members.

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## September

The bees on the heather are doing fairly well and those near the balsam are still bringing in lots of nectar and pollen but elsewhere everything is closing down and the bees are preparing for winter. The sun is set to shine for a few days but night temperatures are below 5°C. We beekeepers need to be getting the bees ready for winter too.

The commonest cause of winter loss is starvation! From October onwards the temperatures drop and the availability of pollen and nectar diminishes as flowering plants go into winter mode. Bee flight and forage activity slows down to almost nil as sources of food become scarce. Well before October arrives the beekeeper should have prepared the colony for winter. For the rest of the winter the beekeeper must remain vigilant in ensuring wintering colonies have access to enough food to see them safely into the spring.

### The Bees

Bees winter best as strong colonies with lots of food stores. Check that your queen is present and still laying. If she has been a poor layer then consider introducing a good quality queen. If the colony is small then consider uniting with another using the newspaper method. A good five frame nuc can be successfully nursed through winter.

### Starvation

The colony should be going into winter with a brood chamber packed full of stores - at least 40lb. A second brood box or brood super full of food is even better. A super of food can also be introduced below the brood box to ensure that the bees have plenty of food. Use the biggest rapid feeder you can get - for most people this will be the 2l rapid feeder but a 5l or 10l one means that you only have to make one journey to the apiary.

If the colony is not full of stores then feed with a strong sugar syrup - 1 Kg white sugar in 500ml of hot water. Keep feeding until the colony stops taking the food in or until the temperature drops to 0°C.

In January/February the colony may need additional food - have a Kg of fondant candy ready to place above the brood frames.

### Weather

Ensure that the hive is waterproof and secure from the cold winter winds. Hives do not require additional insulation though some people like to add this at the top, ventilating at the bottom. The varroa floor slide should be in place to prevent chilling from the bottom - the mesh floor should however provide enough ventilation if you leave the hole(s) in the crown board open.

### Enemies

**Varroa.** The main enemy of our bees is the varroa mite. After removing the honey crop give an autumn treatment -apiguard, Thymovar or apilifevar are good as the temperatures are still above 15°C.

Prepare to treat in December with oxalic acid dripped over the brood cluster on a cold (3°C) day.

**Nosema** If your colony is prone to dysentery or shows any fouling on the outside of the hive - or if people near you have lots of nosema - then give an autumn treatment of fumidal B. This is given dissolved in the autumn sugar feed.

continued

**Wax Moths** Wax moths are mainly a problem for stored comb, especially comb that has been used to raise brood. Store supers inside a cold building, wet or dry, with sheets of newspaper between each box. Boxes that have had brood raised in them can be stored with 100 ml 80% acetic acid on a wad of cloth over each super - metal spacers should be removed. Combs must be aired for several days before use.

**Wasps** Reduce the entrances if wasps are a problem. Place wasp traps near the hives. Destroy wasp nests in the apiary.

**Mice** Mice will try to enter hives (and live above the warm cluster) when temperatures drop to below 10°C. Use a mouse guard.

**Woodpeckers** Wrap chicken wire around the hive. You don't need to build a cage, just make sure the bird can't get a firm grip.

**The beekeeper** Beekeepers should be kept away from hives once the temperature drops to 9°C and the bees start to cluster. The bees can be given a quick oxalic acid treatment and fondant can be quickly placed above the combs but the beekeeper should not disturb the bees until late March or April (unless the weather is crazy).

## Jobs for the month

1. Open the hive and check your queen one last time before cold weather sets in. Make sure the queen is not old or sick.
2. Reduce the entrance to prevent robbing - do this now if wasps are a problem
3. Combine the hive with a stronger colony if it is weak
4. Check food levels and prepare to feed your bees if necessary
5. Treat hives that are prone to nosema / dysentery with Fumidal B
6. Use an Autumn varroa treatment
7. Remove the queen excluder.
8. Add a mouse guard in October / Use woodpecker protection
9. Check that the hive is waterproof
10. Make sure that the hive is safe from winter winds

Winter is the best time to consider tidying up the apiary or moving your bees to a nearby new site.

Choose a cold and frosty day as this will ensure that you are not interrupted by flying bees. Cut back any long growth that has grown up during the year and lop back any branches that may be over-hanging the hives and impeding the working space behind the hives. It is essential that the hives are positioned well off the ground to allow an air flow below the hive floors. This will avoid dampness creeping into the hive and help alleviate one of the main causes of hives dying out during the winter months. At the same time, consider raising the hives to a height that will help to avoid having to stoop so much when manipulating the brood nest during the active season.

One of the secrets of success in beekeeping is to be well prepared. Now is a good time to clean those spare brood chambers and supers, exchanged frames and the queen excluders. Cleaning the latter will ensure they fit evenly when they are put on in the spring. If the brace comb is not removed then the excluder will rock with the risk of the wires becoming distorted creating a gap for the queen to pass through and lay in the supers.

[Bill Cadmore, Editor](#)

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## Storage of Combs

The National Bee Unit produces some useful leaflets about all aspects of beekeeping - the one on PDB and Napthalene (FAQ20) is worth looking at if you know anybody who has used these chemicals to store comb.

To store comb there are two effective methods that are commonly used, one is freezing and the other a product called B401. A basic understanding of the life cycle of Greater Wax Moth, *Galleria mellonella* and Lesser Wax Moth *Achroia grisella* is helpful in controlling the potential ravages of these bee pests. These are described in FAQ 19 'Wax Moth'.

Super comb that has not had any brood in it whatsoever, and foundation are generally uninfested. Sometimes a small larva may be found but generally these die because there are insufficient nutrients for survival in the 'pure' beeswax. Many beekeepers suggest that storing supers 'wet' is a good preventative, a few store dry and ensure that the stack is moth proof. It is a sensible precaution to put barriers such as crown or clearer boards with the holes closed off between a number of boxes. This will reduce the potential damage if one box is infested.

More often than not brood comb contains wax moth eggs, larvae or pupae so any attempt to store it without treatment is to court disaster. Probably the most effective and safe treatment is to deep freeze the comb. No life stage of Greater Wax Moth can survive freezing for the periods given

4.5 hours -7°C

3 hours -12°C

2 hours -15°C

Remember to add time to allow the combs to reach the treatment temperature and be careful, as comb is very brittle at low temperatures. A chest type deep freeze is ideal.

'Certan' as it used to be called, or B4012, is a form of *Bacillus thuringiensis*, which kills the larvae as they attempt to feed on comb. It is a biological control which only attacks lepidopteron larvae and is harmless to honeybees and humans. In use it is diluted with 19 parts water and sprayed onto combs for storage. One bottle is sufficient to treat 70 - 100 Langstroth combs. Other forms of *B. thuringiensis* are not as effective.

No life stage of Greater Wax Moth can survive heating at 46°C for 80 minutes. However accurate temperature control is difficult and you must be careful that hot spots are not created melting the wax!

Using comb fumigation by acetic acid is a useful tool to destroy disease pathogens and is also effective against all life stages of wax moths if carried out correctly. See FAQ 9 'Fumigating Comb'.

The storage of old brood comb and super comb that has had brood in it must be questionable as these combs retain disease pathogens. Generally it is considered better practice to render the combs and use the wax recovered to exchange for new foundation or make into something useful.

Considered with the cost of treatment, rendering such comb is a safe approach.

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## An Invitation

Bradford (Idle) Beekeepers Association  
and  
Leeds Beekeepers Association

would like to invite all Yorkshire BKA and Harrogate and Ripon BKA members to a lecture by

## Kim Flottum

Author and Editor of the American Bee Journal

Tuesday 2nd November  
7.30 - 9.00

Bradford University

Secure, on campus, car parking is available to all attendees and the university is only a few minutes from the railway and bus station. Approach the university at the top end via Shearbridge Road, come into Longside Lane and then turn right into the barriered car park.

Refreshments will be available before and after the talk.

Entrance is by ticket only but there is no charge. Please contact [Bill Cadmore](#) by email or telephone to obtain your ticket. A map will be sent with the ticket. Donations will be accepted to pay Kim's expenses.

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Wanted - Yorkshire Honey

We would like to buy your surplus Yorkshire Honey

Despite having a bumper crop ourselves we can sell much more than we produce so if you want to save yourself the bother of bottling and selling your honey then sell it to us in bulk - we'll pay good prices.

Contact Lyn Cadmore

email - [billz.hunni@virgin.net](mailto:billz.hunni@virgin.net)

phone - 0113 216 0482

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Autumn Varroa Treatment

Do not be fooled by varroa - even if you haven't seen any varroa on your bees or when you uncap drone cells do not think that you can get away with not treating your bees this autumn. Do a test to see if you need to treat - and you'll be surprised at how many varroa you might get on the open mesh floor insert.

Hopefully we will have a warm spell in September so the thymol based products can be used with some hope of effectiveness. I'm using apiguard or apilifevar.

I've seen varroa on bees in two of my colonies but when uncapping the last few drones I found at least two in every cell of one colony. This prompted me to treat all sixty colonies with apiguard. The knock down rate achieved in twenty four hours varied from 0 (zero) to twenty five (25). Clearly some hives needed treating. These tended to be the colonies used for drone rearing and especially those used for drone storage prior to semen collection but colonies nearby to these also showed higher numbers of varroa.

Encouragingly there are far more colonies with no varroa drop or very low drop rates but even so I'm treating all colonies in a group if there is a higher drop hive in that group.

The colony on a roof in the city centre has so few varroa that I had to take some along to show the people looking after the hive what they were looking for on the OMF insert. While working with these people who are very new to beekeeping I have found it really useful to work with a magnifying glass - this makes it so much easier to identify whether the object you are looking at is a varroa rather than a shiny lump of propolis or even pollen.

Even with an autumn treatment I still intend to use oxalic acid in winter. I dribble rather than fumigate and have found this to be a really good way to cut down varroa numbers.

I wish that the amitraz treatment strips were available in this country. Friends who have used them say they are very effective but we can only use this chemical if we have a prescription from a vet - and even then I can't find anybody who sells the strips.

Wouldn't it be nice if more of the pollinator research finance were being put into helping beekeepers find ways to live with varroa ? The news about bees that clean varroa off themselves more effectively is good but as varroa is still the major problem facing beekeepers in the UK I'm sure we could do more to keep it under control than pour acid over our bees.

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Important Dates

Y.B.K.A. DATES

**Countryside Live**      **October 23rd & 24th**

Yorkshire Showground  
Y.B.K.A. Honey Show

**YBKA AGM**                      **December 4th**

Yorkshire Showground

Other dates

**Bradford BKA**                      **September 7th**

First AGM for new association hoping to become a district of YBKA  
Special guest speakers

**Peter Hopkinson**

University staff and beekeeper  
Ecoversity & Beekeeping

**Geoff Hopkinson NDB**

Beekeeper and author  
**Beekeeping**

Starts 7.30 p.m.

All welcome.

Approach the university at the top  
end via Shearbridge Road, come into Longside Lane and then turn  
right into the barriered secure car park.

RBI    Regional Bee Inspector **Ivor Flatman**, tel. 01924 252795, e-mail  
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### Duncan's great idea

Every area has a pest control office as a part of the local council. Their job is to deal with calls from members of the public, people in local authority housing and council employees who have a problem with pests: Rats, mice, insects, bees, wasps etc.

They can be really useful contacts for beekeeping associations as any swarms reported to them can be passed directly to the district BKA so that members can do a public service and gain a swarm of bees.

The trick is to avoid getting calls which are wasp or bumblebee problems.

Originally members of the district BKA visited the offices of the pest control service to talk to them about honeybees and provided them with a leaflet giving differences between bees, wasps and bumblebees. This was enhanced a year later with a list of questions that could be asked to determine whether the insects were honeybees or not.

In order to help the pest control workers sort calls effectively Duncan had the great idea of inviting them for a visit to an apiary, putting them in bee suits and giving them a guided tour of a hive. Adding a cup of tea and a chat allowed beekeepers to build very positive relationships with the council workers.

The end result is an informed pest control service that is very supportive of the district association and more importantly a service that can direct honeybee problems to the beekeepers and other problems to pest controllers.

If your district doesn't have contact with the local pest control service then it is worth while discussing how you might build a positive and useful link with them.

It is also great PR for beekeeping.

### A Plea

Please can members from all the district of YBKA send articles, announcements and gossip to me for inclusion in the enews. I need to make it as useful as possible to all members of the Yorkshire BKA.

Thanks

[Bill](#)

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