



YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Yorkshire Beekeeping Association Newsletter May 2020

Contents:

[Chairman's Notes](#)

[Keeping Bees on Allotments - The Council \(WMDC\) Seizing Bees!](#)

[COVID-19 Information via YBKA Website](#)

[YBKA Swarm Advice](#)

[Chairman's Advice on Working Safely](#)

[Examinations Information](#)

[COLOSS Survey Request](#)

[May in the Apiary](#)

[Saving a Tree Bee](#)

[Calendar](#)

- [Committee Information](#)

[Classifieds](#)



Chairman's Letter May 2020

This past month has been a testing time for everyone due to the Covid 19 pandemic. My heart goes out to anyone who has lost friends and loved ones during this time. I would like to take this opportunity on behalf the YBKA committee and members to thank all NHS staff and everyone working to keep the wheels turning by carrying out vital work at this dangerous time. YBKA appreciates everything you are doing for us.

In one respect I feel that as beekeepers we are somewhat privileged. We can still visit our out apiaries and tend to our beloved bees. This can take some of the everyday strains away; possibly not physically but often mentally, allowing us, whilst tending our bees, to temporarily forget the stresses that this virus has put on ourselves, our friends and society as a whole.

Personally, my bees and especially my beekeeping equipment have never looked as good. All boxes cleaned, sanded and painted; new hive stands made or old ones repaired and painted; frames made up in abundance and all without having the usual rush to get everything ready as in a "normal" year when, often, other things take priority. I am sure that many of you out there are doing the same and feeling good about things in your apiaries and gardens at present. Social distancing is extremely difficult for us all, but it is something we must strictly adhere to, in order to help save lives. Remember this includes beekeeping too!

Please spare a thought for the elderly and infirm in our society. If you've an elderly person living next to you, or close by, check on them whilst maintaining social distance. Ensure that if they cannot get to the shops and obtain the food and medical prescriptions they need, that you offer to help. Let us keep each other safe until we can overcome this terrible virus. It is up to everyone to help each other and I know from past experiences that beekeepers, especially Yorkshire beekeepers, are exceptional at rallying round and helping-out where they can.

It was with the deepest of regret and with apologies to all our members that we have needed to cancel our educational program planned for this year, including the tutorials to help members through future exams. We have also needed to let go our Spring Conference and the Great Yorkshire Show, that many of our members attend, each year, as volunteers. Please, rest assured that your YBKA Committee is still working hard and communicating, through various social media platforms, to ensure that we will have things in place to offer an even better programme of events for everyone, when this dreadful situation is resolved.

May is a busy month for beekeepers, with swarming coming to the fore in many colonies. So, stay vigilant and all new beekeepers, remember to keep up with those 7-day inspections! If you have a problem, despite restrictions on visits from more experienced beekeepers, a phone call to another member can often help get you back on track.

Stick to the rules! Be safe! Enjoy your beekeeping and lovely garden if you are lucky enough to have one.
Dave Shannon

Y.B.K.A Chairman

Keeping bees on allotments be aware of the rules



I write this article not to castigate any of the parties involved in this incident, although many readers may form opinions on whether the action taken was justified, reasonable, proportionate or strictly within the parameters of the law.

Of course, there are two sides to every story and a fully informed judgement can only be made when considering all the evidence in full. However, the issues within this case could impact on any members keeping bees on allotments. Each Council will have different rules and it is for tenants to carefully read those rules before placing their honeybees on an allotment site.

As Secretary for Wakefield and Pontefract Beekeepers Association I received a message on my phone from one of the members I have helped, on several occasions. The member is elderly and over the past couple of years has suffered some health issues resulting in substantial periods of time in hospital. Going through my records, I see that I treated his bees with Api-Bioxal on 29th December when I was treating my own bees. At that time, both of his colonies were doing OK and had plenty of stores.

On Bank Holiday Monday, 13th April 2020, I received a message from this member, and I replied in the evening. He informed me that he had received a letter from the Council who were threatening to take his bees off his plot. He asked if I could take them to one of my sites until he could find another. He stated that someone had closed an entrance on one of the hives and all the bees inside were dead, but the other hive was flying OK. Due to the current restrictions on travel I agreed to call on Thursday or Friday that week, whenever I was going out to tend to my own bees.

On Tuesday 14th April he contacted me saying his bees and equipment had been removed from his plot (note: his allotment is opposite his back-garden gate so in a sense he was still complying with social isolation). It was mentioned that his letter referred to the BBKA taking his bees and he asked if anyone in the association had taken them. I sent an email out to our membership that evening asking if anyone had taken his bees and equipment.

The Council responded to this email the following morning sending a copy of my email confirming it was a Wakefield and Pontefract member that had taken the bees on behalf of the Council.

The following response was received which may be of interest, especially if you keep bees on

a Council allotment:

"Hello Mr Millard

I am the [REDACTED] for Wakefield Council Allotments of which [REDACTED] is a Council run allotment site. It seems you may not be aware of the Council's allotment rules regarding bees on allotments therefore I thought I would make you aware of these.

Allotment Policy 2016

Policy Statement 15 – Animals and Livestock

Only twelve birds and twelve rabbits are allowed per plot.

Cockerels are strictly forbidden.

Pigeons may only be kept with the written permission of Wakefield Council.

No other animals or bees are allowed to be kept on allotments plots.

Plot holders must comply fully with the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Site Rules for Allotments and Leisure Gardens 2015

Livestock at Wakefield Council Allotments

Under the allotments act, allotment holders are allowed to keep some hens and rabbits, as an addition to their plot being used for gardening purposes.

This permission does not allow livestock to be kept in a way that is prejudicial to health or cause a nuisance.

In practice plot holders will be limited to **twelve birds / fowl** (*sic*) and or **twelve rabbits**.

No cockerels are allowed to be kept at any time. Any plot holder found to be keeping cockerels may have their tenancy terminated immediately.

All other poultry, livestock and cultivated life forms (eg Bees) can only be kept with the express consent in writing from the Council.

No livestock can be kept for commercial purposes.

All livestock must be kept to the satisfaction of the Council. This includes pest prevention where plot holders may be held responsible for any infestations due to lack of control with animal feed and providing suitable breeding conditions for pests.

Wakefield Council"

The Council outlined some of their justification for taking the bees and refused to return the bees and equipment to their tenant. They apparently contacted the member concerned informing him his equipment had been destroyed.

Whether you agree or disagree with the Council's actions could be debated for many hours, but the moral to this story is to make sure you comply with tenancy agreements and if not sure, ask. Almost all Councils including Parish Councils, require you to obtain express written permission before keeping bees on allotment sites, so ensure you have any agreement in writing. For even in these days of social isolation and lockdown this case demonstrates that action will be taken.

Mark Millard

Secretary for Wakefield and Pontefract Beekeepers Association

Check out the YBKA website for public guidance on reporting swarms:

<https://ybka.org.uk/swarms/>

There is an anonymised email link to the information, that you may want to feature on your district association website. Try it out: bees@ybka.org.uk

(please note that it has an 8-hour security cycle, preventing multiple hits from any one email address)

Covid-19 and Beekeeping

[Find all your latest beekeeping related COVID-19 information here at Yorkshire BKA web page](#)

Message from the YBKA Chair Regarding Safe Working

Dear Members,

In these worrying times, we are still advised that beekeeping is considered a permissible activity. You will all have been sent a copy of the document from Defra (dated 3 April 2020) offering guidance on working with bees during the lock down and how to do so safely. If you have mislaid your copy, it can be found on the BBKA website, by clicking on the "Latest" tab on the yellow banner heading. This document should be printed off and carried with you when travelling in connection with beekeeping/swarm collection.

In the meantime, attend to your bees sensibly and in isolation if possible, avoiding any large gatherings. Most apiary work at this time can be done by one person. In the case of association apiaries, the apiary manager should attend the bees alone, unless assistance is required for certain tasks. The recommended safe distance of 2 metres should be observed between persons involved, as far as possible.

Do remember to sanitise all equipment/clothing before and after a visit and don't forget hand hygiene. If you are receiving equipment/foundation via home delivery, open and remove the items, dispose of packaging and wash your hands thoroughly.

Further advice and guidance from BBKA will be circulated as soon as received.

Do take care of yourselves, your bees and all members of your district associations.

Stay safe,

Dave Shannon (Chair, YBKA)

Examinations and Assessments

At this time of year, the BBKA County Examinations Officer (In YBKA case, me) would usually be busy liaising with candidates, assessors, and apiary managers who would host practical assessments, in order to make the necessary arrangements. However, given the current situation with regards COVID-19 and the statement issued centrally from BBKA, all such activity is on hold, until we receive the all-clear. I have emailed all candidates that are due to take the Honeybee Health Assessment this year.

Kirit Gordhandas,

YBKA Examinations & Assessment Secretary

examination@ybka.org.uk

Letter from COLOSS

Monitor Honeybee Colony Losses spring 2020

Letter from COLOSS

Dear Beekeeper.

In the last decade, elevated losses of western honeybee colonies have been observed, mainly in Europe and North America, but the underlying causes remain unclear. In 2008, European and USA honey bee experts formed a network "COLOSS", having realised that efforts by individual countries to identify the drivers of losses were unlikely to succeed, given the current consensus that causes are complex and can be different between regions and between the years. Now more than 1000 scientists are working together in this network in specific working groups.

The epidemiological working group have developed a standardised questionnaire to identify the underlying causal factors of losses and provide beekeepers with sustainable management strategies.

We now invite you to fill in the questionnaire for 2020 which you will find below.

<https://www.bee-survey.com/index.php/958611>

This will enable us to compare your answers with other beekeepers. With your data we can estimate the relative risk of colony losses for beekeeper decisions such as Varroa treatment, migration of colonies and comb replacement. We also aim to identify differences in relative mortality risk between regions. This will enable follow up research projects in specific regions.

At your option, your personal details may be recorded however we undertake not to disclose them to any third party to protect your privacy.

Finally, your help is much appreciated. Please can I ask you to promote this survey and the questionnaire link through this open letter to as many English beekeepers as you are

able to do so. Feel free to share the link by email, word of mouth, newsletters or social media and to your local bee keeping organisations. In doing so you will be making a contribution to tackling the problem of colony losses and ensuring that English data is represented as an equal partner in the COLOSS European community.

Thanking you

Dr Anthony Williams

COLOSS Survey Coordinator for England

De Montfort University

A Member of Leicester and Rutland Beekeepers Association

Email: anthony.williams@dmu.ac.uk

Tel: 0116 207 8468

More Information#####

For further information about the COLOSS colony loss core project and past results please see the COLOSS website: <https://coloss.org/core-projects/colony-losses-monitoring/>

Results from previous surveys have been published in Journal Apicultural Research, the most recent article was published as an open access document and can be found at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00218839.2019.1615661>

In the Apiary May 2020

Well what a month April has been with lockdown in force and social distancing which may have had an impact on our beekeeping. To those with 'out apiaries' the information document from Defra, sent out by Linda to all members was much needed and useful information to produce when visiting those apiaries. I have a printed copy in my vehicle to produce should I get stopped and asked why I am out.

The weather through April has been good, with blossom all around. The bees have been active and rapidly building up. Everyone should have completed initial inspections by now and assessed the needs of the colonies in the next few weeks.

As previously advised, your newly built frames for brood boxes and supers can now be completed with fresh wax. On a nice warm day replace any old, damaged or really blackened frames with new foundation for the bees to draw out. Preferably do a Bailey Comb Change, quite a simple task and one that encourages all the colony onto newly drawn comb. This is best done when there is a good nectar flow in progress (especially good for beekeepers with oilseed rape nearby). Alternatively, a large rapid feeder is the way to go - one that holds around 6 pints of liquid sugar feed to help the bees draw out the new foundation. By doing this, you can actually increase the productivity of the hives and gain more surplus honey to extract over the next few months.

This is also an ideal time for the bees to produce the elusive drawn brood comb. I

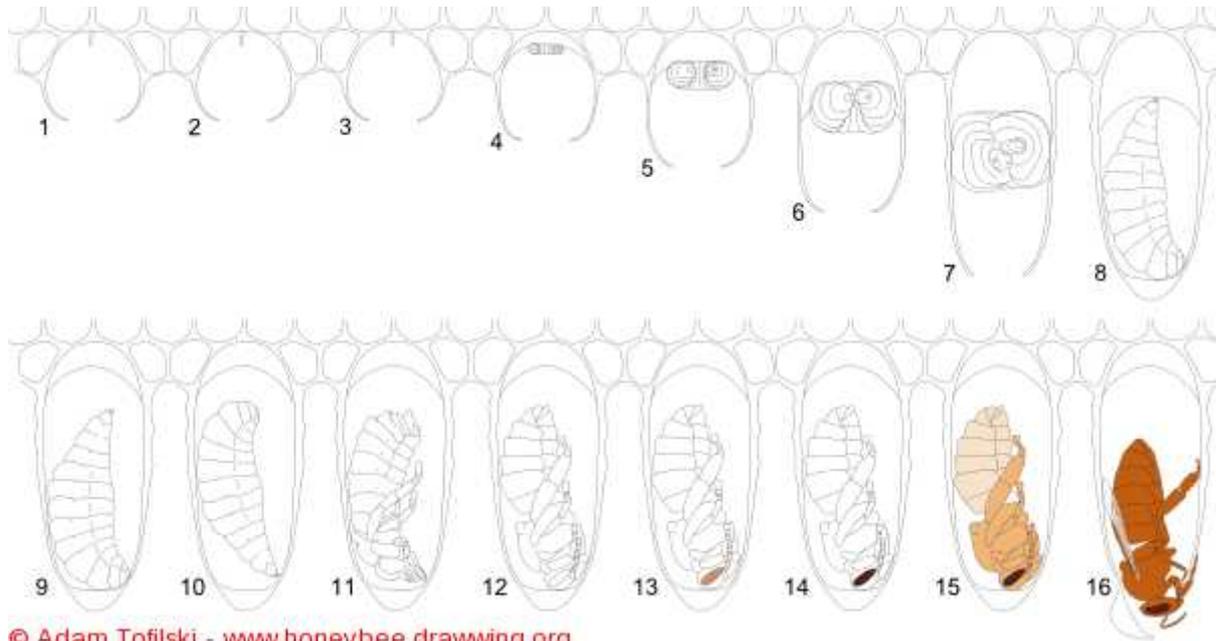
remember when I was a new beekeeper, I was often told that what I needed was some spare drawn out brood combs for swarm control etc. To do this use a brood box as a super when there is a good nectar flow on. The bees will draw out the foundation quite rapidly and fill the frames. Just remember if you are in an oilseed rape area to extract the honey as the flowers on the rape are starting to go or else the honey will granulate in the frames.

Weekly inspections are now a must to ensure effective swarm control. Make sure your queens are well-marked and if not, re-mark them. Having them clearly visible is timesaving when you start your weekly colony inspections, particularly from May when swarm season commences. There has been much speculation about swarm loss and its causes, however, if you perform weekly inspections on your hives and identify the appearance of queen cells, most of the concern for colony loss can be avoided. Don't confuse queen cells with queen cups, the small dish-shaped cups that bees produce at times. Strong queen cells, loaded or "charged", contain white Royal Jelly in the base with a small lava floating on top.

Photograph of a Charged Queen cell



Don't wait until the queen cells are sealed, or your bees will swarm at the first suitable opportunity after sealing. The diagram below shows why weekly inspections are crucial at this time of the year as the cell is sealed around day 8 and then the bees will be gone!



© Adam Tofilski - www.honeybee.drawing.org

Whilst all beekeepers should practice effective swarm control, I believe that this year with lockdown and social distancing we as beekeepers should be even more vigilant to prevent swarms and members having to go out to collect them.

As mentioned in my previous article, plan your approach for swarm prevention this year. There are many articles available to assist in a method that suits you, but the basic principles are that a colony consist of 3 elements: -

- The Queen
- Flying Bees, and
- Brood with young bees.

Take one element away and it will prevent them from swarming.

This is one method reproduced from a previous edition of this newsletter

- As soon as good, open, queen cells are detected you need to be able to put a strategy in place to avert the risk of swarming and provide yourself with the opportunity to increase your stock. It is important to have pre-prepared nucleus hives ready to house your new colony, ideally with frames of clean comb, or frames of foundation if comb is not available. Then proceed as follows:
- First, find your queen and remove her, from the parent hive, to a safe place. You can put her in a cage and keep that in your pocket, if necessary.
- Now find a frame containing a good, open queen cell. Check this frame carefully, to make sure there is only the one queen cell present. If you find more, cut them back. Place this frame in the middle of the nuc box, marking the position of the queen cell, on the top of the frame.
- Take a second frame from the parent colony, that contains mostly sealed brood and older larvae. Again, check it carefully to make sure it contains no queen cells and if you find any, knock them back. Shake this frame into the parent colony brood box, once or twice, to dislodge any flying bees and place it, with the younger, nurse bees adhering into the nuc box, to one side of the frame with the queen cell.
- Repeat this same process with a third frame of mostly sealed brood and older larvae and place it on the other side of the frame with the queen cell.
- Add a frame of stores from the parent colony if you have frames of comb to

complete the nuc box or, if you need to complete the nuc with frames of foundation, you will need to add a feeder of thin syrup. This will provide the fuel for the young bees to draw the foundation into comb laying-space for the new queen, once mated.

- At this stage I usually move the nuc box to the position in the apiary where it will remain. The flying bees will return to the parent colony. Leave it alone for about 21 days, allowing time for the new queen to have emerged, mated and begun laying. Hopefully by then eggs can be seen and you will have a second, viable, colony.
- Remember to reduce the nuc entrance opening, to prevent robbing, if feed has been applied.

On the day of beginning this manipulation, you have the original, parent hive, depleted of some frames and nurse bees and the old queen safely put away (in your pocket or kit box). Now, you have a choice:

- **Either:** With another, good, open queen cell, you can raise a new queen to lead this original colony through into the following year. To do this, check all remaining frames carefully, to make sure there are no more queen cells present and if you find any, knock them back. Put the frame containing the chosen, good, open queen cell in the middle of the box and flank it on either side with frames of young brood, then frames of sealed brood, then stores and make up the full frame complement with frames of clean comb or foundation.
- **Or:** You may decide to keep the original queen of this colony and return her to the brood box after checking all remaining frames for queen cells, knocking back any that you find and making up the brood frame complement with frames of clean comb, or foundation.

This technique for making increase is a simple strategy for new beekeepers to practice.

Remember if you see a charged Queen cell don't panic, but something has to be done. It is all down to preparation.

Till next time please stay safe and enjoy your beekeeping.

Mark Millard

Saving A Tree Bee

Thought this might amuse your circulation. A tree bumblebee saved. Look at the whole video!

https://share.icloud.com/photos/0-Jlbuq_a-XjkcL3wEnGh9_OA

Best Wishes, Paddy (HBKA)

Paddy G Walker

YBKA CALENDAR 2020

Events Postponed
To be updated

Committee Details

Dave Shannon is Chair of YBKA

Mark Millard is Vice Chair

Norbert Cooper continues as Treasurer

Kirit Gorhandas is Examination and Assessments Officer

Clare McGettigan is Education Training Officer

Linda Schofield is Secretary

Tony Jefferson is the YBKA Delegate to BBKA.

Chris Barlow continues as Newsletter Editor

David Lamont continues as YBKA Webmaster

Classified Adverts

Do you have anything bee related for sale or are you wanting something bee related? If so, please email newsletter@ybka.org.uk the editor for a free sale or wanted listing:

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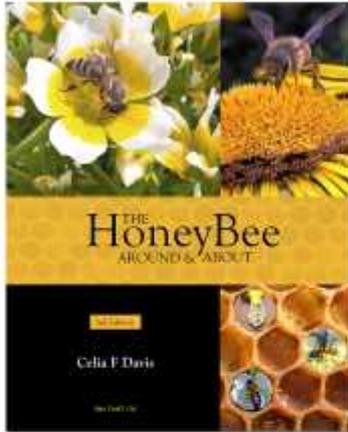
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