



YORKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Yorkshire Beekeepers Association Newsletter June 2020

Contents:

[Chairman's notes](#)

[Peter Hewitt – YBKA Honorary Membership](#)

[Swarm – YBKA public guidance](#)

[YBKA Chair: safe working guidance](#)

[BBKA Modules information](#)

[June in the apiary](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Committee Information](#)

[Classifieds](#)



Chairman's Report

We are almost half-way through this year's beekeeping season and once again have faced adversity from the British weather. Following the absolute deluge of rain in the earlier months of the year that caused rivers to burst their banks, flooding houses and crops, we come to the present May's drought conditions (for my area at least no rain in 6 weeks). Everything is drying up, including the trees, crops, and plants. I took several hives to the field beans this past week, which is usually a good source of extra honey. However, plants that by now should be two feet high and in flower are only 6 inches high and parched. I have spoken with several beekeepers in different regions of the county. Some have had the odd shower but in the main we desperately need a good, gentle downpour, preferably overnight.

I hope you are all doing well with your bees and by now have taken off your spring honey crop (especially those of you in the OSR areas) before it sets in the combs? Luckily, social distancing does not affect us, as individual beekeepers, and we are able to carry on.

The YBKA Committee is now beginning to hold meetings via Zoom to ensure that we are addressing issues that members bring to our attention. This is a great, safe, way for all our district association committees to come together to highlight issues of interest and importance for the benefit of all our members. In these times where meetings / gatherings are not allowed it is still good to stay in touch.

As you know, YBKA events planned throughout the season have been suspended. However, we must still leave open the possibility that some of our programmes, scheduled for later in the year could be allowed to take place. This will of course be based on guidance from government and NHS advisors as to whether it will be safe to do so. Please keep checking our web site for updates as well as the monthly Newsletter (thanks to Chris, our editor, for making sure it comes out to you all). I am sure that Chris will welcome any new articles or snippets of interest for future editions. Forward your contributions to: editor@ybka.org.uk

Keep to the social distancing guidance and stay safe. Remember too that we are still in the swarm season and swarms need to be collected, but always with the safety of yourself and others in mind.

Please do all you can to reduce the risk of your colonies swarming to protect the welfare and safety of your district Swarm Collection Team members.

Dave Shannon

[YBKA Chairman.](#)

Congratulations to Peter Hewitt on his award of Honorary Membership of YBKA!

Socially distanced, but still very pleased with his certificate, Peter Hewitt, Yorkshire's most senior beekeeper, should have received his award at the Spring Conference and Reunion 2020 event, sadly cancelled. The AGM seemed such a long time to wait for another chance to have his presentation if, indeed, we are even able to mix and mingle again by late November.

Peter is now hard at work, practising looking surprised and overcome with emotion for the formal awarding of his certificate, at the earliest opportunity! Well done Peter and very well deserved.

Linda Schofield



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 – YBKA Chairman

2020 BBKA Cancelled Module Examinations and Practical Assessments

The March 2020 Module exams were cancelled as were the Honeybee Health and Basic practical assessments.

BBKA has been in touch with me to offer a refund for any member that has been affected.

If you wish to avail yourself of this offer then please email Sarah Laidler – BBKA's Management Accountant (sarah.laidler@bbka.org.uk) directly. Sarah will need details of how you paid, i.e. cheque, card etc. and your receipt number. The refund will be by the same method that payment was made.

If you are unable to provide Sarah with any of the information she needs to process your refund then please email me in the first instance at examination@ybka.org.uk and I will provide you with the receipt number from my records.

If you do not want a refund, then your name will remain on file until exams/assessments resume

<https://www.bbka.org.uk/exams-and-assessments-of-the-bbka>

Kirit Gordhandas,

YBKA Examination and Assessment Secretary,

In the Apiary - June

Well what a month May has been weather wise and the good weather is looking to continue into June. It was reported recently that May has been one of the driest months on record, depending where you live, and ideally we could do with a few nights of rain, followed by the fantastic sunshine we have been receiving, to ensure there is plenty of nectar for our bees to collect.

I hope you are all keeping well and enjoying your beekeeping in isolation? Your bees should have developed into strong colonies by now, so weekly inspections continue vital to ensure they are prevented from swarming. During May I have been quite busy, as have other swarm collectors. We are not out of the woods yet, as June continues to be a month when bees are likely to swarm. With the warm weather we have been receiving and lots of forage for the bees, make sure you give them plenty of room in which to expand and process the nectar they are bringing in. Congestion in the hive is a major contributor to initiating the swarming impulse.

If, when you go into a colony, there appear to be fewer bees than last time, there is a possibility it may have already swarmed. If so, do not dismay! It is likely that the remaining colony has sufficient time in which to build up stronger for the winter. The main thing not to do in such a situation is destroy queen cells as you find them. My advice is to make a mental note of the frames containing queen cells first, as you inspect each frame, and then decide about reducing the number of cells. If you destroy all the cells first, only to find that the colony is queen-less, they have no material from which to produce a replacement queen. In such a situation, the viable option would be to introduce a frame of eggs from another colony to allow the bees to produce a replacement queen. At the end of the day, always remember to reduce the number of queen cells to prevent the risk of a secondary/cast swarm from leaving the hive.

If you have not already done so, then it is time that a disease inspection is undertaken. After checking the frame for the queen and any potential queen cells shake the bees off so that you can thoroughly check the brood without the usual covering of bees. Carefully check for the notifiable diseases EFB and AFB as well as any other diseases that may be present. Beebase has some great literature to help you perform this task, such as the publication Common Pests, Diseases and Disorders of the Adult Honeybees and Best Practice Guide No 4.

It is also time to do a varroa check if you have not done so already. Again, information about how to do this, along with a varroa calculator to help you, is contained on Beebase. There is useful information on the different treatments available too, including those that can be used whilst honey is on the hive.

With the weather improving, an abundance of young bees and nectar available, it is time

to replace combs. Remove all old and damaged combs and replace with foundation. This ensures new clean comb, providing more space for the queen to lay, keeps the wax builders busy drawing out wax and improves hygiene within the brood nest.

If you have Asian Hornet traps, make sure you monitor them regularly. The Asian Hornet poses a threat to all our bees and we must remain vigilant for any incursions and report any sightings immediately. If you have traps the bait currently used will be a sweet sugary solution but don't forget at the height of the beekeeping season, when predatory worker hornets are seeking high protein foods to feed the larvae a protein bait should be considered. The sugar solution bait will still work but you can also use special protein products such as Suttera/Trappit liquid Wasp Bait.

If you live in an oilseed rape area you need to be taking off your spring honey and extracting it before it sets in the frames. Before removing honey make sure the water content is below 20%. This can be checked by using a refractometer, which can be obtained very cheaply from various internet sites. If you sell honey with a water content above 20% you risk a hefty fine from the FSA. Random checks are the norm. If you are selling to the public also ensure that your labels comply with the latest honey labelling regulations. If you have extracted honey that is over 20% then do not despair. Feed it back to the bees to re-work it and reduce the moisture content further.

Another pointer when taking off your surplus honey is to remember the "June Gap". Very often in June, after the spring flow has subsided, there is a dearth in some areas, when there is little forage to sustain the bees. It is always a good idea to leave a box-full on the hives until the new summer flow comes in. When you perform a weekly inspection, you should be evaluating the available stores to see the bees through to the next inspection. The feed that should be available for a week is approximately 10lb which equates to approximately 2 full brood frames of honey. As a precaution I have sugar syrup available and a couple of feeders should emergency feeding be required throughout this time.

This is the time to do your splits and queen rearing. Always keep, and update, records on all your colonies. It is very important to monitor what you see at each 7-day inspection, to be prepared for any eventuality. This is also vital when queen rearing, to make sure you get the correct dates for the queens hatching. By recording all the years' actions, you can select the best colony to breed from; selecting for good honey gathering tendencies, gentle - not aggressive to handle when inspecting and quiet on the combs, as opposed to running all over and balling up over the edges as you are inspecting them. Bees that do not follow you when you leave the apiary is another important selection criterion. These are all good pointers for the rearing of good queens. For colonies that lack these positive traits, replace the queens with better stock when queen cells appear; or you can graft from the best colonies to replace those queens with inferior qualities.

I think I have given you enough to consider and to do over the coming weeks so, until next time, keep safe.

Mark Millard

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

BBKA Forum

The BBKA has a new online forum. This is the web address. Pop along, sign up and say hello. www.bbkaforum.co.uk

***Quality Beekeeper Clothing At
Affordable Prices***

Full Suits, Smocks, Bee Vests & Veils

**Full adult suit - £55
(with free postage)**

From Somerset

Email: michaeljohnduckett@gmail.com

www.thebeeshop.co.uk



MAISEMORE APIARIES LTD

MANUFACTURERS & SUPPLIERS OF ALL BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT

MASSIVE SALE!

2ND QUALITY HIVES & FRAMES

FOR 3 DAYS!



FRI 26th JUNE to SUN 28th JUNE

for DELIVERY ONLY!

**Can be ordered on our website
or by phone on the dates above!**

See our website, facebook or twitter page for prices!



OLD ROAD, MAISEMORE, GLOUCESTER, GL2 8HT
TEL: 01452 700289

sales@bees-online.co.uk www.bees-online.co.uk www.woodenbriquettes.co.uk

www.thorne.co.uk
sales@thorne.co.uk
01673 858555

THORNE

**HELPING BEEKEEPERS
KEEP BEES FOR
OVER 100 YEARS**

Hives, Bees, Frames, Foundation
Hardware and Clothing
Processing, Labels, Packaging
Queen Rearing
Health and Feeding
Books, Gifts, Hive Products
Candlemaking

ORDER ONLINE OR IN STORE

RAND

Beehive Business Park, Rand
Nr Wragby, Market Rasen LN8 5NJ
sales@thorne.co.uk 01673 858555

STOCKBRIDGE

Chilbolton Down Farm
Chilbolton Down
Stockbridge
Hampshire SO20 6BU
stockbridge@thorne.co.uk
01264 810916

WINDSOR

Oakley Green Farm
Oakley Green
Windsor, SL4 4PZ
windsor@thorne.co.uk
01753 830256

DEVON

Quince Honey Farm
Aller Cross
South Molton, EX36 3RD
devon@thorne.co.uk
01769 573086

SCOTLAND

Newburgh Ind Est
Cupar Road, Newburgh
Fife, KY14 6HA
scotland@thorne.co.uk
01337 842596



Queen rearing

Extensive range of queen rearing
equipment



Honey processing

Solar wax extractors, warming cabinets



Hives and hive parts

W.B.C., National, Commercial, Langstroth
Dadant, Smith, Warre, Top Bar

BeeCraft MAGAZINE

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF BRITISH BEEKEEPING



View your free April
2020 edition at
bee-craft.com/yo



If you like what you see why not subscribe!

**Interested in a discounted bulk subscription, with added benefits,
for your association?**

**Email Wendy at marketing@bee-craft.com,
or Katie at secretary@bee-craft.com for more information.**