



YORKSHIRE
BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Yorkshire Beekeepers' Association Newsletter December 2020

Contents:

[Chairman's Notes](#)

[Oxalic Acid Squirter design](#)

[December in the Apiary](#)

[Fondant Feeding](#)

[YBKA Study Sessions](#)

[Asian Hornet Trap design](#)

[Bee For Development](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Committee](#)

[Classifieds](#)



Chairman's Notes

Beginning with positive news! We have planned several online events for our winter/spring programs for YBKA members.

Kirit Gordhandas and Clare McGettigan, our Education Team, are setting up events for you to join in with. Kirit is liaising with BBKA about the online exams for next spring and is keen to keep you all informed about the arrangements as they are confirmed (you will have received the recent Q&A document about the spring exams). We are hoping that we will be able to hold them safely in our headquarters on the Harrogate Showground, by November next year, but only time will tell. Clare has been getting members signed up for the first, online, module tutorials presented by our expert tutors. We needed to extend capacity from 60 to 100 places due to the high demand. All the places filled within a few days of the course announcement!

We are in the process of setting up online talks by various top speakers that we hope members will support and enjoy. Further information regarding dates, times and topics will be in our January 2021 Newsletter.

I would like to thank all our district associations that have worked so hard to keep members informed and engaged over the past 10 months, using online and other creative communications. Your efforts have been much appreciated, on both the local and county level.

Despite Covid this year's beekeeping season continued, although of course many events and courses had to be cancelled for personal safety. For most of us it was quite a successful year, with good surpluses of honey achieved by many of the members I have spoken to. Let's hope 2021 is even better!

It only remains for me to wish each of our YBKA members:
A very Happy Christmas and New Year

Stay safe and stay positive!

Dave Shannon
YBKA Chairman.

'Oxalic Acid Squirter'

New beekeepers will have developed their craft under the shadow of Varroa when various treatments are available. Others, like myself, had to come to terms with its sudden presence. Interestingly I, unknowingly, moved my bees from the South to the North across the quarantine line in late 1992, but luckily a subsequent inspection showed them to be free of the parasite.

We now have learned to live with this mite and the treatments used to try to keep it at bay or at least control its numbers. One such treatment is trickling an oxalic acid/sugar solution in between the brood frames when the colony is broodless. The "window" for doing this occurs during winter when the weather is cold, so opening and closing the hive needs to be quick and involve little or no manipulation. When you remove the roof and crown board, speed is of the essence. Bees can get annoyed when it's cold, just like you or I would if someone lifted off our house roof and bedroom ceiling when we were in bed!

Dispensing oxalic acid solution for 'trickling' can take time if you don't plan ahead. Of course, you can buy ready-made measuring dispensers, but years ago I was caught out without one, while waiting for an order to arrive. So, I made my own and used it for many years. They are so easily made that the loss of one is no problem.

Using a 20 ml plastic syringe I bent the arms of a small fold back clip (see photo) so that the syringe plunger sat at 5 ml (the dose per seam of bees). Test this with water and adjust the arms of the clip, as necessary. In operation, the syringe is quickly and easily filled and emptied between the frames, using a cup or jug of the oxalic acid mixture (see the David A Cushman website for the 'receipt'). If you are a 'gloves person' then thin gloves are a help when doing this manipulation.



Chris Coulson
Beverley Beekeepers Association

In the Apiary December 2020

As we arrive at the end of the calendar year, there isn't a great deal to do in the apiary.

At this time of year most bee colonies will be in a cluster, the colder the ambient temperature, the tighter the cluster will be. The odd bee will venture out on milder days, for cleansing flights or water gathering. The vast majority will be in a cluster, generating heat by contracting and relaxing their flight muscles and maintaining an internal cluster temperature of approximately 20 degrees centigrade. Bees rotate between the outer edges and the inside of the cluster to survive.

Usually by December the mid-summer bees will have died off, leaving the late summer/autumn bees to take the colony through to spring. The queen will have reduced her laying rate to a bare minimum with most queens taking a brood break. This is an ideal time to treat with Oxalic Acid to reduce varroa levels within the colony. With little or no brood, Varroa will now be on the adult bees. Oxalic Acid seriously damages

brood, should there be any, but at this time of the year this is a small sacrifice for the benefit of the whole colony. Oxalic Acid is an organic substance, but unlike other treatments it should only be used once. Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully, in respect of application and health and safety guidance. There are different ways to apply the treatment, but the trickle method is probably the easiest, requiring no specialised equipment other than a syringe. You basically apply 5ml of solution to each seam of bees slowly trickling over the bees along the seam. "A seam of bees" refers to those in the gaps between the frames.

If this is new to you it may be wise to practise first applying water onto a surface.

Practise trickle method

You can purchase the dry crystals and make up the solution using sugar syrup and apply using a syringe to accurately measure 5ml. Alternatively, you can purchase a ready prepared solution which dispenses 5ml at a time.

This takes no more than a minute or two per colony. Prepare the amount to be administered in your syringe. Remove the roof and crown board and run the solution along the seams. Once all seams have received the required dose replace the crown board and roof. It is not usually necessary to apply any smoke as the operation is so quick but do have your smoker lit, and to hand, as a precautionary measure. If using mesh floors place a monitoring tray below so that you can assess the mite drop after treatment has been applied.



The other method of application is to vaporise the crystals, but this requires a special applicator with a power source.

Remember, this is a veterinary approved treatment and in accordance with the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013 you need to record the treatment on a medicine record card. More information can be found on 'beebase' along with a sample 'Medicine record card' that can be downloaded and printed off to keep in your records.

<http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?sectionid=110>

Whilst colony inspections are not taking place it is good practice to check hives on a weekly basis throughout the winter months, hefting them to ensure supplies of food are

still adequate, without having to open the hives at all. It is possible to take a quick look through the porta-bee hole on the crown board to check the bees are still ok. It is important to check that roofs are still in place and that hives have not been blown over after high winds. Check that mouse guards are secure and, if your apiary is prone to woodpecker visits, ensure that any protective mesh/netting is in place preventing the birds from damaging hives and feasting on the bees inside.

Keep monitoring the stores. Concerns have already been raised by fellow beekeepers and the NBU that colonies are going through stores and there is a risk of starvation. Now is the time where fondant should be used, rather than liquid feed. Fondant should be placed directly above the cluster, so the bees have easy access. Personally, I usually place fondant above the cluster when I do the Oxalic treatment usually as a precautionary method, but this year this schedule may need to be brought forward. Ensuring there are sufficient stores and keeping the bees in a damp free environment should help them survive the cold months to come.

Whilst hands-on beekeeping activities are greatly reduced throughout the winter months, this is a time to undertake repairs and maintenance on all the equipment in preparation for the coming season. Plan what you want to do in 2021 and what equipment you may need. You might grab a bargain in the January sales!

Alternatively, why not study to take a module in March? BBKA has recently announced plans to hold the spring module exams on the weekend of 24th and 25th April 2021 using online invigilation. This will allow people to take module exams, online, in their own homes.

The final application date for Module exams will be 31st January 2021 and candidates will be able to sit a maximum of two modules.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas.

Mark Millard
Wakefield Beekeepers Association

FONDANT FEEDING

Well, the cold weather is with us along with warnings about colony starvation. Too late for syrup feeding so it's fondant if feeding is needed.

I've made my own fondant in the past and incurred the wrath of 'she who will be obeyed' so I've taken to buying it in 12.5 kg blocks at £10/block from Shepcote Distributors Ltd in Drifffield, East Yorks. They deliver into Hull so for that price it arrives at my door. I've never found a problem feeding it to my bees though a 12.5 kg block presents its own problems of cutting it into manageable sub-blocks and then feeding it to the bees.

Cutting and feeding: I have used knives, a circular saw, cheese wire etc to cut it. Knives and cheese wire allow the fondant to reform behind the cut and the circular saw sprayed fondant all over me, my glasses and the shed ceiling as well as blocking the saw! However, over the years I solved the cutting and feeding problem and this is what I do.

After taking the fondant out of the cardboard box I put it, still in its wrapping, on a work

surface and mark off slices I want, on the wrapping, with a marker pen. Given the block is 12.5 kg a quarter of the block will weight about 3.1 kg. I move the block so the slice over hangs the work surface edge. When you cut with a knife the cut opens up rather than closing and the section is easily cut off. But is still too big to go into the hive so here's the solution to that problem.

I put an eke on the floor and put the fondant slice halfway down a plastic waste bag. This goes into the eke on the floor and I paddle it down with my feet to the same height as the eke. Children are useful for this! The eke makes sure you don't make your fondant patty too big. It can be kept in the bag to keep it moist. To feed the bees a big hole is cut in one side of the plastic bag and the bag and fondant is placed hole down on the feed hole in the crown board or on the frames or QX but inside the eke which has been placed in the hive. Reassemble the hive and job done!

Chris Coulson

Beverley Beekeepers Association.

YBKA Study Sessions

I am pleased to announce the 2nd series of our YBKA study sessions - **HONEYBEE BEHAVIOUR which will start in February**. These 4 sessions will be based around the syllabus for BBKA Module 6 but are open to all YBKA members irrespective of whether you intend to take the exam. Each session will run from 7-8.30pm on 4 consecutive Tuesdays.

About your tutors:

ROGER POOL has been beekeeping for 10 years and currently runs approximately 12 colonies. He is chair of Halifax Beekeepers and has passed all the written modules, microscopy and the General Husbandry assessment. Roger always presents beekeeping 'education' in an interesting and not too serious way!

BRONWEN WHITE is a Master Beekeeper and has been keeping bees for about 14 years. She currently runs about 12 colonies and is chair of Rotherham Beekeepers.

When

- 9th Feb 2021, Session 1: *Sex and the Beekeeper* led by Roger and *Function and behaviour of the worker bee* led by Bron
- 16th Feb 2021, Session 2: *Swarming: the why and how* led by Roger and *Collection and use of nectar, pollen, propolis and water* led by Bron
- 23rd Feb 2021, Session 3 *The foraging bee* led by Roger and *Communication in Honeybees* led by Bron
- 2nd Mar 2021, Session 4. *A home to raise a family* led by Roger and *Interaction between honeybees and the environment* led by Bron

To join, please register on the Zoom website using the link below - you can choose to attend some or all of the sessions. Please note that we are limited to 100 attendees on the night but we will be recording the sessions for anyone who is unable to attend. (NB: we are discussing options to increase the limit).

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEqdOurpz8vGNWFOjNZJfARdteC4lLdcRJ>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Please note your registration will be specific to your email address and cannot be shared with anyone else.

Many thanks,

Clare McGettigan
YBKA Education Officer

Asian Hornet Trap Design

Link to Beverley Beekeeper Association

<https://www.beverleybeekeepers.co.uk/2020/making-an-asian-hornet-monitoring-trap/>

from Chris Coulson

Bee For Development

Like many beekeepers, I suspect, I am in receipt of my State Pension, and each year I am given by DWP £10, I believe as a Christmas bonus, or other gesture. As I am still working long after a theoretical retirement age, for me, £10 is neither here nor there, though I fully appreciate that, for others, it is a welcome addition to their income.

Each year that I have received it, I have donated it to one charity, or another. This year, I donated it to Bees for Development, as did my husband, and received a thank you from them with a link to an interview with an Ethiopian beekeeper, whom they support.

This is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHpr6rKbkWA&feature=youtu.be>, together, I think, with other such interviews with others supported by BfD.

Could I ask other beekeepers in a similar position to mine, to consider also making a donation to BfD? The recipients of help have so little compared to we in the UK. Anything you might be able to contribute would be gratefully received.

Happy Christmas.

Jane Pawlow

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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

Thorne's large, stainless steel steam wax extractor complete with steam generator. Used a couple of times and in very good condition. A bit small for my setup sadly. I'm looking for £250 or very near. On Thorne's site at £430. Call Rich on 07801 847487 to view in Strensall York if interested.



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THE TITTERMOST 20

1. What is Dominic Cummings' favourite Christmas song?
Driving Home for Christmas

2. Did you hear that production was down at Santa's workshop? Many of his workers have had to elf isolate!

3. Why didn't Mary and Joseph make it to Bethlehem? All Virgin flights were cancelled

4. Why are Santa's reindeer allowed to travel on Christmas Eve? They have herd immunity

5. Why did the pirates have to go into lockdown?

Because the 'Arrrr!' rate had risen

6. Why is it best to think of 2020 like a panto? Because eventually, it's behind you

7. Why couldn't Mary and Joseph join their work conference call? Because there was no Zoom at the inn

8. Why can't Boris Johnson make his Christmas cake until the last minute? He doesn't know how many tiers it should have

9. What do the Trumps do for Christmas dinner? They put on a super spread

10. Which Christmas film was 30 years ahead of its time?
Home Alone

11. How do you play Dominic Cummings Monopoly?

Ignore the rules, move anywhere on the board you like, and never Go To Jail

12. Why won't Santa lose any presents this year? He's downloaded Sack and Trace

13. How is the pandemic like my stomach after Christmas? It'll take ages to flatten the curve

14. How is Prince Andrew coping with the stresses of Christmas this year? Fine. No sweat

15. Why wasn't Rudolph allowed to take part in vaccine trials? Because they only wanted guinea pigs

16. Which Government scheme supports Christmas dinner? Eat Sprout To Help Out

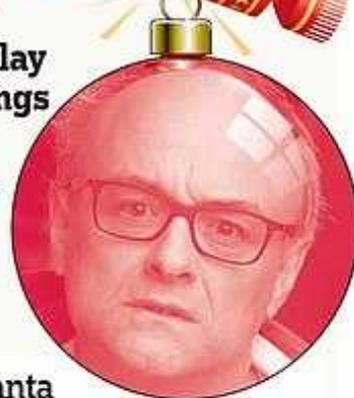
17. How can you get out of talking to your boss at this year's staff Christmas party? Put him on mute

18. How does Santa keep track of all the fireplaces he's visited? He keeps a logbook

19. Who dresses in red and gives to the children this Christmas? Marcus Rashford

20. Why did Mary and Joseph have to travel to Bethlehem?

Because they couldn't book a home delivery



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