



**YORKSHIRE**  
BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

# **Yorkshire Beekeepers' Association Newsletter January 2021**

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**Chair's Notes:** Following an extremely difficult 10 months, both socially and for many, financially, there does seem to be a small glimmer of hope in the form of COVID-19 vaccine rollouts. It brings hope that we can eventually resume many of our meetings and events. However, until such time arrives it is vital that we all adhere to the social distancing rules to keep everyone safe and well. Thank goodness that we can still tend our bees during lock downs.

Our education team, Clare and Kirit, are working hard to put together Zoom tutorials and talks to help those engaged in the BBKA module exams. I believe that over 70 attended our last talk by Ivor Flatman, on the subject of Varroa Management. Kirit is constantly in touch with BBKA to update everyone with any changes in exam procedures in respect of the new online exam system. The take-up to date by members has been excellent and I would personally like to thank both Clare and Kirit for all their efforts, as well as Ivor and Derrie for delivering such excellent talks.

Unfortunately, due to current social restrictions, our YBKA Spring Conference cannot take place. I am pleased to advise that this year's YBKA Delegates Meeting will be held by Zoom for the first time, on Sat the 27th of March 2021 commencing 10.00 am. An agenda and reports will be sent out to all district secretaries for local discussion in advance, to advise delegates of your wishes in the event of any votes to be cast on the day. Districts are asked to think of any issues they may want the YBKA Committee to consider for action during the coming year and provide a written outline, to be circulated in advance of the meeting. More information will follow shortly.

On another positive note, this latest lock down offers a great opportunity for future exhibitors to practice and perfect their skills for honey shows to come. Beeswax candles, dipping and moulding, filtering your honey to a high standard and perfecting a recipe for your honey cake can all be mastered whilst you are confined to quarters. You can also start making meads and melomels for future shows if you can keep them that long!

We are always looking out for articles for the newsletter on all bee and plant related topics, and any good stories you think our members would enjoy reading. Please send them to Chris the editor ([newsletter@ybka.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@ybka.org.uk))

Finally, please keep a close check on your bees throughout the remaining winter months. Happy 2021

Dave Shannon - YBKA Chairman

# Update for April 2021 Module Exams

Just to update you that there is some more information about the April Module exams.

I have noticed that one of the Q&A's on the BBKA Module Exam FAQ webpage relates to the software that is being used screenshot below:

**Q: How do I know if my computer is suitable?**

A: Type **Inspira system requirements** into your web browser and the first two links will take you to the information. It gives the main options but as it says at the bottom other systems may be supported, candidates will do a system check about a month before the exam.

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The webpage address for the FAQ can be accessed by clicking <[HERE](#)> and is worth reading.

Martin Anastasov, Master Beekeeper, NDB and chair of the Exam Board has written an article that gives more details on the April 2020 module exams. It is in the January 2021 edition of BBKA News on Pages 20 and 21

There are three important key dates listed:

- **31 January:** Closing date for new entries for April Module exams.
- **20 & 21 March:** Training for candidates and invigilators.
- **24 April:** Date for exams.

Candidates have been asked to "... reserve these dates in your diaries."

If you have not received January 2021 BBKA News, then the magazine can be accessed online <[HERE](#)>

The username and password are printed on the contents page of each month's magazine and regularly changes. The one in the December 2020 issue worked when I accessed on 1 January 2021.

May I respectfully suggest you read the article if you have not already done so.

The above information has been sent to all registered candidates by email.

Kirit Gordhandas, YBKA Examinations and Assessments

## January in the apiary

After a challenging 2020, in many ways, we enter a new year with optimism for the coming season. I find beekeepers to be optimistic in reflecting on what went well, what could have been done better and looking forward to the new beekeeping season in a few months' time.

January is a quiet time in our apiaries, but our bees still need regular attention throughout the winter months to give them the best chance possible to get through the winter.

The first thing we must remember, is to constantly keep a check on food supplies available in each hive. This is best done by "hefting" the hive and I have written about this in previous articles. Hefting is simply lifting the hive from the rear to assess the overall weight. If you started to do this going into the winter, you will have noticed the hives getting lighter each visit as stores are consumed. If you are a beginner, it's best to seek the help of a more experienced beekeeper to assist you, as the technique comes from quite a few years of experience. It's not a good idea to go disturbing your bees by internal inspections at this early stage of the year under any circumstances. It may chill any brood within the brood box and if disturbed too much, can cause the colony to collapse due to stress and cold.

The recent cold spell over Christmas will have seen the cluster tighten up to retain heat and conserve energy, but the milder days before Christmas saw bees flying quite regularly and this activity uses more stores resulting in NBU (National Bee Unit) warnings of potential starvation. If your colonies are short of food, then it's very important to feed them ASAP. Not with liquid feed, however. Sugar fondant is used in the winter months. There are different methods of applying the fondant used by beekeepers, but all apply the same principal of placing it above the bees. Some apply above the crown board, with the bag split-open face down above the empty slot where the porter bee escape is fitted. Others place fondant in honey jars or other containers above the board.

I use baker's fondant and cut a slice from the block. Using 'cling film,' I roll it out into a thin patty which goes directly above the bees on the frame tops. Don't forget to cut a gash into the cling film on the side facing down to allow the bees access to the fondant. The remainder of the fondant must be covered to prevent it from drying out. I also use an eke, a shallow frame of timber with the same dimensions as your brood box, to allow sufficient space for the patties to sit on top of the frames.

## Fondant placed above the frames with eke in place.



This method necessitates removing the crown board and potentially causes loss of heat from the cluster, so choose a still, calm, day to do this and do it quickly to conserve as much heat as possible. I like the flexibility of being able to place patties directly above where the bees are at the time of feeding, making sure that they have direct access to the fondant. If you are putting fondant above the crown board, an eke may still be needed dependant on the depth of the roof. You can use an empty super.

As the days are slowly getting longer, brood rearing will be increasing, slowly, which will also be a demand on stores both in carbohydrates in the form of honey/sugars but also protein in the form of pollen. Many beekeepers apply pollen patties too at this time of year, but we must be careful not to stimulate the queen to over lay. Potentially, there is still some cold weather to come and we must be conscious of stores that will be used to generate the brood temperature as well as feeding brood. Personally, I leave feeding pollen substitutes until later in the season.

If the temperature is reasonable and the weather is dry and calm a quick look under the crown board may allow for checking those frames adjacent to the cluster and moving empty any frames to the outer edges, to ensure that stores are always nearer to hand for the bees. In the past, I have found instances of isolation starvation, when the bees have moved to one side of the box and starved on empty frames when there have been plentiful stores at the opposite side. Bees are reluctant to leave brood and when it is very cold, they will not break cluster and move across frames to access food. It is

a sad sight to see them starved to death, their abdomens sticking out of empty cells, when nearby there are copious amounts of food left.

Whilst mid to late December is the best time to apply Oxalic Acid as a varroa treatment, it can still be applied in January if a measured mite drops suggest some form of action is required. If using mesh floors, place a monitoring board underneath and check the mite drop over a number of days. Count the mites present and divide by the number of days the monitoring has taken place. If it equates to more than 2 mites per day you may need to treat. There is a wealth of information in the NBU publication 'Managing Varroa' available on BeeBase. I wrote about Oxalic Acid application methods in last month's article.

Lastly, check your hives are all secure and a heavy object is placed on the lids to stop them blowing off in any winter gales. Make sure that mouse guards are still in place and, if in an area prone to woodpecker attacks, cover your hives with a strong netting allowing a 5-inch gap between the netting and timber to prevent them from pecking at the woodwork. Woodpeckers are prone to attack when the ground is frozen, and food is scarce. Once they sample the contents within the box they will most certainly be back for more. The other event which many of us have recently experienced is snow. Make sure entrances are clear, both from snow on the exterior and any dead bees on the interior. You can easily see whether there are dead bodies to be removed by looking in through the mouse guard.

The winter is a good time to prepare your equipment for the coming season. On cold days propolis will set hard and brittle and so can be scraped off easily. Empty wooden brood and super boxes can be sterilised using a blow torch to lightly scorch the interior of the box to kill pathogens. Remember to remove plastic runners beforehand. Polystyrene hives can be scrubbed in a warm washing soda solution and bleach can be used to sterilise. The NBU produces a really useful fact sheet on 'Hive cleaning and sterilization' again available on BeeBase.

Make plans for the coming season. If you wish to expand you may wish to take advantage of the numerous sales held by equipment suppliers. Whilst face to face meetings are still not possible there are many online sessions available to join. The YBKA have been providing online tutorials for the module exams. You don't have to take the exam to take part in the training, so this is open to everyone. If you are planning on taking a module in April this year the closing date for applications is 31 January 2021.

Whatever you choose to do, stay safe. Mark Millard

# A Deal On Security Marking Equipment For YBKA Associations

The YBKA Committee has recently completed purchase of a Small Commercial Kit from **SelectaDNA** to mark the various items of equipment held on behalf of members, for the purpose of deterrence and identification in the event of theft. The kit obtained, cost £150 and the suppliers are offering a 10% discount to any YBKA district associations that buy a similar package.

To activate the discount, please quote the code: **YBADNA10**

Details of the security marking kit can be found at:

<https://www.selectadna.co.uk>

Further information (and photos) available from Equipment Officer Derrie O'Sullivan at [equipment@ybka.org.uk](mailto:equipment@ybka.org.uk)

## Building Our Apiary – “World of Bees”

*Selby & District Beekeepers Association*



The vision of an apiary as a learning and information centre for our local community, primary schools and visitors to our town, has been an ambition of ours for a few years now. And finally, our journey to this dream is almost over as we near completion of our association apiary in the centre of Selby town.

We are most fortunate to be supported by Selby Town Council and they have provided us with the apiary location in an unused part of the cemetery in the middle of town. It is part of their overall objective to plant the area around the apiary with bee- friendly plants and we were delighted to have been involved with them in the choice of plants, shrubs and trees.



In addition to the help we received from **Selby Town Council**, we were also successful in securing a grant of just under £10k from **Lottery for All**. Without this, we just wouldn't have been able to create this feature. It's actually pretty easy to get sums of under 10k – much more involved for sums over this amount!

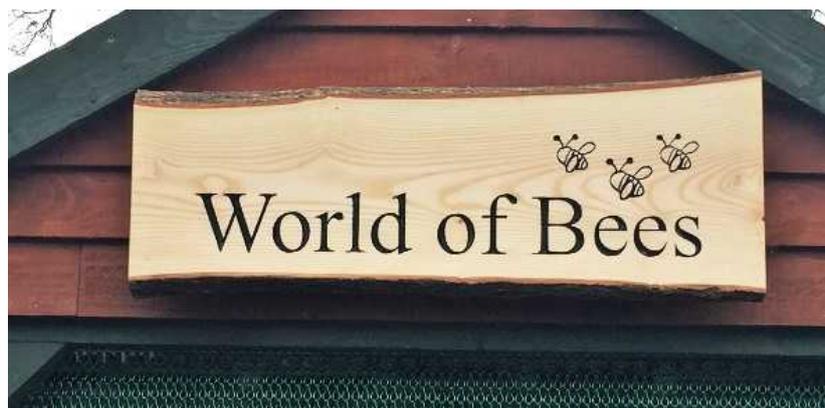
After what seemed a prolonged process of obtaining planning permission with **Selby District Council**, followed by the delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were finally able to make a start on our self-build apiary on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2020. You'll find links to the



chronology of our apiary construction here on our website apiary page along with other useful information.

[www.selbybeekeepers.org.uk/apiary](http://www.selbybeekeepers.org.uk/apiary)

## FEATURES OF OUR "WORLD OF BEES" APIARY -



Two of the perimeter **Notice Boards** each have educational posters that we designed ourselves. The posters will be changed each month to maintain a level of interest for our visitors.

One Notice Board has a static **WELCOME** message whilst the  
Yorkshire BKA January



other is used for notices and upcoming events that will be of interest to our visitors.



The **Hive Enclosure** currently holds 8 association hives and still with plenty of space around the perimeters for our beginners to have a temporary home for their first colony. The association hives all face towards the Visitor Centre, our "**Bee Free Zone**", allowing our visitors a close-up opportunity to watch the comings and goings of the bees as well as listening in on us as we go about our routine inspections or

Beginners Sessions. Our tutorials will be heard by all in BFZ thanks to personal microphones and speakers inside the BFZ.

The **Bee Free Zone** has two sets of curtains in the porch way to help prevent bees from entering. In the porch way, we have also provided a hand sanitation station to help prevent the spread of coronavirus. Bench seating is provided in the BFZ is a Visitors' Book; Custom made 10 Frame Observation Hive; a variety 3D bee images; Educational notices; Smokers and Hive Tools; Skop; and a Colouring Corner at which children can use our wax crayons to colour one of the many comic bee pictures we provide.



as  
of



We're all now looking forward to populating the Observation Hive with live bees next spring! This will be a real asset for the community of Selby and an important educational attraction. And judging by the many wonderful comments in our Visitors Book, it seems that us beekeepers are not the only ones looking forward to the arrival of spring!

2021 looks to be an exciting year for us!

Chriss Line  
Selby Beekeepers

## **Aston Lark Ltd, All Risks Beehive and Equipment Insurance**

Just in case you are not already aware, this scheme offers an 'All Risks' policy to cover either an association's equipment, fixtures and fittings or those of the individual beekeeper. This insurance cover is not linked to that provided by Bee Disease Insurance (BDI) that only compensates for those limited items needing to be destroyed following a diagnosed incident of a notifiable disease. It also differs from the Public Liability Insurance included in your BBKA subscription.

With an "All Risks" policy various levels of cover can be taken out, so the scheme is flexible, and you just pay for what you need.

The scheme was initially negotiated with Buckland Harvester, for a period of 3 years, by BBKA, and has been continued by their successor, Aston Lark. The initial deal was negotiated on the assumption that a large client like BBKA could generate enough custom to ensure that costs could be kept low. The time to review this deal is on the near horizon and it would be a shame to lose it, for want of publicising its merits.

Here are a couple of "testimonials" provided by YBKA users of the scheme to date.

*"If you want cover, then it's quite simple to contact the insurance providers directly, quoting the BBKA scheme. I found them helpful, friendly and efficient when I called them."*

*"I have taken out cover with them for a few years now and my personal view is that it provides good value and gives you peace of mind. It's worth looking at your spare kit in storage over the winter and just totting up the replacement costs. When I did this, I was quite surprised by the value of my equipment."*

*"The issue of being able to provide a postcode for an out apiary was easily sorted out."* **Tony Jefferson (Whitby BKA)**

*"The YBKA has just renewed its insurance policy with Aston Lark Limited, which provides a total level of cover of £15,000 at a cost of only £25. The insurance policy represents excellent value for money and covers the following assets of YBKA:*

- *Microscopes and ancillary equipment - £10,000*
  - *Projection Equipment - £2,200*
  - *Computer Equipment - £350*
  - *Trophies - £1,500*
  - *Promotional Stock (eg Tamper Evident Seals, Mugs, Sew On Badges, etc.) – £650*
  - *Exhibition Stands and Direction Boards - £300”*
- Norbert Cooper (Treasurer YBKA)**

These guys are **not** on commission, just wanting to share their experience of a good deal with the membership!

Remember:

- Most home insurance will not cover beekeeping equipment that is kept outdoors or in sheds and garages.
- All Risks can cover specialist equipment (eg microscopes and trophies), as well as bees, hives and hive parts etc.
- Beekeeping associations can include buildings in an “All Risks” policy, as well as their equipment stocks.

To find out more, visit the website <https://www.beekeepersinsurance.co.uk>

Or email: [bbka@astonlark.com](mailto:bbka@astonlark.com)

Or ring: 0161 834 1884

Don't forget to mention that you are a member of BBKA when you make contact.

**Linda Schofield**

## **YBKA CALENDAR 2021/22**

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> January: GPC Meeting 6pm (Zoom)

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> January: BBKA virtual ADM 10am**

Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January: Closing date for new entries for BBKA April exams

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March: GPC Meeting 6pm (Zoom)

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March: Beetradox (Sandown Park – postponed)**

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March: Training for invigilators and candidates for BBKA on-line Modules Exams (details tbc)

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> March: YBKA Delegates Meeting 10am (Zoom)

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April: BBKA Spring Convention (virtual event – see BBKA website)**

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April: BBKA Modules Exams (on-line only)

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May: GPC Meeting 6pm (venue/medium - tbc)

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> July: Great Yorkshire Show (Harrogate Showground- tbc)**

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July: GPC Meeting 6pm (venue/medium – tbc)

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September: GPC Meeting 6pm (venue/medium – tbc)

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October: GPC Meeting 6pm (venue/medium – tbc)

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> to Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October: National Honey Show (Sandown Park – tbc)

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November: Cosmetics Workshops with Dr Sara Robb (tbc)

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November: BBKA Modules Examinations (venue/medium tbc)

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November: YBKA AGM (venue/medium - tbc)

### **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](mailto: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.



***Quality Beekeeper Clothing At  
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**Full adult suit - £55  
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**From Somerset**

**Email: [michaeljohnduckett@gmail.com](mailto:michaeljohnduckett@gmail.com)**

**[www.thebeeshop.co.uk](http://www.thebeeshop.co.uk)**

**Change.org petition regarding the derogation of  
Thiomethoxam**

<https://www.change.org/p/uk-parliament-pesticide-believed-to-kill-bees-is-authorized-for-use-in-england>

YBKA Chair Dave Shannon has asked that this be brought to the attention of those members who may wish to sign.

NOT only for beekeepers

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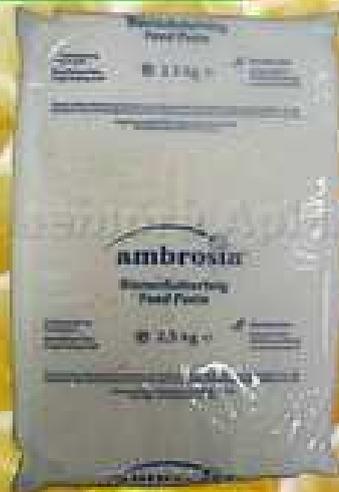
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by Phone from 9.00am 4th January





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