



**YORKSHIRE**  
BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

# Yorkshire Beekeepers' Association Newsletter May 2021

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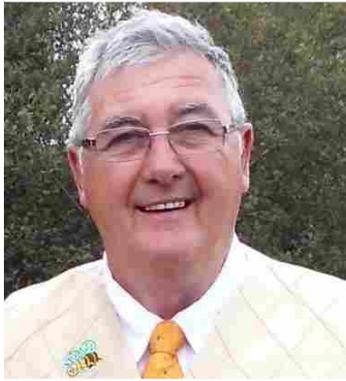
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**Yorkshire BKA does not condone the importation of bees from abroad via any route.**



**Chairman's Report:** I would like to begin this May issue of the YBKA Newsletter by informing you, with regret, of our withdrawal from this year's Great Yorkshire Show. Apologies to all our volunteers that contribute to its success each year. The decision was made, primarily, out of respect for the health and safety of our members and volunteers following concerns that YAS has targeted attendance figures of 120,000 visitors over a 4-day period. Considering that a majority of YBKA members have been isolating for most of the year, this figure presents too high a risk of potential Covid contagion. The committee and I apologise for this but felt, overwhelmingly, that this was the right decision

under the circumstances.

Reading through the latest reports on the BBKA's petition to ban all imports of packet bees into the UK it appears that to date, only around 15,500 signatures have been submitted. We really need 100,000 to push government into full action, hence, I urgently implore all our members to reach out to their friends, families and members of the general public to bring the petition, and the reasons behind it, to their attention. Of course, if there are any members who haven't yet signed, please do so: details and link below. It appears that DEFRA has now made a big U turn from its promises in February, to allow only the importation of queens from abroad, to now allowing the importation of package bees too, via the N. Ireland/ Britain Brexit loophole. The latest, large consignment is coming in from Italy, a country that is suffering the impact of small hive beetle infestation in certain areas, causing huge problems for the Italian beekeeping fraternity and devastating local pollinators and honey gatherers. The contamination threat is a potential disaster for UK beekeepers. DEFRA states that all bee packages must hold a certificate of cleanliness, but who will be able to check through the 5000-10,000 bees within a package, to ensure this is the case and certify that all are free from pests/diseases? To my mind and those of many beekeepers, this is impossible. It will only take one consignment to be infected, regardless of ignorance or intention of the exporter/ importer, for an incursion to happen. Please click and sign before it's too late to control.

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/577603>

On a brighter note, we have our next Zoom YBKA General Purpose Committee Meeting coming up on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> May when I look forward to seeing all our area representatives again to consider another, full, agenda. This is an important means of making and sharing collective decisions that affect all our member districts. If you wish to bring an issue or concern to the attention of the GPC, make your local representative, or contact person aware, or get in touch with our secretary Linda ([secretary@ybka.org](mailto:secretary@ybka.org)). The dates of future meetings can be seen on the YBKA Calendar below.

Finally: this has been a very changeable, and frustrating, start to the beekeeping season with long, dry spells and frosty nights. Not the best conditions for bees or crops and plants. Remember, don't go looking through your brood boxes when it's only 8-12 °C, the bees won't appreciate it at all. Wait until it warms up to above 14°C.

Happy beekeeping!

Dave Shannon

YBKA Chairman

# BEVERLEY BEEKEEPERS ANNUAL AUCTION

HONEY BEES AND BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT  
JUNE 27th 2021  
WOODMANSEY VILLAGE HALL  
LONG LANE, WOODMANSEY HU17 0RN

Auction of live honey bees and associated new and used beekeeping equipment.

Entries accepted Saturday 27th June 18.00 hrs to 20.00 hrs and  
Sunday 28th June from 08.00 until 10.30am  
Viewing Sunday from 10.30 am  
Auction Commences 11am

Auction of live bees will commence at 1pm approx.  
Enquiries to [auktion@beverleybeekeepers.co.uk](mailto:auktion@beverleybeekeepers.co.uk) or  
Dave Hodgson 07875393588  
10% seller's commission.

NO BUYER'S PREMIUM  
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For all further information please see:  
[www.beverleybeekeepers.co.uk](http://www.beverleybeekeepers.co.uk)  
[..\Auction2020\BevBKA Auction Guidelines 2021.doc](#)  
[..\Auction2020\Auction Colony description form 2021.doc](#)

## BBKA Swarm Collection List

The BBKA maintains a "swarm map" of beekeepers who are a) members of BBKA and b) have registered to become a "swarm collector." The swarm map consists of a scrollable google map with a pin for the postcode of the registered beekeeper.

When a member of the public accesses the BBKA swarm map and inputs the postcode for the swarm it brings up a map, centred on that postcode and pins point to the contact details of the local swarm collectors.



When the member of the public clicks on a pin then they are given the name and contact details of that beekeeper. They do not need to go through a local beekeeping association.

The swarm map can be found by clicking [HERE](#)

If you want to be involved in swarm collection you need to a) check the process operated by your local association b) ensure that you have read the BBKA information leaflet on collecting a swarm that can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#) c) first go out on swarm collection calls with an experienced swarm collector.

Swarm collecting is not for everyone but once you are happy to be included on the swarm collectors' list then drop your local association membership secretary an email or phone them to ask them to add you to the list.

All that is involved is adding a tick on your BBKA eR2 membership record for the swarm collection list and then adding a postcode for the Google map pin and a contact number.

<input type="checkbox"/> Include on Swarm List	Swarm list post code	Swarm list mobile	Swarm list land line
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Once that has been done then you are on the “swarm map” awaiting your first call!

Kirit Gordhandas  
YBKA Exam & Assessment Secretary

## **The Government has responded to the petition you signed – “Stop the importation of honey bees into GB from the EU via Northern Ireland” as follows:**

We recognise the serious threat posed by small hive beetle. EU areas affected by this pest are not permitted to export to the UK. Strict controls apply to imports into the UK from other areas.

The Government recognises that some beekeepers are concerned about the new trading arrangements and the risks of exotic pests entering Great Britain, in particular small hive beetle.

Small hive beetle would present a serious threat to our honey bees if it were to arrive in the UK. This invasive pest has only been detected in one part of Europe, namely southern Italy, and exports of bees from the affected region into either Great Britain or Northern Ireland are not permitted.

Imports of honey bees into Northern Ireland and any other part of the UK are only accepted from approved countries and are subject to rules relating to notification and health certification to ensure that imports are free of key pests and diseases.

Movements of honey bee queens, packages and colonies from Northern Ireland to Great Britain remain permitted. There is, and will remain, unfettered access for Northern Ireland goods, including honey bees, to the rest of the UK market.

We continue to work with colleagues in the Devolved Administrations as part of our monitoring of the new trading arrangements.

We recognise the important role played by beekeepers and bee farmers in sustaining honey bee health. We appreciate the level of interest in this issue, and we continue to listen to beekeepers and associations as part of our ongoing work to maintain suitable trading arrangements and effective biosecurity for the UK beekeeping sector.

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Click this link to view the response online:

[https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/577603?reveal\\_response=yes](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/577603?reveal_response=yes)

The Petitions Committee will take a look at this petition and its response. They can press the government for action and gather evidence. If this petition reaches 100,000 signatures, the Committee will consider it for a debate.

The Committee is made up of 11 MPs, from political parties in government and in opposition. It is entirely independent of the Government. Find out more about the Committee: <https://petition.parliament.uk/help#petitions-committee>

Thanks,  
The Petitions team  
UK Government and Parliament

You're receiving this email because you signed this petition: "Stop the importation of honey bees into GB from the EU via Northern Ireland".

## **NPWS confirms first discovery of a live specimen Asian Hornet in Ireland**

The National Parks and Wildlife Service at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage has confirmed that a single specimen of the invasive alien species Asian Hornet has been found in Ireland. This marks the first identification of the species in the wild in Ireland. The single specimen was found 'alive but dying' in a private dwelling on the northside of Dublin. At this time there is no indication of a nest in the vicinity.

Photographs of the specimen taken by the homeowner were sent to the National Biodiversity Data Centre ([biodiversityireland.ie](http://biodiversityireland.ie)) and later verified as Asian hornet (*Vespa velutina*) by the National Museum of Ireland.

The circumstances of how the specimen arrived in the country are not known. There are many possible pathways of introduction particularly for small mobile invasive species in urban areas with extensive regional, national and international connectivity. However, given current weather patterns it seems less likely to have come from an established nest.

While the discovery of a single specimen is not a cause for alarm, it does remind us of the potential for invasive alien species to find a path of introduction into new areas and also serves as a timely reminder that we should be prepared to deal with the threat they pose to biodiversity and local ecosystems.

The Asian hornet is a predator of honeybees, wasps, other pollinators such as bumblebees, hoverflies and spiders, which it uses primarily to feed its larvae. These prey species are important for pollination of crops as well as wild flora and disruptions to their populations may have serious impacts on biodiversity and pollination services. However, the potential of the Hornet to become invasive in Ireland is dependent on its successful establishment of colonies here.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is working closely with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine (DAFM) to monitor the situation and put contingency measures in place.

While both Departments are concerned about the discovery of this insect, it should be stressed that, on the basis of the ongoing surveillance, there is no evidence that the Asian Hornet is established in Ireland at this time.

Both NPWS and DAFM have committed to immediate additional surveillance for the Asian Hornet, especially around entry points in Ireland with direct access to mainland Europe including ports and airports along with large distribution hubs. Other surveillance traps will be set in strategic locations from the original point of detection in Dublin 3. This is in addition to the sentinel apiary programme that DAFM operate with the cooperation of volunteer beekeepers. This involves surveillance for Asian Hornet at apiaries located at strategic locations around Ireland.

Minister of State Malcolm Noonan commented that while the public's vigilance is welcome, "it is important that there should not be an over-reaction to sightings of other large insects such as wood wasps and native social wasps. It is imperative other species are not targeted, disrupted or destroyed on foot of this discovery of the Asian hornet specimen."

Should any further Asian Hornets be found, records of sightings, including photo if possible, can be submitted via the National Biodiversity Data Centre website ([biodiversityireland.ie](http://biodiversityireland.ie)) or the easy-to-use NBDC mobile app.

For general queries or information relating to invasive alien species, email the NPWS [ias@housing.gov.ie](mailto:ias@housing.gov.ie)

Further information on the Asian hornet, including identification aids and contact details for the competent authorities can be found on the NPWS website and the website of the [www.biodiversityireland.ie/asian-hornet-alert/](http://www.biodiversityireland.ie/asian-hornet-alert/)

## **In the Apiary: May**

Well, what a month April has been. It started so promisingly with fantastic sunny days but ended with overnight frosts! The bees must have no idea what to do, breaking cluster during the day then having to generate heat throughout the night to maintain a constant brood temperature. The notorious April showers appear to have eluded us and the ground is looking parched. Let us hope May is going to be better.

Everyone should have completed initial inspections by now and have assessed the needs of the colonies for the next few weeks. I have found a great deal of inconsistency in my colonies coming out of winter and speaking with other beekeepers I don't appear to be alone. Some colonies have come through strong and are building up nicely, but others have dwindled significantly and will take a bit more building up. It will be interesting to see what the survival rate was for the winter just gone.

Weather permitting, May is a good month for replacing old and damaged brood comb as the colonies are building up with lots of young bees ready to produce wax and usually a nectar flow in progress. The old, damaged, blackened frames should ideally have been moved out to the edges of the box and be accessible, with little or no brood on them. On a nice warm day replace these frames, closer to the edge of the brood nest, 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. Remember to produce 1lb of wax it takes 6 to 8lb of honey/syrup (depending upon which books you read) and the wax builders need to maintain a temperature of 35 degrees centigrade. If unsure there is lots of guidance on how to perform this task online. Some beekeepers prefer to undertake a Shook Swarm procedure, which can also be used as a varroa control and gets all the bees onto new fresh comb much quicker than the Bailey Comb Exchange method. There is an excellent fact sheet of how to undertake this procedure on 'Beebase'

By replacing old combs, you can increase the productivity of the hives and gain more surplus honey to extract over the next few months; but more importantly, improve the health of the colony as the old frames may harbour pathogens and/or disease spores.

For all new beekeepers: this is also an ideal time for the bees to produce the elusive drawn-out brood frames mentioned at training courses. Sterilised, drawn-out brood frames are extremely handy for swarm control and when dealing with weak colonies suffering from Nosema. 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 beginning to fade or else the honey will granulate in the frames.

Weekly inspections are now a must to practise effective swarm control. Ensure your queens are well-marked and if not, re-mark them. Having them clearly visible is timesaving when you start your weekly colony inspections and need to perform swarm control procedures. Remember that from an egg laid on day 1, a queen cell will be sealed on day 8. The swarm usually leaves on the first fine day after the cell has been sealed, hence the need to undertake weekly inspections.

Remember, we can still get caught out as a colony intent on swarming can reduce this time frame by 3 or 4 days as it is the feed given to the larva that dictates the caste (worker or queen). After day 3 as a larva the caste is usually set. But in general, when a colony is preparing to swarm, the egg will be laid in a queen cell and follow the 8-day development period before the cell is sealed.

For newer beekeepers you must be able to identify queen cells. They hang down vertically from the frame and are larger than worker and drone cells. Don't confuse queen cells with queen cups - the small dish-shaped cups that bees produce at times to keep us on our toes. Queen cells will be extended lengthways and will contain an egg or a larva, lying in a pool of white royal jelly. When you see this, you need to follow your planned swarm prevention procedure.

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 put in 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.

Photograph of a charged Queen cell



It is also beneficial to get some kit together for collecting swarms. Many of you will be on the swarm collectors' list and will be getting ready for the calls from the public who have had a cloud of bees descend upon them!

Whilst I have used a cardboard box to collect bees in the past, for some years now, I have preferred to use a gorilla type tub as shown in the photograph. It has handles, making it easier to hold with one hand and is flexible to get in around the bees. I have an old white sheet, a pair of secateurs, water spray and a strap ready to take them away. This stays in the back of the van for the summer along with a polynuc with a brood extension, for when I get called out to a swarm. There is nothing worse than seeing some bees hanging from a tree and then see them flying off whilst you are trying to find some equipment to collect them.

Swarm collecting equipment ready:



Hope the weather improves and you enjoy your beekeeping.

Mark Millard

## **YBKA CALENDAR 2021/22**

Friday 12th March: GPC Meeting 6pm (Zoom)

Saturday 13th March: Beetradox (Sandown Park – postponed, watch website)

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

Saturday 27th March: YBKA Delegates Meeting 10am (via Zoom)

Friday 16th to Sunday 18th April: BBKA Spring Convention (virtual event – see BBKA website)

Saturday 24th April: BBKA Modules Exams (on-line only)

Friday 14th May: GPC Meeting 6pm (via Zoom)

Tuesday 13th to Thursday 15th July: Great Yorkshire Show (Harrogate Showground final details tbc)

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

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

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

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

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

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

Saturday 27th November: YBKA AGM (via Zoom)

### **2022:**

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March: YBKA Delegates Meeting (via Zoom)

## **Committee Details**

Dave Shannon is Chair of YBKA

Mark Millard is Vice Chair

Norbert Cooper is Treasurer

Kirit Gorhandas is Examination and Assessments Officer  
Clare McGettigan is Education and Training Officer  
Linda Schofield is Secretary  
Tony Jefferson is the YBKA Delegate to BBKA.  
Chris Barlow is the Newsletter Editor  
David Lamont is the 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](mailto:newsletter@ybka.org.uk)

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.



**A Brunel SP22 compound biological microscope and a Brunel DM2 Stereomicroscope, plus dozens of necessary pieces of equipment. £350 – see pictures on next page**

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