



BDBKA News



www.barnetbeekeepers.org.uk

Note from Chair

I hope 2017 is going to be a good beekeeping year for us all. An improvement on last year in Spring weather would certainly be welcome.

2016 proved to be a mixed year for honey crops and colony well-being. In spite of all we had plenty of Association Honey from the beginners at Whalebones and were able to run a stall at the Barnet Christmas Fair. It proved very popular and the stall sold out on the day. We have a little left to take to the Love Whetstone market in the Spring.

The Christmas Party went well with a great deal of good food supplied by everyone, and the usual light-hearted honey tasting competition. We very much missed Linda Perry's capable organising hand in this but I pleased to say she is feeling better and on the mend. We look forward to seeing her back.

Diary dates

2017

18th February - Brood Diseases, the Varroa Mite and Adult Bee Diseases

at Whalebones, 9.30am.

18th February - Mead Making

by Ron and Mary Hunter at Whalebones, 2pm.

25th February - Federation Day

Somehow the end of January is already here and there is still all that kit to clean and all those frames to make, as well as visiting the apiaries to check on stores, feed and conditions of hives. The recent cold snap left woodpeckers hungry, so I hope those of you in vulnerable areas have wire or plastic covers in place. The cold snap may also have made smaller colonies and nucs weaker or have caused their demise. The time for evaluation of stocks and decisions about unites and comb changes is approaching.

The health of colonies is important in these decisions and we are planning a Nosema Check day as our March monthly meeting. It will be at Whalebones Saturday 11th March at 2pm. We shall have a short talk about it first and then examine our bee samples under the microscopes. All members are welcome with samples of about 30 bees from each hive to be tested. These can be collected earlier and killed in the freezer. If you bring them live on the day please bring them in one pound honey jars to make use of killing fluid easier.

We are planning an interesting programme of monthly meetings with outside speakers, practical sessions and discussions. There should be something for everyone and your ideas are always welcome. We are also beginning to set up a local queen rearing programme to select and breed from the best tempered, most prolific local colonies. There will be more about this later in the year.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our first meeting of the year, a Mead making demonstration by Ron and Mary Hunter. It will be at Whalebones, 2pm Saturday 18th February. The session will give you all the information you need to get started with your own production and yes you do get a taste!

Pat Morgan

Holy Trinity Church, Suez Avenue, off Medway Drive, Perivale, Middlesex UB6 8LN, at 10am.

Talks:

- Making a Start in Spring by Clive de Bruyn NDB
- Fun with Pollen Traps by Bob Smith NDB
- Wax exchange by Roy Cropley
- Equipment for sale by Bee Basic Ltd

www.beebasic.co.uk

4th March - Bee Tradex

Hall H3 Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, CV8 2LG, 9am till 4.30pm.

More than 40 Different Traders with lots of bargains

Free lectures:

- 10am Bee Farmers Association
- 11am New Insights into the Dance Language - Daniel
- 2pm Honey - 130 million years in the making - Marin Anastasov
- 3pm APHA (Formerly DEFRA) Asian Hornet threat to the UK

11th March - Nosema

Testing

at Whalebones, 2pm. If you would like to test your bees for Nosema, bring a sample of about 30 bees per hive.

1st April - Swarming and Swarm Control

at Whalebones, 9.30am.

29th April - Bees Chemical Factory on Pheromones.

by Sean Stevenson at
Whalebones, 2pm.

In the Apiary - February

Bees need food to maintain the brood rearing temperature of 34c. Normally they should have sufficient store from their Aug/Sept harvest. However, you should monitor the hives weight. Once brood rearing gets under way early February the bees can consume up to 500g of food a week. Heft the hives by lifting them at each side (or weigh them with luggage scales) and feed fondant or pollen supplement only if necessary. If pollen is being taken into the hive feed fondant or candy; once pollen is being brought to the hive it is normally warm enough to feed syrup. Feed the hive with fondant (which can be bought or made from caster sugar and liquid glucose (or THEIR honey) Alternatives are wet 500g sugar bags on top of the crown board (which will need a feed hole) using a spare super box as an eke. Candy can also be made by heating a strong sugar solution to 115°C, but do not overheat and burn the syrup (see bee books for method).

The bees will need water close to the hive; this can be given with a plastic container, filled with peat, wood shavings or vermiculite and water, placed 10 m from the hive. An old tray laid flat gives a good watering place.

If there is activity on most hives and no activity in one hive inspect this hive to see if it is dead; any hive which has died should be shut down and if possible removed from the apiary.

If the hive is well provisioned and pollen is going in, leave the hive alone unless the hive is light when hefted. Check for varroa by looking at the tray under the brood box (assuming you have a varroa floor). If

there is a high varroa count, treat the bees with a single tub of Apiguard in March before the nectar flow starts.

For those beekeepers with solid floors, think about replacing them with clean floors at the end of the month but for beekeepers on open mesh floors changing the floor is less important as, unlike solid floors, mesh floors do not collect hive debris and are almost self cleaning.

If we have a sharp frost and snow storm then remember on solid floors to keep the entrance clear for ventilation. On open mesh floors it is recommended to keep the entrance blocked with snow to keep the bees in as an open mesh floor gives adequate ventilation.

Geoff Hood

Swarming and Swarm Control

Last year I wrote about the Artificial Swarm (AS) as a method of swarm control. It's a well known and respected way of controlling a swarming colony so that you don't lose the bees and you still get some honey. This article was well received from the comments I got back – thanks all.

Now it's time to 'fess-up - I don't do an AS when I find queencells myself. I have had plenty of failures with it (I've heard tell that its failure rate can be as high as 50% - though I've not checked my records to check this). So this month, I'm going to tell you what I do instead.

First – a word of warning... NO METHOD is 100% successful (in practical terms.) But I have found that for me (mostly beekeeping at the weekend and having to ration the time I can spend on each colony) this is much more practical.

This method I first encountered in a Welsh Beekeeping guide by Anglesey beekeeper, Wally Shaw. If you get a chance, do read Wally's full method in "Swarm Control: An Apiary Guide" [<http://www.wbka.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Swarm-Control-Wally-Shaw.pdf>]

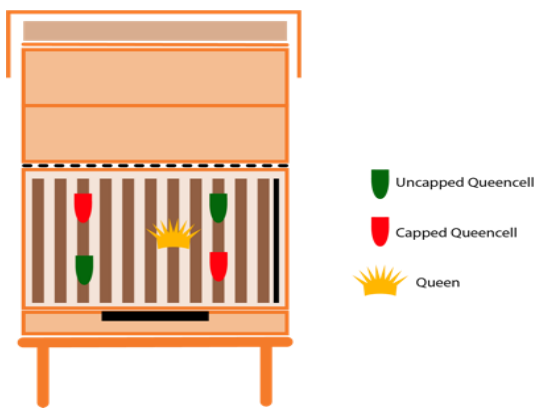
The Modified Snelgrove II

This is the title Wally gives it, I prefer to pay homage to the messenger, and just call it "doing a Wally". Now, don't think that this is going to need any less kit than a Pagden/Heddon AS. It's just the same. And you'll have to be confident in finding and picking up the queen! Yes, I'll say that again – picking her up (and not damaging her in the process, obviously). If you're not, as soon as you see drones, start picking them up – and while you're at it, marking them and clipping them too. Queen handling really is a fundamental beekeeping practice, which we all should master. If you're not sure, we'll be holding a clipping class later in the year – keep an eye out for an Education Officer email inviting you to attend.

Where a Wally does win is ease of manipulation, AND you'll find that your queen will be easier to find and probably a lot less skittish than when you have to find her for an AS. So here goes...

Mid April, you've just come back from Spring Convention (or BeeTradex in March) and you've got all your extra kit for swarm control (a complete spare hive with full complement of frames of foundation, stand, feeder and feed) cleaned and ready AT THE APIARY (it's no good making this difficult for yourself by having to rush home to "get ready". Swarming WILL HAPPEN – don't be a swarm denier.)

So, you saunter into the apiary, open up, and 3rd or 4th frame in – Uh-Oh! There are open queencells. Remember, this is swarm control, so for it to work, the old queen must still be present and without seeing her, the best indicator of that is eggs and ONLY open queencells.

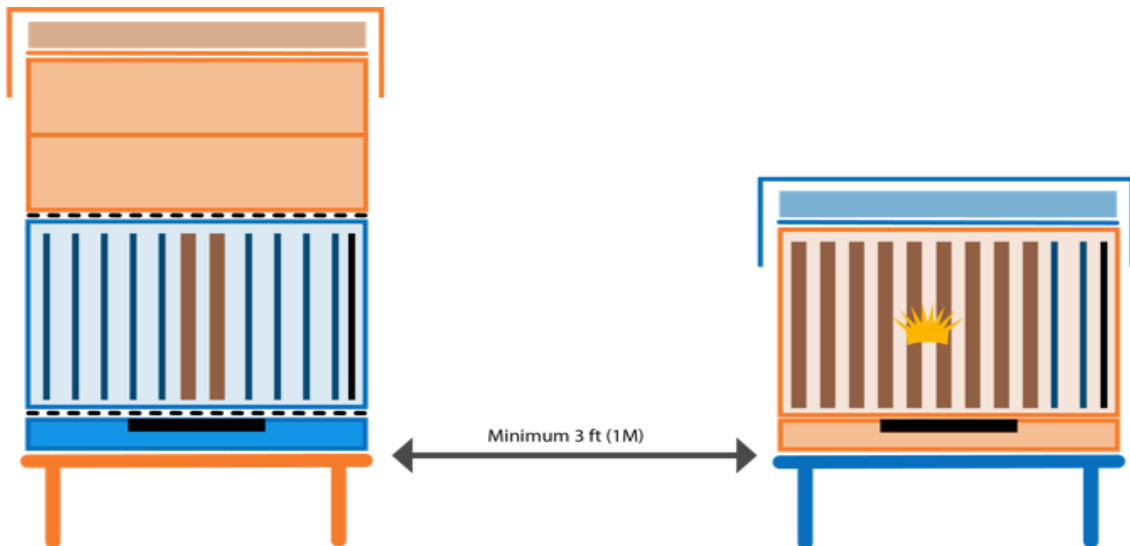


Here's what you do:

1. Don't Panic. You're ready, you've got a plan and you've got the kit to hand to sort it out.
2. Replace the frames (dummy and tighten-up) then pop the crownboard on and move the whole old hive (stand, floor, brood box, crownboard) to a new position, more than a metre away (2-3m is better.)
3. Set up your new hive on the old stand and take two foundation frames out and keep them handy.



4. Go back to the old hive and find two frames with open, young brood on them. Make sure that they don't have any queencells OR the queen is on there either. This is important. IF your hive has supers on, you can even shake off these two brood frames back into the old box, then check them for queencells. The flying bees and super bees will come and look after the brood on the frames you transfer into the new hive, since it is on the old site.
5. Place these two frames in centre of the new hive (old stand). If there are supers on the hive, pop them on the new hive (old stand) with the queen excluder and close up as normal.
6. Go back to the old hive (new stand) and knock down all the queencells you can find (being careful – remember the queen is still in this one.)
7. Once that's done, pop the two saved foundation frames in to make up the full box, tighten up and close up.



After first part of procedure.

8. IF either side needs feeding, feed. If there's flow on or if there's stores in the supers, you might not need to.
9. Go away and leave it 9-days (could be a little bit longer – but NEVER more than 11.)

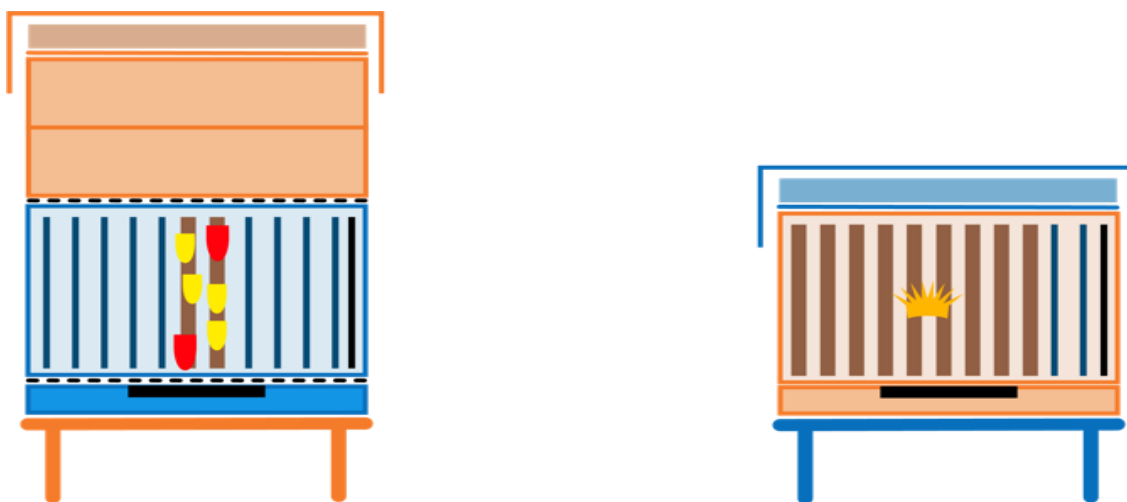
What's happening?

In the old hive: the situation is that there are drastically fewer bees (you removed all the bees in the supers – they're now on the new hive) and all the flyers, which will return to the old stand (new hive.) For the old hive, even though they still have the queen, they are suddenly not in a great shape to swarm.

In the new hive: these bees, particularly the flyers and those in the supers are suddenly queenless, so they start queencells. Hopefully these will be on the youngest larvae, but if it's only left 9 days, even if the larva's 3 days hatched, it's not quite going to have developed into a queen before you're back to sort it out. That's why you choose very young brood on those two frames you transfer over.

After 9 days

After 9 days, go back into the apiary to inspect your colonies. In the old hive, you'll find a colony with fewer bees, the majority of which will be younger bees. This colony is headed by the old queen and she should be back in lay with eggs and hopefully young larvae.



What you should find 9 days after the initial split.

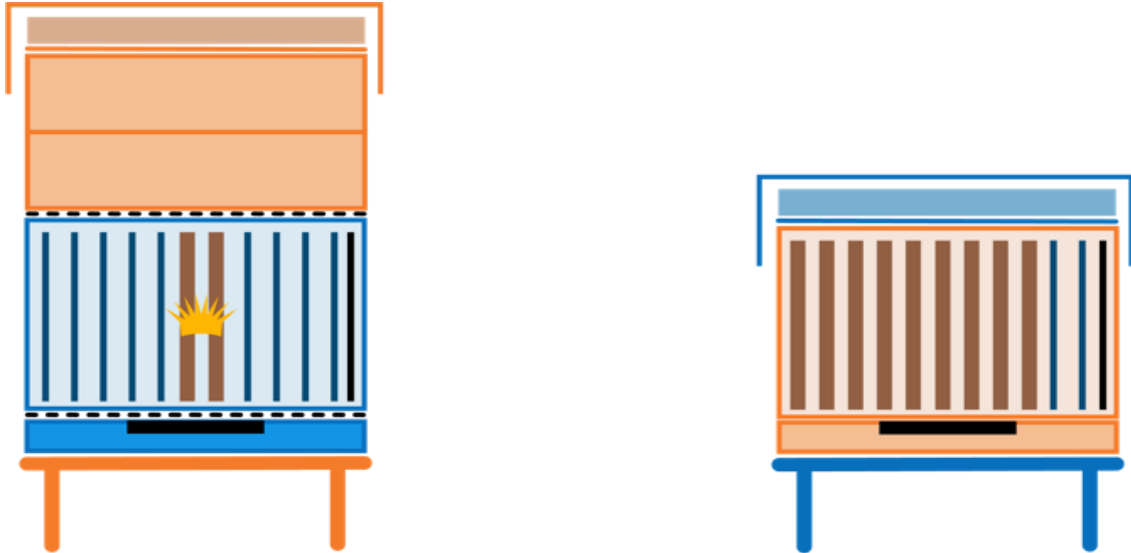
10. In the new hive (old stand) you will find emergency queencells. Tear all these down. IF you've left it too long and this colony has a virgin running around inside it (with a queencell that is open at the end) you can't proceed with the manipulation. Remember to check any queencells you pull down – they should be occupied. If they're occupied by a worker, in their head first, then you're in trouble! - there is a virgin running around in this hive! Bring both these colonies on as new units.

11. The queen in the old hive should now be much easier to find since not only are there fewer bees, but the queen's bigger and less skittish on the frame (she's been put back into lay by the bees for whom the conditions have changed to less favourable for swarming.)

12. Carefully pick her up by the wings and take her over to the open new hive. I just run her in on the top bars, but I have run her in at the entrance too. If you're nervous about how she'll be greeted, pop her into a queen cage and lay it on the top bars of the new hive. The bees will be inquisitive but not aggressive and they'll want to investigate and lick her, but they won't grab on for dear life and try to sting or bite her through the cage. If they do, it's likely that there's a virgin running around inside and introduction of the

old queen won't be possible.

13. Now you can close both up (ensuring they have food or stores.)



After the second manipulation at 9 days.

Let's take stock of what we've achieved. The old colony is now queenless, but it has a surfeit of nurse bees, young brood and eggs newly laid from which to raise a new queen. Emergency queens are only inferior to swarm queens IF the hive is under populated by nurse bees of the right age (the youngest nursing bees with the fattest brood food glands) or it doesn't have sufficient eggs or the very youngest larvae from which to raise the best virgin queens. After all, the emergency response is used in almost all artificial queen raising systems.

In the new hive, there are a lot of super bees and foragers that can make wax. They also have their queen back and she's in lay so the stimulus is there for drawing that foundation. The two frames of brood you left in there will soon hatch and you'll have new nurse bees ready to bring on brood. As the queen's in lay in a smaller colony with lots of potential space and little or no brood, the pressures that initiated swarming are dissipated.

The old colony should be looked at in a week's time and excess or capped queencells removed, thinning down as you would a normal AS. You can then leave it to bring on a new queen, but as ever, be aware of the potential for mating failures.

Unite as desired later in the season.

So, the Wally lets you do your swarm control in an easier way by separating the splitting of the hive and the finding the queen steps. Wally Shaw also claims more reliable success (in quelling the swarming urge in the bees) and it's always a less fraught experience. Here are the Pros and Cons (as I see them):

Pros

A faster initial manipulation.

Easier to find the queen in the second manipulation.

No need to place a queen excluder under the new brood box, as you do with a normal AS.

Can be done vertically if space is tight.

Cons

Takes a bit longer

The 9 day interval can be difficult if you work five days a week - though I have done the 2nd part on a sunny evening with little difficulty (finding the queen IS a lot easier!)

It does take an extra trip to the apiary (but you should be inspecting an ordinary AS as well.)

Like a normal AS, do it vertically and you need to have a strong back to haul those boxes about!

I've done these for a couple of years now and only had one failure in 8 procedures.

Wally claims that knocking down queencells isn't necessary in the original hive when you move it in part I, but that the bees will "sort themselves out" and pull them down when you make the manipulation. I've not had the nerve to try this: after all, we all know that bees don't give two hoots about what beekeepers write about their behaviour. Since I'm there with the hive open and my hive tool in hand it's not such an extra chore to go through and remove those queen cells anyway. However, I might try it this year (I'll let you know how I get on if you're interested) - it would certainly make the whole thing less disruptive.

Then again, who's to say whether I never missed a queen cell in the past?

Steve Leveridge

Summary of BBKA Examinations

BDBKA has a tradition of running an excellent beginners course and we do encourage everyone to sit the Basic Assessment. This demonstrates a level of proficiency in beekeeping and is required by some landlords offering sites for hives e.g. Allotment Associations. Barnet Beekeepers Association awards members who pass the Basic Assessment with a book voucher.

Most beekeepers are probably interested in looking after their bees rather than taking exams but if you wish to take up the challenge the following table summarises what is available. Needless to say, there is an application form and fee payable for each.

EXAMINATION	ENTRY REQUIREMENTS	TYPE OF EXAM
Basic Certificate	To have managed at least one colony for at least one year.	Oral/Practical
General Husbandry	Have Basic Certificate. To have kept and managed bees for 5 years.	Oral/Practical
Advanced Husbandry	Have General Husbandry Certificate for minimum of 18 months.	Oral/ Practical in all areas including microscopy and teaching.
Modules 1 – 8 (no 4)	Have Basic Certificate. Have kept bees for 2 seasons.	Written
Intermediate Theory certificate	Combination of modules 1,2,3 and one of 5,6,7.	–
Advanced Theory Certificate	Modules 1-8 (no 4). 8 must be taken last.	–
Microscopy Certificate	Have Basic Certificate	Oral/Practical
Show Judge Certificate	To have won 30 prizes at County/National level where there were at least 100 entries. To have acted as Steward to 6 Senior Judges at shows. Have Modules 1 & 2.	Production of logbook. Written/Oral.

Modules are divided into topics: 1 = Honey bee Management, 2 = Honey bee Products and Forage, 3 = Honey bee Pests, Diseases & Poisoning, 5 = Honey bee Biology, 6 = Honey bee Behaviour, 7 = Selection & Breeding of Honey bees, 8 = Honey bee Management, Health & History. Apart from Module 8, which must be taken last, the Modules may be taken in any order. Some would say 5 & 6 are a useful basis to everyone's beekeeping and may be good to take first, but it is a matter of personal choice. I found it helpful to work with a couple of others taking the same exams so that we could swap ideas and keep each other up to scratch. There are a couple of groups running at present. If you are interested in joining one or setting one up for yourself, please get in touch. We may be able to help.

Master Beekeeper is awarded on obtaining both the Advanced Husbandry and Advanced Theory Certificates. A commitment to passing on one's knowledge will have been needed to get this far. The ethos behind these exams is not only to keep standards up but to spread the word and teach others to keep all our honeybees proficiently managed by practical demonstrations, mentoring and giving talks.

One higher exam still is the National Diploma in Beekeeping. Beekeepers are eligible after the completion of the Advanced Certificates or equivalent in the British Isles. For later I think!

Pat Morgan

Invitation to all our members

All our members are welcome to join us on the 2017 course, Maybe you want a recap on swarm control or brood disease. It is also great to have our members help support the beginners in our training apiary. We will also have **Open Forum** days where association members will discuss the year so far and share information and advice.

Beginners Lecture Dates:

18th February - Brood Diseases, the Varroa Mite and Adult Bee Diseases.

18th March - Apiary Practical

1st April - Swarming and Swarm Control.

Federation Day Flyer

The Federation of Middlesex Beekeepers' Associations
Barnet and District Beekeepers' Association. Ealing and District Beekeepers' Association.
Enfield and District Beekeepers' Association. Harrow Beekeepers' Association.
North London Beekeepers' Association. Pinner and Ruislip Beekeepers' Association.

Beekeepers' Day

Hosted by Ealing and District Beekeepers' Association

Saturday 25th February 2017

10.00 am Welcome with coffee / tea on arrival.
10.30 am. Monitoring honeybee colony activity with accelerometer sensors.
Dr Martin Bencsik. Supplier of the measurement and software which is animating
The Hive Project at Kew, using honeybees from Kew.

12.00 Making a Start in Spring. Clive de Bruyn NDB

1.00 pm Lunch: Refreshments provided at a modest price.

2.15 pm Fun with Pollen Traps. Bob Smith NDB

3.45 pm Annual General Meeting of The Federation of Middlesex Beekeepers'
Associations. *All Federation members should attend. This is an opportunity to participate, and
find out what is happening, in the Federation, BBKA, and the National Honey Show.*

On site, all day
Wax exchange by Roy Cropley.
Bring rendered beeswax and receive foundation of your choice
&
Equipment for sale by Bee Basic Ltd. www.beebasic.co.uk

**Admission
£10**

**Holy Trinity
Church,
Suez Avenue,
Perivale,
Middlesex
UB6 8LN**

Transport
Tube Central Line, Perivale and
signposted from across the road
Overground (from Paddington)
South Greenford Halt.
Bus 95, 297 (from Wembley or
Ealing Broadway), E5.



Mead Making Flyer



[10% Discount - Freeman & Harding Jars - BBKA Members](#)

[BBKA Basic Assessment Syllabus - Click Here](#)

[BBKA General Husbandry Syllabus - Click Here](#)

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