



BDBKA News



www.barnetbeekeepers.org.uk

Note from Chair

Beetradex and the BBKA Spring Convention are now over and I hope some of you were able to find bargains at the trade stands at Stoneleigh and pearls of wisdom from lectures and workshops at Harper Adams University.

The season is now well underway, with the recent warm spell encouraging the bigger colonies to swarming point. We need to be vigilant from now on with regular weekly inspections and swarm prevention in progress or ready to go. I have supers on my more active colonies and have comb change done or in progress on others.

We held a nosema diagnosis day in March, attended by some members. There will be another

Diary dates

2017

29th April - The Honey Bee Chemical Factory on Pheromones.

by Sean Stephenson at
Whalebones, 2pm.

20th May - Borrowing Association Equipment.

This session will show members how to use, clean and maintain equipment borrowed from the association. If you do not attend this session we will not be able to lend equipment to you.

in the Autumn. Do take advantage of this and bring samples of bees for testing. If your colonies are slow to build they may be affected by nosema which reduces their chance of survival of the winter. More of this later in the year.

Our next Monthly Meeting will be Sean Stephenson coming to Whalebones 2pm on 29th April to talk to us about pheromones, title The Bee Chemical Factory. He is an entertaining speaker and always informative. It will be well worth a listen so please support the Association and come along. Tea and chat also available.

Anyone wishing to borrow Association equipment will have to have attended the briefing meeting in May to be sure it is used correctly and not damaged. Unfortunately, we will not be able to let out extractors etc. to you if you do not attend. Come along so that we can all continue to share the benefits of clean well treated equipment.

We are keen to make the newsletter relevant for all our members and welcome contributions from anyone. If you have something you feel would be of interest please write it up and send it in. We may need to edit for space reasons but all articles are welcome from our newest to our oldest members.

Pat Morgan

**Date TBC - Middlesex
Level 2 Food Hygiene
and Safety**

Details will be included in the next newsletter.

In the Apiary - April

Although we will have already been preparing for the season, April is when the beekeeping season really begins. The spring flowers have started to come out and we will see our bees returning with full baskets

of pollen. It is still important to continue to monitor stores as April can often bring rain and cold spells, as well our colonies will be expanding, the increasing brood nest will place further demands on stores.

The first thing is to make sure the queen is present and laying and the brood nest is expanding in a good pattern. If you see foragers returning with pollen it is a sign that the colony is ok. As soon as the temperature is at 14°C we can start to carry out our inspections.

At this stage if you find your colony has not survived the winter try to establish the cause, and close up to prevent robbing. Signs of starvation is usually obvious with lack of stores and bees head down in cells. If stores are present it is possible the bees have become isolated from the stores when in cluster during the coldest periods. If there is no brood present it could mean the queen has died over winter and if only drone cells are present this suggests the queen has turned into a drone laying queen.

It is important to do a full disease inspection as soon as possible. Check for faecal staining on combs or around the entrance which may be a sign of nosema. Nosema may be present without faecal staining so be sure to look out for Nosema testing days. Check the adult bees for deformed wing virus and do a varroa count.

April is also the start of swarming season. I have half a side of a frame of drone brood in total throughout my colony and in my last inspection I observed eggs in polished play cup. With the warm weather we have been experiencing - don't get caught out.... make sure you have your equipment ready. Also check out the 'Swarm Control' article by Steve Leveridge in the last newsletter.

Also our colonies need space to increase colony numbers. I have added a super of undrawn foundation, it was completely drawn out within a week and nectar is now being stored.

Adam Armstrong

News From Our Apiaries - April Forage

Shenley - A bit of blackthorn, hawthorn (though this is notoriously difficult to get to yield nectar), sycamore, apple, crab apple, pear, plum, single and wild cherry or sour cherry blossom, winter aconites, oilseed rape, dandelion, and all the willows are useful to the bees.

Arkley - We have blackthorn just coming out, wild cherry, prunus, mahonia, willow, dandelion and crocus. Still the odd clump of snowdrops but not for much longer.

Willows - Oil seed rape, blackthorn*, dandelion, coltsfoot, cherry-plum, gorse, goats willow, weeping

willow, silver birch, hawkbite, lesser celandine.

*Note: hawthorn flowers after the leaves appear, blackthorn flowers before the leaves appear.

Cat Hill - Willow, forsythia, crocus, plum and cherry blossom, hazel and hawthorn.

Mill Hill - Willow, forsythia, crocus, cherry blossom.

Note from the Membership Secretary to all those with hives on Association apiaries.

Invoices for hive stands (£5 per stand) are on their way. Please pay as soon as possible. Also, if you have not already sent back a signed copy of the revised Apiary Protocol, please do so. You will find a copy attached to your hive stand invoice.

A copy can be sent on request to our membership secretary: mary2block@aol.com.

Mary Block

Honey Regulations

Honey regulations make a pretty deadly conversation killer, even amongst beekeepers. Yet as we prepare to super up, harvest and possibly sell our 2017 crop it's important to be aware of the minimum requirements to keep on the right side of the law, and not bring ourselves or our association into disrepute.

Unfortunately, regular updates to regulations mean this particular task is, like many in beekeeping, never done. The most recent changes, in December 2015, were reviewed in BBKA News No 222, December 2015, which this article draws from. It aims to give a practical interpretation of current regulation for the hobbyist beekeeper, but is no substitute for reading the legislation in full.

There are three main areas to watch out for as you extract and sell honey: its composition, its hygienic extraction, and its packaging and labelling for sale.

1. Composition of honey:

None of these should be an issue if you are extracting your own, capped honey, having followed common sense rules for avoiding the contamination of your supers by artificial feed or treatments:

- Moisture content not to exceed 20%, or 23% for heather honey.
- Combined fructose and glucose content not less than 60g/100g.
- Sucrose content not more than 5g/100g.

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- Water insoluble content not more than 5g/100g.
 - All except Bakers Honey not to have foreign tastes or odours, have begun to ferment or have fermented.

The next requirements are more likely to be broken, through the excessive heating of the honey crop:

- Diastase activity not less than 8: Diastase refers to honey enzymes, which are denatured by over-heating. If warming up honey, keep the temperature below 35° C and cool quickly when the job is done.
- For pasteurisation, keep at 63° C for 30 minutes.
- HMF content not more than 40mg/kg: HMF are a chemical product of the dehydration of sugars, and therefore levels increase after heating.

2. Hygienic extraction

Hygiene requirements are designed to minimise the contamination of honey during extraction:

- Walls, floors etc. to be washable and non-absorbent.
- Work surfaces to be stainless steel or food grade: Suitable materials are those that are smooth, washable, corrosion-resistant and non-toxic. A wooden surface may not be appropriate and should ideally be covered with food-grade plastic film.
- All other equipment to be stainless steel or food grade plastic (as indicated by a fork sign stamp).
- Separate sinks for washing hands and washing equipment.
- Room to be insect proof, but effectively ventilated.
- Enclosed storage for cleaning materials.
- Two doors to separate off toilet facilities and hand washing.
- No smoking, and wear clean overall and hair nets.

Hygiene should always be a concern in the apiary as well as the extraction room, keeping equipment clean and avoiding contact between frames and the ground by using a frame holder or upturned roof.

3. Requirement for Sale

3.1. Reserved descriptions:

The 2003 FSA Honey Regulation Guidance Notes (see reference below) list a number of "Reserved descriptions" of honey products:

- Blossom honey: is under most circumstances the most straightforward description to give your honey.
- Honeydew honey: made not from plant nectars but from the excretions of certain plant sucking insects (Hemiptera).
- Drained honey: obtained by draining de capped broodless comb.
- Extracted honey: obtained by centrifuging de-capped broodless comb.

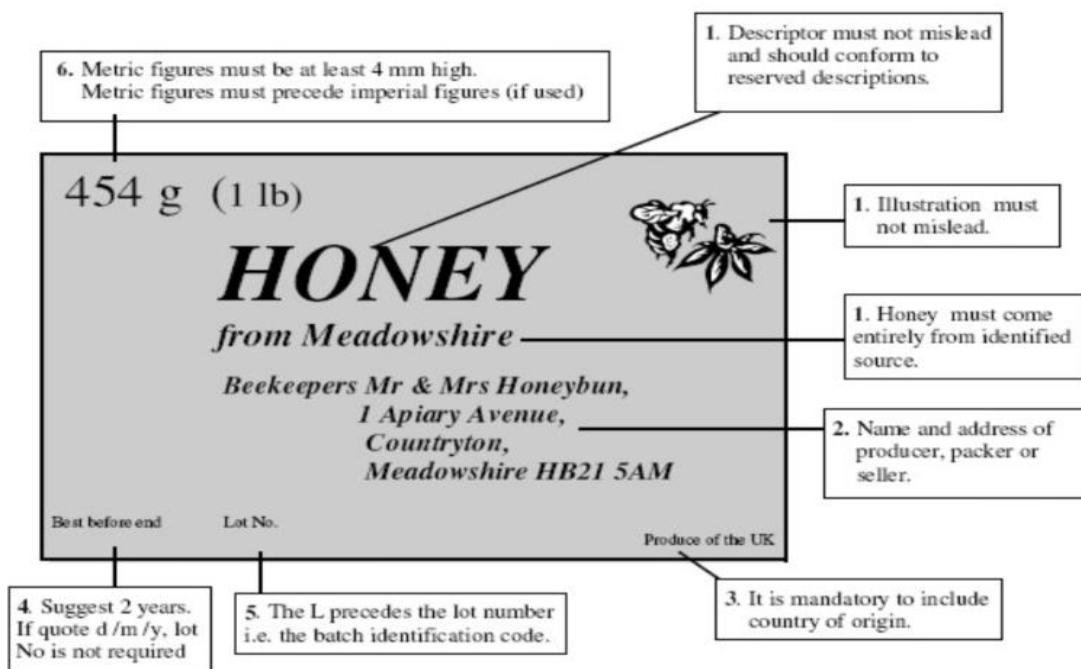
- Pressed honey: obtained by pressing broodless comb with or without the application of heat less than 45°C.
- Filtered honey: significant removal of pollen.
- Bakers' honey: suitable for industrial use or as an ingredient in other foodstuff.
- Comb honey: sold in sealed sections of cells of freshly built broodless comb.
- Chunk honey / cut comb in honey: contains one or more pieces of comb honey.

The last two must be labelled as such: i.e. when selling Blossom Honey on the comb you may not brand it "Honey" but must brand it "Comb Honey".

Adding ingredients: the terms "Honey with Cherries" or "Honey with X" are acceptable if you are selling your honey with added ingredients.

3.2. Labelling:

Labelling requirements are best covered by this excellent sample from the [Mid Bucks Module 2 Study Notes](#).



Direct sale, i.e. direct by yourself to the customer or from your own premises, is exempted from origin labelling under the 2003 FSA Honey Regulation Guidance Notes.

Though we are not required to do so by law, an additional warning that "honey should not be given to infants under the age of 12 months" is good practice.

3.3. Packaging

Packaging honey is subject to statutory regulations regarding Weights and Measures, and the materials in contact with food. A useful summary of those can be found on [food safety](#).

You may, for instance, re-use clean (in the dishwasher at a temperature of 65 degrees C), un-chipped glass honey jars but must purchase new lids for them.

Lucie Chaumeton

Swarm Collecting - Some Tips from the BDBKA Swarm Officer.

Upon approaching a swarm the first action is to check whether there are any individual bees twitching or, as I call, it “arse wagging”. This normally means that a new location has been identified and that they are shortly about to break cluster and take off. In order to prevent this, a leaf spray should be lightly applied or, if not available, sprinkle with water from any source and this will stop them.

- Spread your sheet under the swarm placing a stone on each corner. (If the swarm is on a wall place the box as close as possible and run the swarm in before placing the box on your sheet.)
Note: Never force the swarm into the box as that can cause them to abscond.
- Isolate the swarm from any other twigs or leaves that may prevent it from dropping into your box. Be sure, if in a garden, to get the owner’s consent first.
- If in a public place make sure you have red and white tape to isolate the swarm from the public.
- Ensure you have a suitable stone or other object handy to place under the edge of the box once the swarm is in it.
- Place the box (be sure that the box you choose has no smell) under the swarm and shake the swarm into the box, with one shake if possible, and cover immediately.
- If up a tree still cover and get down as soon as possible, invert the box and place your stone under the edge and the bees will cluster inside the up-turned box. It always helps if you can jam a piece of drawn comb into the centre of the box. A high swarm indicates a young queen.
- Other bees will collect at the entrance, fanning with their tails up and scent gland visible. This will attract flying bees and returning foragers.
- Ensure that a piece of waterproof covering is placed over the box in order to prevent saturation and place a large stone on top of the box.

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- It may help the collection process if the twigs or leaf which is attracting a quantity of bees and on which the Queen has left her scent, is snipped and laid in front of the box.
 - The box must now be left until completely dark and flying has stopped, in accordance with Association rules. It is not only unethical to leave bees behind but it can also cause problems with the public.
 - If the box is left in a public place leave a notice advising that the box will be collected after dark, together with your mobile number.
 - Upon returning remove the stones and cover the box over with the sheet. Wrap in a second sheet if necessary, put in the car and drive slowly to Hyver Hall with the window open to avoid overheating.
 - It is advisable to display a notice on the back of the car BEES ON BOARD in case of an accident.
 - Once at Hyver place in position on a stand provided, partially unwrap and place grass over entrance (but not too much).
 - The following morning run the bees into your nuc box (ensure that a fox or cat has not sprayed on it).
 - It will always help to prevent absconding if you include at least one frame of drawn comb, placed in the centre.
 - The nuc box should lean slightly forward and should have been flamed before use and allowed to rest for at least 24 hours.
 - Do not feed for at least 3 days or the bees may abscond. Using what they are carrying to produce wax may help to void them of any disease they may be carrying.
 - Don't forget to leave a note under the roof with your name, phone number, location of swarm and date.
 - Advise me by phone or email.
 - Hyver and the isolation Apiary Protocol does not apply for a swarm from your own or a member's hive.
 - In accordance with Association Rules, with which you have agreed to comply, the nuc must remain in isolation for six weeks (two brood cycles).
 - You are then responsible for arranging for the BDBKA Disease Officer (Pat Morgan) to inspect your nuc before it can be removed.

Clive Cohen, BDBKA Swarm Officer

Tel: 07973 825165

Email: Clive.conservation@uwclub.net

Clive Cohen

Hive Tools, Smokers, Apiarist Suits and Gloves

Our members with colonies will know that beekeeping is not a cheap hobby so it's beneficial to make the most of winter sales by beekeeping equipment suppliers. We will keep you updated with any offers or sales.

The basic equipment for the beginners course:

Hive tool- I decided to get a Claw type Hive Tool when I started beekeeping in 2014. I had used other Hive tools when manipulating hives in the beginners apiary but not this type. I decided to purchase this type of tool thinking it would give me more options when manipulating hives. Every beekeeper will have their own preferences to which tool best suits their needs. I have to admit that I did damage my apiary suit pocket when the claw got caught on the seatbelt getting out of the car, it was just the seam so had it stitched up.

Cost:

£5 - £15

Smoker- A smoker is a very important piece of equipment, the bees react to the smoke by moving down the frames to gorge on honey, helping to clear bees from lugs of frames when trying to inspect your colonies. It also great to clear bees when trying to place back heavy supers back on to your colonies without crushing bees.

Cost:

£35 - £50

Bee suit- There are many bee suits available online but the cheap ones do not hold up very well, especially when it comes to putting in the washing machine, usually it is the zips that break. I have two Bee suits from BJ Sherriff, they produce good quality suits and its a supplier I would recommend. Other beekeepers get their suits from BB Wear who are also known for being good quality. I know that BJ Sherriff offer a repair service for a fee for their suits.

My first suit was brought for the beginners course and was full body which is a sensible choice for extra protection against stings. The suit is also bright orange and not so discreet, I could be mistaken for an escaped convict.

The second was a Khaki Bee Jacket, a lot more discreet which is perhaps more sensible not to draw too much attention. It is a bit more convenient when conducting a quick inspection but I always feel a bit vulnerable when lifting supers because the jacket tends to lift at the back. I would recommend the full suit to any beekeepers just starting out.

Both BB Wear and BJ Sherriff provide free gloves but you have to ask for these as your order. Personally I prefer to use marigolds rather than the free gloves which are very thick so it will mean you accidentally squish bees and they are very difficult to clean!

Cost:

£100 - £115 for a Jacket

£120 - £140 for a full suit

The suits are expensive, but both BB Wear and BJ Sherriff offer discounts. You will need to get in contact with [Pat](#) for details.

Adam Armstrong

BDI Insurance Certificate

All members should by now have received their BDI insurance certificate. It will have arrived by email from BDI eReturn - ereturn@beediseasesinsurance.co.uk and will also have included a receipt for your 2017 BDBKA membership subscription, magazine subscriptions, Beginners' Course fees, etc. A copy can be sent on request to our membership secretary: mary2block@aol.com.

Mary Block

Do You Want To Do The Basic Assessment?

With the possible development of whalebones for housing starting by next year, I am trying to give everyone the opportunity of taking the Basic at whalebones because in future years without a training apiary we do not know where the assessments are going to be held, we could need to travel to Harrow or Enfield.

The assessment consists of a low key interview to see what you know about bees and you open a hive up to show brood and drones then make a frame.

We have had a 100% pass rate over the last six years. Most allotment societies are now asking for the Basic Certificate from beekeepers to keep Bees on site. It is also a great way of re focusing your beekeeping knowledge.

The Basic examination will cost you £20, however, we do give you a book token if you pass and we support you with a revision meeting or two, we can also arrange a one to one tuition if you think you need it... though you might have to buy me a pint!

If you are interested in taking the Basic Assessment, please email me at ateducation@barnetbeekeepers.org.uk

Geoff Hood

Helping Honey Bees and London Pollinators

You don't have to keep bees to help bees. The best way everyone can help is by making gardens and community spaces more bee friendly. Click the link to see how.

[Helping Honey Bees PDF Link](#)

BBKA Membership Discounts

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

Learning

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

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