



**THE LEEDS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
BRANCH OF THE YBKA
AFFILIATED WITH THE BBKA**



“The Leeds Beekeeper”

INDEX

Back to School.....2

Cover Them Bees.....3

Bee Count.....3

Dahn T’Apiary.....4

Bee McBeeface.....4

National Honey Show.....4

Chimney Bees.....5

Gardener’s World.....6

Weeds?.....6

Bee ANPR?.....7

Swarm Phone Rings.....7

Ask the Beekeeper.....8

Forthcoming Events.....9

Click on an index entry to jump straight to an article.

Well it happened.... In fact I probably jinxed it in the last issue; we have had an abdication. Boadicea has annoyingly departed to pastures new and Queen Camilla has taken her place (there will be no online polls for queen naming here). It was my own fault; a wedding and the pesky weather meant it was 2 weeks between inspections..... and I think you can guess the rest....

CHAIRMAN’S NOTES

I am very happy to let you know that our Apiary Manager, Gemma Armstrong, (who is excused duties at present!) is now celebrating the arrival of her new baby boy, born on the 27th June. He weighed in at 7lb 10oz and will be called Atticus Olyphant Alan Wai Armstrong; I wish him luck with learning to spell that later on. Gemma says "He's a little noisy bundle of joy and we are all very happy. They really aren't joking when they say you get no sleep!" I'm sure you'll all join me in congratulating Gemma and her husband Bernie on their new arrival.

Whilst Gemma has been absent, though, the Spring course has continued down at the Apiary, and was brought to its conclusion on Wednesday last week, with a talk from Duncan, pointing the way forward for new beekeepers. I hope those of you on the course have enjoyed it, and we'll be hoping to see you all down at the apiary over the coming weeks, months and even years. Don't forget, your course fee includes membership of LBKA to the end of this year.

Another thing that'll soon be coming to an end is the swarming season. It's been an odd one this year, with so much rain around; no doubt delaying a lot of swarms from getting out. The 'experts' have had various comments - some say there will be far fewer, whilst others say the swarming season will just be delayed and may go on until the end of July this year. We'll see. All are



Dandelion Ahead!

agreed, however, that there have been a great many bumblebees!

In the meantime the honey/wax liquifier mentioned in the last newsletter, has arrived from Germany. A few people have tried it out already and are singing its praises, so if you'd like to use it, please speak to David Haigh or Mike Utting.

Which brings me on to the fact that although we are secure in our current location down at the apiary, we are definitely going to need to move our extraction room elsewhere, as the Temple Newsam Home Farm is due for an extensive make-over. We are **actively/urgently** seeking an alternative site for it, so if you have any ideas, please speak to someone on the committee, who will be able to tell you exactly what we need.

Happy beekeeping, and hoping for a productive July and August for our bees, i.e. a bit less rain!

Katey Slater

Chairman

BACK TO SCHOOL

Why on earth did I volunteer for this? Can I do an assembly at Leeds Grammar School for the juniors in the school hall? I said yes of course. So on the 27th June I trundled up to the school with beekeepers suit, laptop, and products from my own collection, and of course bees (the stars of the show).



The presentation was to be the start of an outdoor science week and I was to kick this off. The talk was about Bees, Beekeeping and the environmental issues effecting bees.

What a fantastic way to spend an hour - talking to approximately 500 children, who loved it and even some of the teachers were inspired to think about keeping bees.

Beekeepers of the future?

I left them with a question – “What can they do to promote a healthy environment for bees and pollinators?” I gave them one answer and that was to think about setting up an apiary in the school grounds. I hope to see some of the teachers on our forthcoming courses.

A big thank you to the school for the opportunity to promote bees and beekeeping and to show why bees are so important to the ecosystem.

Andy Gowdy

COVER THEM BEES

I have often heard that beekeepers are resourceful folks and after using a couple of old tea towels as cover cloths when inspecting my bees, I decided it could be improved a little bit in order to make the process easier. The plan was a simple one; to build a wooden frame which would fit on top of the box and move back and forth whilst maintaining a 'frame gap'. It also gave me an excuse to play with my router..... (enough time had passed since the original 'Kitchen Dust Affair' but that is a tale for another day)



Homemade Cover Cloth

The design is simple, two pieces of wood for the ends with a rebate cut into them, to allow them to run along the top of the brood box. Two bits of dowel then run across the middle to form the frame with a space of 3” between them to allow a frame to be easily removed. Then a bit of needle and thread work is required to attach the Velcro onto the 2 fabric squares; using Velcro allows the two cover cloths to be removed for washing.

Anyway after completing my new cover cloth ensemble I thought I would have a little nosey on Thorne's just to see if they do anything similar.... Yes it appears they do and for the princely sum of £24.49 you too could be the owner of a hive cover cloth..... well it is stainless steel! Mine on the other hand used an offcut of dowel, a piece of 2 by 1 I acquired for free, a couple of fabric offcuts from the pound a metre man (Leeds market) and a bit of velcro (the velcro isn't strictly necessary)..... infact perhaps this is the deluxe model.... So if you have a couple of hour's free one afternoon, I can happily send you the blueprints, £20 a copy?



Thorne's offering

FRIENDS OF THE EARTH BEE COUNT



Red Mason Bee © Rachael Norris

This Great British Bee Count has finished for this year with over 370, 000 sightings recorded. While the results are being analysed a selection of this year's best images are displayed on their website. Personally in my garden I have seen many more bees (excluding honeybees) than in previous years and have two bumble bee nests so hopefully when the results are announced it will be good news for our pollinators

<https://www.foe.co.uk/page/your-brilliant-bee-photos>

DAH N T'APIARY

It has not been a typical June on the weather front; cold, wet and windy seem to have been the key words on the weatherman's tongue and that has had an effect on the bee's activity. It is that time of year when swarm control is necessary and the LBKA apiary is no exception with several colonies undergoing the Pagden method.

One week saw a lesson on capturing and marking queens using a queen catcher as well as a demonstration of a "crown of thorns". Drones were used for this process and each hive used a different coloured marker as an experiment to see how drones move between hives – it will be interesting to see how these drones move between hives over the coming weeks.

BEE MCBEEFACE

The internet has a lot to answer for and despite the fiasco of naming the new polar research vessel, researchers in Sweden have not cottoned on that asking the public isn't always the best idea. They set up a poll to name the queens of their two new hives at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. Predictably Bee McBeeface came top in the poll gaining 69% of the vote, with Beyoncé taking second place.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-3647123/The-REAL-queen-Bey-Swedish-scientists-ruler-new-campus-beehive-Beyonc.html>

NATIONAL HONEY SHOW

2016 Venue: Sandown Park Racecourse

Thursday 27th, Friday 28th and Saturday 29th October 2016

Preparations are well underway for this year's show at the new venue with the usual excellent programme of lectures and workshops. You're invited to visit and submit your entries to make it the most spectacular display ever. If you can spend any time helping with the stewarding please e-mail the chief steward steward@honeyshow.co.uk



National Honey Show Schedule

The 2016 Schedule will be going to press shortly and should be mailed out to National Honey Show members at the beginning of August in good time for the Show. This year it will include a programme of events over the three days.

New class for 2016: Skep - To be made by the exhibitor using traditional materials and suitable for use. If it has been used the skep must be in a clean condition with no comb inside. All those who have attended the skep making workshops recently will have a chance to show off your new skills.

The Trade, Educational Stands and Attractions

There will be a children's table with candle rolling, a children's quiz, a (virtual) observational hive, and a skep making demonstration on the Saturday. There will be lots to see alongside the competitive display including several trade stands.

National Honey Show Membership

If you take out or renew membership over the summer, you'll not only receive your copy of this year's Schedule in the post, but it makes admission on the day a much faster process.

For further details of the event and the 2016 Show Schedule visit the website in July: www.honeyshow.co.uk

ITS NOT JUST SANTA THAT GETS STUCK IN CHIMNEYS

A lady in the Vale of Glamorgan became concerned by the number of dead bees she was finding in her living room, closer inspect revealed she had some new housemates in the chimney; bees. Fortunately the local beekeeping association were on hand with some ladders and managed to smoke the bees, and most importantly the queen, out of the chimney.

“We were there for about two hours and they said we would have to leave the box outside for all [the bees](#) to go to the queen, because it was taking so long.”

It took three and a half days in the end to remove all the bees from the property but most of the bees were able to be saved in the end.



“I will hold the ladder”

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/family-who-kept-finding-dead-8314932>

GARDENER'S WORLD

I am sure many of you will have seen Monty dealing with a swarm and harvesting some honey from his top bar hive on a recent edition of Gardener's World but for those who haven't please see link below.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07g85qx>

WEEDS KEY TO BEE'S SURVIVAL

When does a plant become a weed? Or is a weed actually just a plant in the wrong place? Scientists have suggested that gardeners should not be reaching for their trowels or applying a spot of Roundup (other weedkillers are available) when they see a dandelion emerge in their flower bed or lawn but instead they should embrace weeds for the sake of our pollinators. Bumblebee numbers have been in decline for more than a decade; indeed two species have become extinct in the UK in recent years.

A research team from the University of Edinburgh surveyed sixty large plots in Edinburgh, Bristol, Reading and our very own Leeds typically consisting of wildflower meadows and encompassing some two million flowers. Their research showed that areas containing black knapweed, common poppy, corn marigold, hawkbit and wild carrot contain more pollen and nectar and also flower earlier in the year making them ideal targets for queens of some bumblebee species.



Honeybee on a dandelion

containing black knapweed, common poppy, corn marigold, hawkbit and wild carrot contain more pollen and nectar and also flower earlier in the year making them ideal targets for queens of some bumblebee species.

“If you think of a garden or park as a restaurant for pollinators, then the flower species that are planted in it determine both what is on the menu and also when it will be open. Flowers vary enormously in the amount and type of useful food that they produce, and when it is produced.” - Damien Hicks, University of Edinburgh

Additionally buttercups and dandelions made a significant contribution to nectar and pollen early in the season making them important plant species for early spring bees. Such perennial plants can produce up to 20 times as much nectar and six times as much pollen compared to other plants, designing habitats that incorporate such plants offers an opportunity to boost the pollinator community.

[http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/homenews/14591614.Dandelions and other weeds 39 k ey 39 to bees survival/](http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/homenews/14591614.Dandelions_and_other_weeds_39_k ey_39_to_bees_survival/)

BEE ANPR?



"Got your number"

Researchers at Queen Mary University have started a project which has seen five hundred bees released in London, with several hundred to be released each week over the following month. Each bee has been fitted with its very own number plate to allow it to be identified over the coming months and this is where the general public come in. The researchers hope the public will spot the bees and photograph them entering their pictures into competitions for best picture, highest number of bees spotted and most

bee-friendly garden and subsequently allowing the researchers to keep track of the bees.

"The fact that the bees have individual 'licence plates' will allow anyone interested to develop their own science project, and ask scientific questions about the behaviour of bees." - Prof Lars Chittka

However, the scientists involved hope the project will capture the public's imagination and inspire a band of citizen scientists who will develop their own science projects. They hope people will keep a look out for particular bees repeatedly visiting their gardens and follow which plants they visit, or what time they are seen in the garden, or if they prefer a particular colour flower. It will be interesting to see what conclusions the project draws.

<http://www.savelondonbees.co.uk/>

WHEN THE SWARM PHONE RINGS....

When Duncan's swarm phone calls and he asks if you'd like a challenge, beware! This was a decent swarm but high up in the tree canopy. Still the cherry picker worked just fine and it was soon caught.

Dave Barrett



No swarm is out of reach.....

ASK THE BEEKEEPER

Have you got a burning beekeeping question that you want an answer to? Then please send it to editor@leedsbeekeeper.org.uk and we will do our best to find you an answer!

My colony had one brood box and was looking quite crowded in terms of spare space for the queen to lay so I have added a second brood box about 3 weeks ago and the bees have just completely ignored it - not made any attempt to even draw out the comb. Should I be concerned?

It's strange but bees do sometimes shun new boxes fitted with foundation. I've added a super like this directly on top of a Queen excluder and they've walked through my lovely new box to get to the used one above it.

It takes young bees to create wax. Perhaps they don't have enough - unlikely at this time of year.

One tip is to put a comb of honey- open cells if possible- from your existing brood box into the new box (brood box in this case but equally useful tip in new supers) as this usually gets them going.

I've never done it , but I'm betting that a frame of open brood placed in your new box, (directly over the heart of the bottom brood nest) would work as well . A possible downside of moving brood in this way is that if it turns cold at night the bees could neglect it.

Another thought. Is your new foundation fresh? If it's a bit stale it's not as attractive to bees. The simple remedy is to play a hairdryer over both sides of each comb. If stale , you can see it " brighten up" and change from dull to bright before your eyes.

But to answer your question - I wouldn't be too concerned. They'll use it when they're good and ready!

Answer provided by Dave Barrett

Many of you will have seen the email from the national bee unit regarding colony starvation, so don't forget to heft your hives and make sure there is sufficient food.

Dead bees don't make honey.....

12OZ HEXAGONAL JARS

Hopefully your bees have been busy and you now have lots of honey and not enough jars to put it in.... fear not LBKA have the answer! 12oz (340 g) hexagonal jars with lids are available in the shop at a bargain price of 23p each, they come loose so you can buy as many as you require. Please bring a cardboard box to carry them home in. If you require a large quantity, please email Duncan thebeeman@hotmail.co.uk or ring him on 0785 530 8143

Got an article for the next edition? Please email to editor@leedsbeekeeper.org.uk by 31st July

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

July

Saturday 9th - Apiary Day – 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon

Tuesday 12th – Thursday 14th – Great Yorkshire Show

Wednesday 13th – Heather Masterclass

August

Saturday 13th - Apiary Day – 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon