



### Index:

Welcome	1
Upcoming Events	2
News Items	2
Apiary Day Report – February	3
March Madness	3
Bee Diseases – Acarine	4
March Recipe – Apricot Date & Guinness Slice	6
Book Review	7
APPENDIX 1 – BEE DISEASES INSURANCE	8

The queen marking colour for this year is RED

The yearly sequence is –

Blue White Yellow Red Green

The mnemonic for remembering is -

Be Warned You Require Gloves



### WELCOME

Has Spring finally Sprung? I do hope so – as I sit here putting this newsletter together, it certainly feels like it – it's the first warm day we've had for what seems like years, the sun is shining, and I can see my bees flying from where I sit. I have read Dave Barrett's March Madness article, below, and feel confident that my bees are doing what they should be doing at this time of year. Let's hope this year we'll have a little less rain, and a little more honey!

### UPCOMING EVENTS

- March 2<sup>nd</sup> – Apiary Day, Temple Newsam
- March 6<sup>th</sup> – Winter Course Session
- March 12<sup>th</sup> – LBKA Committee Meeting
- March 27<sup>th</sup> – Urban Pollinators Project - Dr. Mark Goddard, Leeds University
- April 6<sup>th</sup> – Apiary Day, Temple Newsam
- April 12-14<sup>th</sup> – BBKA Spring Conference
- April 17<sup>th</sup> – YBKA Spring Conference at York
- April 20<sup>th</sup> – Catching and Hiving a Swarm/Spring & Winter Course

### NEWS ITEMS

#### 1. Bee Diseases Insurance

Please see Appendix A for full details about this important new Insurance for beekeepers. If you have more than three colonies you may want to consider increasing your insurance. If so, bear in mind that to be properly covered you should always over-insure, rather than under-insure.

#### 2. Yorkshire Beekeepers Association General Purposes Committee

The YBKA GPC would like all members to input to the review of the YBKA constitution. This link is to a background note, which provides information for members and details of how they can comment on the draft document. [http://www.leedsbeekeepers.org.uk/files/YBKA\\_Constitution\\_Review\\_Introduction.pdf](http://www.leedsbeekeepers.org.uk/files/YBKA_Constitution_Review_Introduction.pdf)

### **3. Thwaite Mill Events - 2013**

LBKA have been invited to participate in the following events at Thwaite Mill in South Leeds. As in previous years this is an opportunity to sell honey and hive products by setting up a stall. All events start at 11.00 a.m., with set up one hour before. If you are interested in participating in this event, please let the Newsletter Editor know – details at the bottom.

Spring Festival Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March  
Leeds waterfront Festival Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June  
Hedgerow Festival Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> October.

### **4. Free Download for Beekeepers**

Many thanks to LBKA member, Andrew Lane, for this link – which will be helpful to many of us.  
<https://ia601508.us.archive.org/31/items/AtTheHiveEntrance/AtTheHiveEntrance.pdf>

### **5. Winter Talk 27<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

The Winter Talk on **Varroa Research re Virus Transmission** was given by Dr. Stephen Martin from Sheffield University. Dr. Martin has studied this subject extensively in various parts of the world and the talk was very informative, giving up-to-the-moment thinking on this subject. Links to the papers and supplementary material referred to by Dr Martin can be found on these links:

Global Honey Bee Viral Landscape Altered by a Parasitic Mite - Science 201206  
[http://www.leedsbeekeepers.org.uk/shorturl\\_1](http://www.leedsbeekeepers.org.uk/shorturl_1)

Global Honey Bee Viral Landscape etc - Science Supplementary  
[http://www.leedsbeekeepers.org.uk/shorturl\\_2](http://www.leedsbeekeepers.org.uk/shorturl_2)

Deformed wing virus - The main suspect in unexplained honeybee deaths worldwide  
[http://www.leedsbeekeepers.org.uk/shorturl\\_3](http://www.leedsbeekeepers.org.uk/shorturl_3)

### **6. Write to your Member of Parliament**

Many of us are rightly concerned about the affect of pesticides on honeybees. Recently, our Chairman, Dave, wrote to his MP about this, and he has kindly shared the letter with us. If you feel that you also want to raise this issue, the text of this letter can easily be adapted.

*“Dear Mr Shelbrook*

*Powerful pesticides are being blamed for killing our bees. Now the European Food Safety Authority has just described one of the neonicotinoid pesticides as an ‘unacceptable’ danger to bees.*

*I look with envy at our European beekeeping colleagues whose Governments banned these insecticides some years ago.*

*These chemicals work systemically. They are applied to the seed dressing prior to sowing. They migrate up the stem and into both flowers and leaves. Clearly they cause damage to honeybees when they work the flowers of these treated plants. What’s worse though is that they exude the insecticides from the leaves too. If a honeybee drinks dew or rain from these leaves they are poisoned and die within a few minutes.*

*Our honeybees are having a really hard time in recent years. The climate has been awful for them in the last decade. Hedgerows and field margins have been disappearing. Honeybees are being killed by the Varroa mite - and now this. This though could be addressed and stopped, as in the rest of Europe, were the Government to act and legislate.*

*If you would like further information please take a look at this link:*

[http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/130116.htm?utm\\_source=homepage&utm\\_medium=infocus&utm\\_campaign=be\\_ehealth](http://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/130116.htm?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=infocus&utm_campaign=be_ehealth)

*Why are the UK government refusing to act and ban these pesticides? Will you please write to and lobby the Secretary of State and demand that the government review their decision and take steps to protect our dying bees?*

*Please will you do all within your powers to persuade our Government to act as a matter of urgency?*

*Thank you  
David Barrett  
Master Beekeeper”*

## **7. EU proposes neonicotinoid pesticide ban**

The European Commission has proposed suspending the use of three neonicotinoid pesticides on any agricultural crops that attract bees, populations of which have steadily declined in recent decades. Further information about this at

<http://www.rsc.org/chemistryworld/2013/02/neonicotinoid-pesticides-eu-ban-bees>

## **8. Headingley Honey?**

We have had a request from a local man, wishing to buy locally produced honey in Headingley – or as near as possible. If anyone has honey for sale, please let the editor know and she will pass on your details.

## **9. Bill's Black Bees**

In the latest entry in Bill's Black bee diary there is anecdotal information about honeybees being affected by audio tones. You are invited to read the entry and tell 'Bill's Black Bees' if you have any experience of bees 'Freezing' in response to a certain frequency. Maybe you have the technical ability to generate audio tones and see the effect on the bees. Bill would love to hear from you on the website. Click on the link to see the diary entry.

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

## **10. Giant Bees invade Downing Street!**

Giant bees appeared at Prime Minister David Cameron's office at #10 Downing Street this morning to sting the government into delivering a Bee Action Plan, as part of Friends of the Earth's Bee Cause campaign.

<http://ens-newswire.com/2013/01/29/giant-bees-buzz-british-prime-ministers-office/>

## **11. Are Honeybees Losing Their Way?**

A combo of pesticides takes a toll on their memory and communication skills

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/13/130213-honeybee-pesticide-insect-behavior-science/>

## **12. Irresponsible Beekeeping?**

3 million bees seized from a new york home (in august 2012)

<http://usnews.nbcnews.com/news/2012/08/23/13435771-3-million-bees-seized-from-queens-ny-mans-home?lite>

## **13. Amazing Blue Bees**

<http://www.thefeaturedcreature.com/2013/01/yellow-and-black-bees-are-out-blue-banded-bees-are-so-in.html>

I did think it was photo-shopped but nope – there is even a Wikipedia entry on it.

## **14. Butterflies and Bees in the Indian Himalayas – Volunteer with Earthwatch.**

Is this an opportunity not to be missed – if you are footloose land fancy free, and you fancy a trip to the Himalayas.

“India's Kullu Valley in the Himalayas is famous for its apple orchards and farms. As climate change affects the region, however, flowering plants once plentiful in the region are becoming scarce due to biodiversity loss. The number of pollinators such as bees and butterflies is declining. The result: crops are suffering and farmers must .....” Check out this link.

<http://www.bee-craft.com/butterflies-and-bees-in-the-indian-himalayas-volunteer-with-earthwatch/>

## **15. Ogun (Nigeria)**

Ogun in Nigeria is starting apiculture parks, to employ 500 for honey production.

<http://www.businessdayonline.com/NG/index.php/markets/agribusiness/50562-ogun-starts-apiculture-parks-to-employ-500-for-honey-production->

## **16. Canadian bees in winter.**

LASI Research Scientist Norman Carreck has just returned from a visit to the Beaverlodge Experimental Farm, Alberta, Canada. Read about it as <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/lasi/newsandevents/index?id=17747>

## **APIARY DAY – 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2013**

*The first Saturday of February 2013 was cool but sunny and little wind. No rain. Thank goodness. The shop was opened by David H and the kettles were already on when I arrived thanks to the three little Barrett ladies who I might add provided an excellent coffee/tea conveyor belt service all morning to any one who might have felt a little thirsty.*

*Lots of folk turned up and it was nice to see everyone. Mark and I trimmed the hedges - surprisingly quick and done for another year. Brian, Paul, Keith and Derek shifted lots of leaves. Well that's done until the wind blows them back but for now, the paths are a little clearer. It was a job well done. Lots of people helped move bark chippings in to the apiary. The observation hive hut also had some chippings put down and looks better for it.*

*David H and Duncan and Sue staffed the shop. Sue can multi task and also washed pots. Steve had made a small metal thing to hook on to the gate chain to make it easier to hook up, however version 1 wasn't quite long enough and needs tweaking. Steve is on with this. Jane did lots of treasurer type things. The shop did a brisk trade; selling fondant and sugar. David H checked the hives for food and fitted a new yale lock to the hut door.*

*I turned off the gas and water supply at the end of the morning, its better that way.*

*Chris Barlow - Apiary Manager*

## **MARCH MADNESS – Musings on the Start of the Beekeeping Season.**

Oh how times change. March Madness! Pre-retirement it was the phrase used to spend your budgets. Carry over from one financial year to the next wasn't allowed so "spend it or lose it" was the cry!! Nowadays this phrase has morphed into a quite different term; a beekeeping one, but one just as daft!

That's because beekeepers are twitching to get started. Have a peek. Make sure that the bees are still alive, check food levels, etc. etc. Any excuse to get started. I know, because I too am tempted but, usually, I resist. That's because having a look, removing the roof and crown board does so much damage to their carefully controlled world. Controlled in terms of not only temperature, but also humidity. That's before considering the "upset" to the bees as they start preparations to defend their colony from attack. You may well be quick, but bees will have exposed the sting and drawn down some venom, whose scent and pheromones will be circulating for a considerable time after you've closed down the hive. Of course, this happens whenever you conduct inspections, but by then the weather is warmer and the colony is stronger / better able to recover.

Let me at this stage digress slightly. A couple of years ago, scientists discovered "heater bees". These are volunteer bees, who go into carefully selected empty cells dotted around the brood nest. They enter, head first, and flex their muscles to deliberately raise their body temperature. This, in effect, then centrally heats the brood - on both sides of the frame. They can't keep this up for long, as they'd die from overheating. So they come out to allow another to take over. So much work - such precision. Then we open them up to inspect!

So I'd urge you to leave the bees alone for now. But when CAN you look in I hear you ask? Well the old adage was that when the flowering currant was in flower and you could go about in shirtsleeves, then it was time to conduct the first inspection. That's probably into April. And what's the purpose of the first inspection? Well we are going to run a practical session in the apiary in April. Keith Dobson has volunteered to run the session.

This will take the form of a talk about what to look for, the purpose of the inspection, etc., followed by a practical demo on the Temple Newsam colonies. Details elsewhere in newsletter.

So what can you be doing now? Well perhaps start with some external hive inspections. This is a much under-used technique which can be used throughout the season. But in March it can tell you about what's going on inside the hive without you having to have a look. On a warm day when the bees are flying, look at the incoming bees. Many will be simply orienting themselves to the hive entrance, going on cleansing flights or collecting water to dilute honey for eating. The really joyous thing you can see though, is ingoing pollen. That's what I go out specifically to see. I watch each hive in turn until I see pollen on their legs. This is a certain sign that all is well in the hive. It tells you that there IS a queen and she's busy laying eggs. Fresh pollen has more nutritional value than stored pollen and the bees seem to recognise this. They go out enthusiastically to gather fresh pollen (from catkins or dandelion etc.) to feed the developing brood. And that's the best sign that you could wish to see. Of course if you don't see ingoing pollen things might still be ok, but make a note to pay particular attention to this colony on first inspection. Equally if other colonies are flying, but not this one, then a quick peek is called for as it's likely that this colony is dead. If that is the case, seal it up to prevent robbing (just in case it died of a transmittable disease). To sterilise any dead hives you can treat it with a pad containing 80% acetic acid.

Other jobs?

- Warm them up. Reduce the entrances and place the floor inserts on mesh floors. If you can "kid them on" that it's getting warmer then the queen increases her rate of egg laying. These will emerge in three weeks and be old enough to forage in six weeks. Ideally you'd have done this in February if you want stronger colonies for the Rape crop, but better late than never.
- I suppose that I should be advising you to heft your hives to ensure that they have enough food. It's not something I do. Ever. I ensure that they have 40 to 45lb of stores in September and leave them to get on with things. That's always been enough. And if they've eaten it all, then perhaps I don't want those sort of bees in my apiary and am not sorry if they die out? But, even if they do die out, it's never because of starvation.
- Repairs of hives and hive parts
- Have you enough equipment to do your artificial swarms this year? If not then buy and make up spares.
- Make up frames ready to take foundation for replacements / swarms

But perhaps all this activity would really be " March madness" as April onwards is always extremely busy - so you could just rest up instead??

Dave Barrett - Chairman

## **BEE DISEASES – ACARINE**

Strictly this isn't a disease but yet another mite that attacks honeybees.

### What Is It?

This is the Acarine mite (*Acarapis woodi* Rennie). It's another mite that drinks the blood of the bee but, unlike Varroa, it only attacks adult bees. The mite enters the spiracles and trachea (the bees breathing tubes of the bee- three on either side of the thorax) and then bites through the cell walls to access the blood. The spiracles are protected from the atmosphere by rows of stiff hairs. I guess that these act as a filter to prevent dust and other debris being breathed in. Mites though, can only get past these hairs on newly emerged bees. That's because, whilst the hairs are there and in place, they are still soft and haven't hardened up into the stiff bristles that are evident on older (more than 6 days old) bees. Mites detect the entrances to the trachea by the inhalation and exhalation of air, as the bee breathes.

Having gained access, it then lays its eggs. These emerge as young mites (nymphs) and go through a series of moults before reaching adulthood as mature males or females. Both nymphs and adult mites feed on the blood of their host. Queens drones and workers can all be affected.

### How Do I Know If My Bees Are Infected?

Most colonies will be affected by this mite to a greater or lesser extent. It only becomes evident to the beekeeper when there is a heavy infestation. When that is the case you will notice infected workers in front of the hive, often in large numbers, either crawling about with fluttering wings in front of the hive or clinging to the tops of stems of plants. Their abdomens may be distended. Their wings will appear dislocated (K wings). These bees can appear outside in large numbers on warm days. These bees simply can't fly. They don't seem to be able to get enough oxygen to generate flight.

It is spread between colonies by several means a) beekeepers swapping bees and merging colonies b) drones, which are accepted into any colony c) bees drifting from their hives to another.

The only conclusive diagnosis though is by dissection and examination of the trachea using a hand lens or low powered microscope. The picture here shows the damage done to the tracheal walls by biting – these are the dark areas. You can also see eggs (three oval shadows) and their faecal matter (also brown) and two mites themselves.



LBKA runs free diagnosis sessions from time to time in the apiary in summer. Alternatively you can ask our secretary, Cath, to get one of our growing number of microscopists to carry out an examination for you on your suspect bees.

### What Can I Do If I've Got an Infestation?

Sadly, not very much. Most colonies will live with this mite rather than die because of it. When there is a heavy infestation the bees will tend to die out during winter (and as the mite can not survive without live bees then that is the end of it in those hives). We used to have two treatments available:

- 1) Fumes from chemically impregnated cardboard Folbex Strips\* that were set smouldering inside hives in spring / autumn, and
- 2) applying liquid chemicals in Frow Mixture\* on pads during winter months.

Sadly both of these treatments have been withdrawn in the UK leaving us with no treatments at all for our bees. \*Both of these medicines were shown during my talk at the January winter meeting (from my "history" collection!). Story of our times I'm afraid. More and more mendicants are withdrawn. Alternatives are available elsewhere in the world but the cost of licencing is such that they're not made available to those of us in the UK.

Dave Barrett - Chairman

### **BOOK REVIEW - The Bad Beekeepers Club – by Bill Turnbull**

Many of us are familiar with Bill Turnbull as a cheerful face on breakfast tele as we rush around, trying to get out of the house for our daily business. Some of us will also have seen his efforts on Strictly Come Dancing!

However, seventeen years prior to writing this book, a swarm of honey bees landed in his garden – the result of which is that he is also a beekeeper of many years experience, and has written an entertaining account of his beekeeping activities in this book.

Although he calls his book "The Bad Beekeepers Club", he is being a little over-modest. I have limited experience and he seemed to me to be quite a GOOD beekeeper, although some of his exploits were a little adventurous – if not downright dangerous.

This is definitely not a beekeeping instruction book. Instead, it leads us from the writer's first visit to the local Beekeeping Association apiary, where a bee ended up inside his hood, through honey harvesting, swarm

collection, to making use of his notoriety to auction 2 jars of honey for no less than £10,000 in aid of a charity for a school in Uganda.

A good read with a lot of laughs – certainly will help newcomers to get things in perspective!

Katey Slater

## **MARCH RECIPE**

### **Apricot date and Guinness slices**

This is a lovely and moist, modern Irish take on the traditional sticky toffee pudding recipe, adding a truly Irish dimension with the addition of Guinness. The sauce is delicious with ice cream and it freezes well too.

#### **Ingredients**

##### **For the sauce**

- 75 g (2.6oz) butter
- 75 ml (2.6fl oz) Guinness
- 75 ml (2.6fl oz) double cream
- 2 tbsp runny honey

##### **For the slices**

- 150 g (5.3oz) stoned dates
- 120 g (4.2oz) dried apricots, chopped
- 150 ml (5.3fl oz)
- 120 ml (4.2fl oz) water
- 75 ml (2.6fl oz) whiskey
- 1 tsp bread soda (bicarbonate of soda)
- 175 g (6.2oz) demerara sugar
- 85 g (3oz) butter, softened
- 3 medium eggs, beaten
- 180 g (6.3oz) self-raising flour
- 100 g (3.5oz) chopped walnuts

#### **Method**

1. Preheat the oven to 200C/gas 6. Line a 21cm square brownie tin with parchment paper. Put the dates, apricots, Guinness, water, whiskey and bread soda in a saucepan. Place over a gentle heat until the dates soften and break down, stirring occasionally. This should take about 4–5 minutes. Leave to cool.
2. Using an electric mixer, cream the sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs.
3. Fold the flour, walnuts and the cooled date mixture into the egg mix and transfer to the prepared tin. Bake for 35–40 minutes, until firm to the touch. Leave to cool in the tin for 5 minutes before turning out on a cooling rack. Cut into 9 squares.
4. To make the sauce, place the butter, Guinness, cream and honey in a saucepan and simmer over a low heat until the honey has dissolved and the sauce has thickened. Serve warm drizzled over the slices.



Contributed by Sue Baskind

PLEASE SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS (ARTICLES, ANECDOTES, PHOTOS, RECIPES, ETC.) FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER TO KATEY SLATER AT EDITOR@LEEDSBEEKEEPERS.ORG.UK



## Bee Diseases Insurance Ltd

This year Leeds Beekeepers Association is including BDI insurance for all Full Members renewing for 2013.

The Association will insure 3 hives for each Full Member with the option for members to pay an additional premium to insure more than 3 hives.

If you wish to insure additional hives please complete the form below and return with your payment to the treasurer no later than 16<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

---

### **BROOD DISEASES INSURANCE FORM 2013**

NAME OF MEMBER \_\_\_\_\_

REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INSURANCE ON  NUMBER OF HIVES

I ENCLOSE A CHEQUE FOR £\_\_\_\_\_ MADE PAYABLE TO LBKA

Please return form and payment to:

LBKA Treasurer  
Jane Sargeant  
The Walled Garden  
Gateforth  
Selby  
YO8 9LJ

Please see below for tariffs for additional hives.

# Brood Diseases Insurance through BDI Ltd

Bee Disease Insurance Ltd. (BDI) is an insurance company set up and run for beekeepers by beekeepers. It promotes research, education and disease control methods for honeybee disease. It also compensates subscribing beekeepers and their bee colonies in England and Wales in respect of losses caused by statutorily notifiable honeybee diseases and pests. Currently these are American Foul Brood, European Foul Brood, Small Hive Beetle and *Tropilaelaps* mites. Scotland and Northern Ireland have a different bee health inspection service to England and Wales and different compensation schemes in operation.

The shareholders of BDI Ltd are the Member Associations. The minimum payable by each Member Association to BDI Ltd as a condition of membership is a subscription of £2 per annum for each of its beekeeping members. Partner members are each considered as a beekeeper so each is expected to pay a subscription. This subscription not only pays for BDI promotional activities but also includes insurance cover for up to three honey bee colonies. Associate Members, Junior Members and Friends are NOT insured.

Beekeepers under the age of 16 years are unable to take out insurance policies so any policy has to be arranged by a parent or guardian. Beekeeping members are obliged to pay premiums for any extra colonies they own. In respect of Partner Members they are only required to pay one premium in respect of all the extra colonies they jointly own. The additional premiums are:

Up to 5 colonies (including the basic three)	an additional £2.00
Up to 10 colonies (including the basic three)	an additional £5.25
Up to 15 colonies (including the basic three)	an additional £7.75
Up to 20 colonies (including the basic three)	an additional £9.50
Up to 25 colonies (including the basic three)	an additional £11.10
Up to 30 colonies (including the basic three)	an additional £13.60
Up to 35 colonies (including the basic three)	an additional £16.10
Up to 39 colonies (including the basic three)	an additional £18.10

For beekeepers owning 40 or more hives a different scheme, known as Scheme B, please speak to the treasurer for further details.

BDI premiums are paid in respect of the calendar year, 1st January to 31st December. Insurance cover becomes effective each year from the time that the member's association receives his or her membership subscription and additional premiums. However where such payment is made after 31st March cover will not commence until 40 days have elapsed from the payment of the subscription and any premium due. This is known as the 40-day rule.