



WAX LYRICAL

Joe's Final Rant (as Chairman)

It's now several months since the sad passing of one of our members, Mr Stan Harrison. I first met Stan at a splendid beekeeping cum tea party on a very sunny day in Bransdale. Time flies, that was more than nine years ago. Stan knew a lot about bees and was not afraid of trying out new methods and ideas, designing several new pieces of equipment. He made an effort to pass on his expertise to others within the association and became a source of bees and advice to many novice beekeepers.

Stan's family wished that after his death, the association should benefit from his beekeeping equipment. After some consultation, we held a successful



Joe prepares to auction Stan's equipment

auction which raised several hundred pounds for association funds. I received warm thanks from Stan's daughter and son-in-law over the help we were able to offer in clearing up his affairs and we are grateful to them for their generosity.

And so to the end of another beekeeping

year, this being by definition of constitution my final rant. About time too I hear. My main mantra has been to establish regular training; between myself and Keith we have achieved this, the numbers speak for themselves. I inadvertently got myself elected as a Chair of

Governors at our local school so it's more a case of 'out of the frying pan and into the fire'.

I would like the next Chairperson (as yet unknown) to continue the work that has been done in recent years with enthusiasm and fresh ideas. The strength of any organisation is its

members, you have to be able to attract new ones and retain old. I would also like every member to think of themselves as potential secretaries and chairpersons so that it's not the same people having to do all the work every year. Think bees - if lots of people all do a little bit of work.....

Finally, it's been an awesome summer and I have a mixed flower honey crop without moving my hives to the moors. Just proves, temperature is absolutely everything in honey production. Roll on winter.

Regards all

Joe

A "Swarm" of Bumblebees

Beekeepers are often asked to deal with swarms and many do so willingly. However instead of honeybees, the swarm sometimes turns out to be a bumble bee nest.

A few questions about location of the "swarm" and size of the bees will often save a journey.

Bird boxes and compost heaps are favoured locations or bumblebee nests - or at least the ones that people become aware of. In fact favoured nest location is a function of species; there are 23 known species in the UK.

Advice about bumblebee nests needs to reflect the bumblebee life cycle, summarised as follows:



Typical Bumblebee nest



**Bombus Terrestris or Lucorum
(workers nearly identical)**

- Queens hibernate and emerge in the spring
- After foraging to build up strength, she chooses a nest site and lays a few eggs
- When the eggs hatch she feeds the larvae until they pupate
- As adult bumblebees emerge, they take over the foraging and feeding and the queen concentrates on egg laying
- The colony slowly builds up until the queen stops laying sometime in the summer.

- The last larvae develop into queens and some drones are also raised at this time
- The nest breaks up, workers die and the new queens mates
- Mated queens build up their body before hibernating.

Most people do not notice a bumblebee nest until it is getting near to the point of breaking up. Therefore my approach is to explain the life cycle and try to persuade people that if they are patient, the colony will disappear in a few weeks

without harming the bees. Mostly this approach is successful.

There is some information on the web that suggests nests can be moved.

(<http://bumblebeeconservation.org/about-bees/faqs/moving-bumblebee-nests/>)

I knew someone who was interested in bumblebees and had tried moving nests. His view was that you could only do this successfully if the colony was still very small.

Practical Beekeeping for Novices

By Richard Colman

To become a knowledgeable and capable bee keeper takes more than some familiarity with the facts gleaned from a book or information over heard or given by experienced bee keepers. What the novice needs is hands on experience of opening their hives with explanations as to what is found, advice on what to do next, or what to expect might happen, and helpful criticism of one's technique and general hive management.

To this end Keith helped a small group of novice keepers pick their way through the bee keeping year by visiting each other's apiaries (if not too grand a word) throughout the Spring and Summer of 2013.

Beginning in March there were some timely emails offering advice on feeding and "cold weather problems" and a reminder of the equipment (depending on one's aspirations) that may be necessary in the upcoming months to house and maintain ones bees.



2013 Practical Beekeeping Group

Keith hosted the first meeting in April followed by approximately fortnightly meetings throughout May, June and July, some even venturing up into Bransdale where a final meeting in September dealt with uniting colonies and preparation for winter.

I am sure the group will wish to thank Keith for his time and advice; the same might be on offer next year so take advantage if you can

Report of recent meetings

NBU Sand Hutton 11 June 2013

We have on our doorstep one of the most significant institutions for bee health in the UK. 12 members of RBKA visited the National Bee Unit at Sand Hutton on a warm but overcast evening in June to see some of their work.

We were met by the Director of the NBU Mike Brown and our regional bee inspector Ivor Flatman and walked to their home apiary within the perimeter fence. It must be one of the most secure apiaries around.

The number of colonies varies from 150 to 300 depending on what research is ongoing at the time. They use a Buckfast strain of bees from Scandinavia, largely because their good temper keeps relations with other users of the site sweet.

We saw their "production line" for new queens starting with grafting into artificial cells, cell raising mating in mininucs and then into small colonies. At the time, small colonies were needed for a project under the Insect Pollinator Initiative. The colonies are placed in different locations around the country to assess the biodiversity of the environment and its ability to support pollinators.

In the laboratory, we met Professor Keith Delapane who explained his latest work to assess the importance of multiple mating to colony vitality. Some of you may have heard him speak at Malton Rugby Club last year. As part of his programme, some of the mininucs

we saw had newly emerged queens to be artificially inseminated and then clipped to ensure they did not slip out later for an illicit assignment with a drone.



Mike Brown with members of RBKA

Finally we visited the foul brood lab where combs infected with EFB AFB were on display and could see, in a safe setting, what hopefully no one will see in their own apiary. There was a lot of careful hand washing afterwards!

Oswaldkirk

May 12th 2013

There was a good gathering of members at Rhona and John Sutherland's apiary but unfortunately the weather was more like March than May and so hives could not be opened. A lively beekeeping discussion ensued indoors.

Sleightholmedale

18 August 2013

Mainly senior member of the association met at Brian Holmes' apiary on 18 August 2013.

Brian showed us his latest product, wild honeycomb, which has been on the menu at a top London restaurant and much esteemed by the late film director and restaurant critic, Michael Winner.

Some more sceptical members wondered if he had forgotten to put the frames into his supers.



Brian's wild comb

Wombleton

10 September 2013

Some 20 members met to listen to Rob Coleman from York talking about wintering of bees. Issues of feeding, hive ventilation, varroa and other pests, monitoring. Various alternative strategies were raised in the discussion that followed.

Braving the BBKA Basic Assessment

By Rhona Sutherland

Like many people who take up beekeeping I had not taken an exam for a long time, although as a teacher I have watched umpteen poor kids suffer school and national exams for many years. So why did I bother putting myself through a practical assessment such as the Bee Basic exam when this is supposed to be a Hobby? Well, just to ensure I had actually learnt what I thought I had learnt in the 3 years

since we first got bees I suppose! I am very glad I did because it really is very straightforward, and John now thinks I am an expert so that's good!

So, having done a 6 session Introductory Course run by RBKA, kept bees for a couple of years and tried to attend as many evening meetings and summer apiary visits as possible, followed by the hugely informative Better

Beekeeping sessions run by Keith, I signed up for the Basic, paid my £15, and downloaded the syllabus from the BBKA site this Spring. I was rung up by BBKA in June to agree a date and time a couple of weeks later when I would turn up at Tony Jefferson's Apiary near Staithes. He was very reassuring and great fun, so surprisingly, I really enjoyed the day out, despite the fact that it

poured with rain most of the time.

He asked a series of questions on bee biology, the reasons for various procedures in beekeeping as well as quizzing me about bee diseases. I then had to make up a frame, light the smoker and keep it alight while I opened up one of his hives. After that I talked him through what I was doing with the hive and why, while assessing what I saw. In fact, just what you do every time you inspect your own bees. So don't just think about it...do it!

The Basic Assessment is open to anyone who has managed at least one colony of bees for a minimum of 12 months. There is an entry fee of £15.

There are three parts and the Candidate must achieve the pass mark of 50% in all three parts individually in order to pass the Assessment as a whole.

- *Practical Assessment of the Candidate's ability to handle bees and beekeeping equipment and the ability to interpret what is observed.*
- *Oral questioning of the Candidate's knowledge of Equipment, the Natural History of the Honeybee and Beekeeping*
- *Oral questioning on Diseases, Pests and Poisoning.*

The length of the Assessment should not normally exceed one hour. The full syllabus can be found at: http://www.bbka.org.uk/files/library/basic_syllabus_2013_1354100470.pdf

Ryedale Show Results Honey Classes

As published in the Ryedale Gazette & Herald

Two jars of honey (light):	A Jefferson
Two jars of honey (medium):	C Smailes
Two jars of honey (dark):	C Smailes
Two jars of honey, granulated or soft set:	D Mead
Two jars of honey (heather):	C Smailes
Three jars labelled for sale:	A Jefferson
One section in wood or other attractive container of cut comb 1lb or less:	C Smailes
One comb of honey standard or shallow:	A Jefferson
Cake of beeswax:	C Smailes
A picture photograph (print) max size A4:	C Smailes

Honey Recipe

Baked Pears with Honey

Ingredients

4 pears
4 tablespoons honey
4 cardamom pods, crushed
4 cloves
Pinch of ground cinnamon
Pinch of golden caster sugar
290ml boiling water
Whipped cream to serve

Method

Prepare the pears

Peel the pear and core them leaving the stalks in place. Place a clove in each of the pears and place them in an ovenproof dish on their sides. Break up the cardamom pods and scatter them over the pears and then sprinkle over with the cinnamon.

Make the syrup

Dissolve the sugar and honey in the water in a saucepan over a low heat. Increase the heat and allow the mixture to boil for 2 minutes.

Bake the pears

Pour the syrup over the pears and place them in the oven to bake for 1 hour. Baste the pears frequently while baking and turn them at the same time.

Serve

Serve the baked pears with cream and drizzle over a little of the syrup.

Do you have a honey recipe to share? Or would you like to try.....

Drone Pudding

Ever wondered what to do with those drone larvae that you removed as part of your ICPM programme for varroa control? You can just feed them to the birds but Eat Ento (<http://www.eat-ento.co.uk>) have another answer - eat them yourself. The Times feature writer Lucy Bannerman tried them and wrote:

"Dessert could only be described as a petri dish of burnt bee larvae. This is the most challenging dish," Mr Dasan warned.

Down the hatch it went — and, to my relief, it wasn't a burster. The delicate bodies, with blackened mouthparts, had the texture of a sultana in porridge. I am unashamed to admit it was my favourite. I took another bite.



Drone larvae

The dish uses drone bee larvae, which organic beekeepers get rid of anyway, once they have matured, because they attract mites.

They're still working on the name for the dessert. "We need to find another word that means the same thing," said Ms Aguirre. "Larvae tend to put people off." They have recipes for eight species but want to develop more. "

Ryedale Beekeepers Association

Dates for your diary

October 8th 2013 7.00pm	Wombledon Village Hall	"Beekeeping and the Weather" Joe Jacobs
November 12th 2013 7.00pm	Wombledon Village Hall	Annual General Meeting

2014 meeting dates will be available later this year

Officers

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