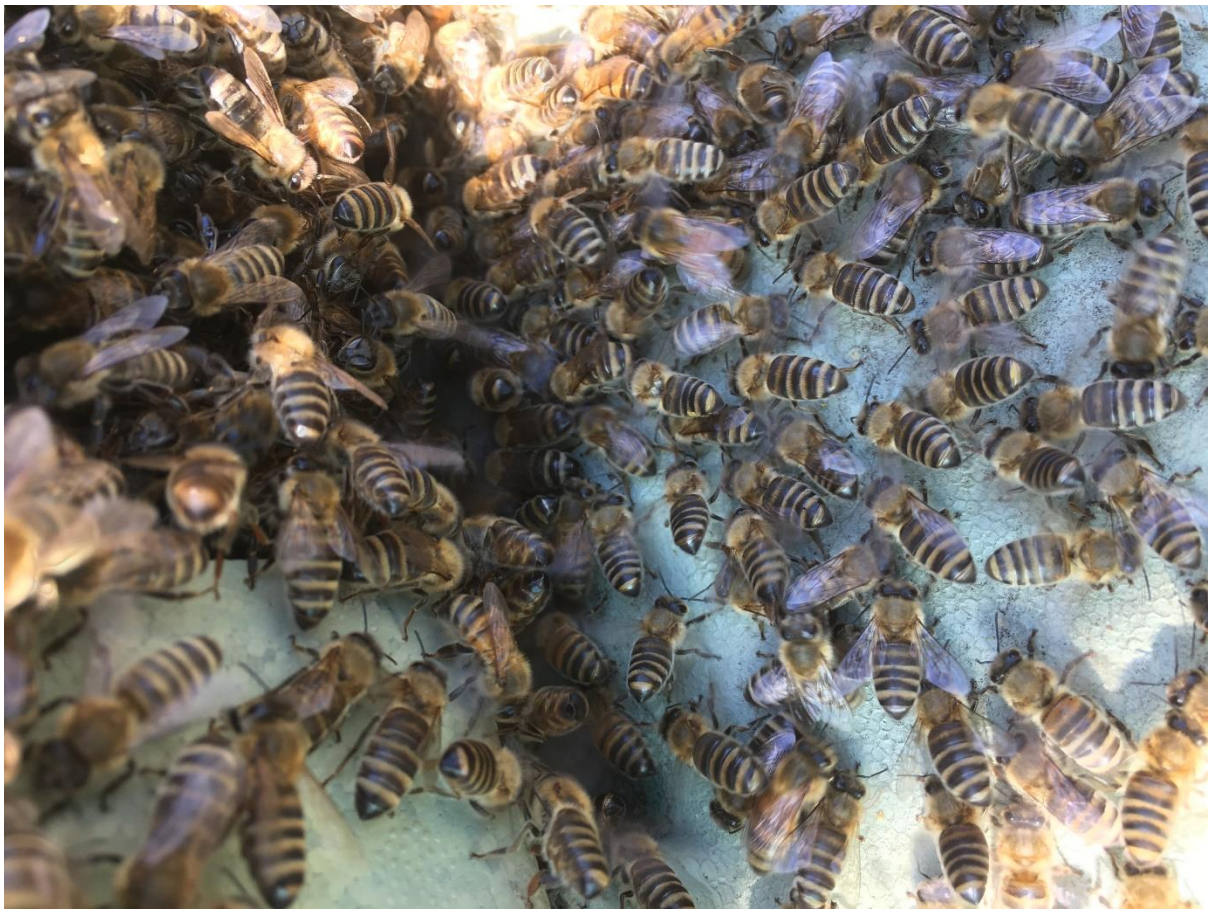
Combings

The newsletter of the York and District Beekeepers Association.

Issue No. 62

Summer 2017.



York and District Beekeepers 2016/17

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YDBKA

York & District Beekeepers Association

The password for the members area of the YDBKA website is:
beesatyork

"Combings" is the newsletter of the York & District Beekeepers Association. Views expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Association as a whole or of the editor.

Contributions to, and comments on "Combings" are always welcome. I would particularly appreciate your pictures for "Reader's Hives".

Please send any copy or comments to: Combings@gmail.com

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Combings is published quarterly.

Please note that the last date for copy for the next edition is:

18th August 2017.

Two Eds.

Another season is in full swing with lots of field bean honey being added into the rape honey this year.

It is customary to give an annual reminder about health and safety so when you are out and about your apiaries, please remember to take your mobile phone, and wherever possible let someone know where you are going, as accidents can and do happen.

On page 14 you will find some advice from Alan on how to carry out a swarm control method without finding the queen.

Thanks to Paul Appleton for the image on the front page of his bees demonstrating the use of their Nasonov glands.

Do consult the YDBKA programme as there are lots of apiary visits and social events coming up over the summer.

Proposed changed to the Constitution

Members who were not at the half-yearly meeting in April may be unaware of this matter

The YDBKA Committee would like to inform members of the work that the committee is currently undertaking regarding a review of the YDBKA charitable status and constitution.

It has come to the committee's notice that the Association's current charity status is that of an Unincorporated Charity. This effectively means that the members of the committee, who are the trustees of the charity, are ultimately personally and wholly liable not only in the event of any outstanding debts should the charity terminate but also if the insurance company should for whatever reason refuse to take on liability in the event of a claim against the association.

The members of the committee jointly agreed that they did not wish to continue being personally liable for the association.

A subcommittee has been formed to investigate changing our charitable status from an Unincorporated Charity to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This change in charitable status would mean liability is transferred from the individual trustees (the committee) to the association.

This process requires the association to register our change from an unincorporated organisation to an incorporated organisation with the Charity Commission.

To do this we need to:-

- Review our current constitution, produced in 2008, so that it is accepted by the Charity Commission. This will also give us the opportunity to considering other elements of the constitution, such as our trustees and committees periods of tenure and synchronising our financial and membership year.
- The subcommittee would report back to the full committee.
- Gain members approval for the change at a Special General Meeting.

We intend to give an initial progress report to all members at the end of May.

If any members would like to discuss this in further detail, please contact a member of the subcommittee.

Charity status and constitution subcommittee: -

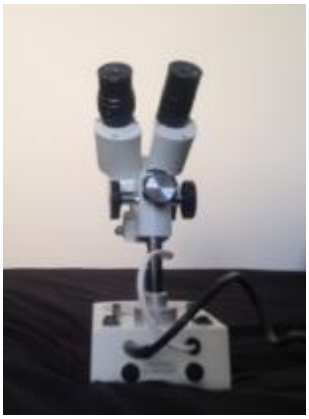
Paul Appleton (Chairman), John Thompson (Treasurer & Membership Secretary), Patricia Miller (General Secretary), Stephen Beyer (Co-opted member)

For sale

Supplied originally by Brunel Microscopes Ltd.

The model is a Winchester SP50 (the model has been restyled from the original model but the spec remains very similar)

Total cost £135 includes £10 for case (current price £355)



Dissecting Stereo Microscope produces a clear and well defined three dimensional image.

Cost £150 (current price £203.52)

Contact: Margaret E Langstaff: 01759 380546 Mob: 07733 125362 or email: mel@thebeehive.plus.com

Bees and hot tubs -a very contemporary problem solved.

Very many thanks to Chris Caller for this; not a difficulty ever faced by the Bee Masters of old!

I have been keeping bees at the bottom of my garden and on two out apiaries for seven years without any problems.

A few weeks ago, a neighbour came and informed me that my bees were visiting his hot tub. I went to investigate and sure enough, there were about 20 bees on the brown PVC cover of the hot tub.

The hot tub in question had been bought second-hand, and had green algae growing on the stitches on the seams of the cover, and the bees seemed to be feeding on the algae. I emailed YDBKA with a request for help from the members and had

several replies suggesting that the bees were short of water. I knew that this was not the case, as there are several water sources near the hives.

The first clue to solving this problem came in a reply from an email I sent to Mike Waite, "The Bee Man from Crosock", he suggested that the bees were attracted to the hot tub for salts and minerals. This set me on an online search for the answer.

There are two chemicals used for hot tub water treatments. One is chlorine based, the other, bromine based. I found out that bees are attracted to chlorine and that the concentration of salts and minerals in the vapour produced by the hot tub provides a better source of salts and minerals than a natural water source; chlorine also releases its active ingredients at lower temperature than bromine, which means that a bromine solution is more effective at killing bacteria at the temperatures that hot tubs use. So, the answer is to change the water treatment currently used to a bromine solution that the bees will not find attractive. The hot tub was emptied, all the pipe work and pump thoroughly flushed and then refilled with a bromine water treatment. A 2 x strength of the bromine solution was used this to wipe over the cover and rim of the hot tub.

Chris has since reported that this has been an effective solution for his neighbours.

Let's hear it for the boys!

For a long time now we have had problems with poor matings of new queens, which can lead to drone laying queens later on in the season. The weather is often blamed, but as many of us now use Hoffman frames, which leave so little space for drone brood, and we practice the removal of drone brood as a "no chemical" method of varroa control, these actions must surely result in fewer available drone partners for new queens.

Perhaps we are a little too keen to cut out all drone brood as part of varroa management, especially in the early part of the season, when new queens abound. To increase drone numbers, you may like to think about putting in a sheet of drone brood foundation, or a "short" frame could be used, i.e. a super frame in a standard National brood box, or a National frame in a 14x12. The bottom of the short frame will be drawn out as drone cells and the queen will obligingly provide lots of drone eggs. Your own queens will, of course, not benefit from your actions as they will fly out of their own area to find their mates, as this improves genetic diversity, but hopefully neighbouring beekeepers will also allow more drones to develop in their best colonies.

As many of the traits that beekeepers prefer to find in their colonies, such as docility and supercedure tendency, comes down the male line, use the colonies displaying these traits for your drone rearing. Another plus is that colony morale is reportedly higher with more drones in the hive, which may result in a more even-tempered colonies.

There is rarely a quick fix in beekeeping but if we allow more drones to develop in our colonies, that's got to be a good thing for the queens generally.

Do not, however, forget to practice other methods of varroa control, as colonies with a heavy varroa infestation will simply not survive.

Did you know?

The uses of beeswax are many and varied. Edward I and Elizabeth, the second daughter of Henry VII were buried in *cere* [waxed] cloths.

Top Tip

Make sure that your bees always have enough room to store honey ahead of their needs, this process is called "supering up". If you are unsure as to when the time is right, a rule of thumb would be to add a super when the existing one is half-full. There is some debate as to if fresh supers should be added above or below the one already in place, but if the full one is on top it makes it easier to remove when you wish to extract it. Supers with foundation, as opposed to drawn comb, should be situated above to the heat of the brood nest or the foundation may not be drawn out by the bees.

APIARY VISIT WITH JOHN FULLER 1 APRIL 2017

Vice-President John Fuller, assisted by Kate Wallace, kicked off our Apiary Visits for the new season in his apiary on the outskirts of Howden. About 30 members gathered for the event.

The subject for the visit was "The first inspection" and, we received a thorough explanation of how to conduct the first inspection of the season, as John carefully took us through a colony, transferring it into a clean brood box and floor, and reminded us what to look out for.

John then moved on to a demonstration and explanation of how to conduct a shook swarm on another colony. Following that, he moved onto a third colony, to demonstrate a Bailey frame change. This, and the shook swarm, created particular interest and a lot of questions, especially from those who had not seen these techniques before, and John in his usual calm manner was able to show the relative ease with which they can be done – and to show how they are not manipulations involving fear or mystery.
Thanks to John and Kate for the visit.

This year's Auction was somewhat low-key, compared to recent years with only 54 people registered as buyers, and only 20 sellers.
144 lots were on offer plus 4 lots of bees. The bees sold for £80, £90, £100 and £135, and all of the other lots sold except for 13 that either failed to attract a bid, or failed to achieve the reserve price that had been set.
£2,599.88 was taken in, which included the 5% Buyers commission – this compares to £2,745.75 (2014); £4,462.08 (2015); and £3,401.48 (2016).

Thanks to Martin Ainsley for his usual avuncular auctioneering skills, Michelle Mulder for helping me gather the "brass" in, Bruno Hannemann, Paul Appleton and the team of Stewards – who worked well, and who declined some tat with a smile and a firm "nyet".

Thanks to John Thompson for both these reports.

Supercedure

Sometimes two queens will be seen during a hive inspection; we all know there should be just one queen to a colony, so what's happened?
This is the result of a natural phenomenon known as supercedure. Occasionally the new queen will be mated and laying alongside her mother, who will be disposed of by the colony later on, but unless you mark all your queens, you may never even notice you have a new queen in situ!
Supercedure happens when a colony replaces its queen without swarming. Supercedure cells are built from queen cups, in the same ways as swarm cells and it can sometimes be difficult to tell the difference. Supercedure cells tend to be fewer in number than swarm cells, there may be only one or two, and the position on the comb may be indicative, as supercedure cells tend to be in the centre of the comb or along the top edge of the frame.

Apiary visit at Murton

The apiary visit with YDBKA apiary manager, Martin Ainsley took place at Murton on 13 May. There were around fifteen members attending. Martin ably demonstrated a simple and useful method of raising new queens and he answered the many questions with his usual patience and good humour.

Mind the gap!

The June gap, that is. Before the localised effects of global warming, and with traditional farming practices, there was a well-known (to beekeepers) "June gap" at the end of the spring flow, but before the main flow started in July. It can still happen now, although perhaps not precisely in the calendar month of June.

Whenever it falls, it's still known as the June gap, and is a particular concern because it can leave the bees seriously short of forage, especially so if the oil seed rape honey has been removed from the hives earlier.

During your weekly inspections, take care to note the availability of stores in the brood box. A national brood frame of honey weighs about 5lbs; a 14x12 frames around 7 1/2lbs. A decent sized colony gets through about 1lb per day just to stay alive and so, to be safe, a colony in a national needs two full frames of honey to see it through to your next weekly inspection.

Apart from the weight of the brood box, another confirmatory sign of hungry bees is the shortage of brood food in open brood cells. Nurse bees need to be well fed themselves to produce the food which they then feed to the developing larvae: sorry-looking larvae lying in dry cells, devoid of the milky-coloured food, is a sign of food shortage.

Syrup should be fed: Either make your own at a ratio of 1lb granulated sugar to 1 pint of water, or use the commercially

available alternatives. The tricky bit is to ensure that the syrup doesn't find its way into the supers, where its risks being mixed in with genuine honey and extracted, jarred and sold (the Food Standards people won't be impressed!). Remove or relocate the supers to another hive that can look after them. Keep an eye out for the start of the main summer flow, then stop feeding.

BBWear, a reminder from our Treasurer

May I remind you that BBWear Ltd. of Truro, offer YDBKA members a 20% discount on beesuits. In order to qualify for this, please follow this procedure:

- Email membership@yorkbeekeepers.com and ask me to confirm to BBWear that you are a fully paid up member. I will do this as soon as I can.

- Select your suit size, colour etc. from their web site at www.bbwear.co.uk

- Telephone them (01872 562731) with your order and mention that you have asked me to confirm your membership eligibility to them and make payment as appropriate

NB. Orders made via the BBWear website will not receive the discount, only orders placed by telephone can attract the reduced rate.

Additions to the library

The list of the association library books is now on our website and has its own dropdown menu in the "For Members" section. It is a work in progress and will be improved over time. New

books will be added to the list as they are acquired; donations always welcome.
Recent additions to the library are:-
Haynes Bee Manual - Claire Waring
Beekeeping and the Law - Smith D. & Frimston D.
The Honeybee Inside Out - Celia Davies
Honeybees Around and About - Celia Davies
Understanding Bee Anatomy - Ian Stell
Mead Making - Harry Riches
Microscopy Certificate Module 9 - Yates & Yates
Beekeeping Study Notes: Beekeeping Husbandry (Violet Book) - Yates & Yates
Beekeeping Study Notes: Beekeeping Senior Study Notes Practical (Red Book) - Yates & Yates
The Buzz about Bees, biology of a super organism - Jurgen Tautz
Pollen Identification Cards - W D J Kirk (two copies)
Keeping Bees in Horizontal Hives - De Layens
Unfortunately, another desired acquisition, requested by members, Heather Honey by Michael Badger is now sold out.

If you would like to borrow from the library please contact me either by email library@yorkbeekeepers.com, by phone (details on your events card) or at one of our events.

NB. We have a number of guide books to help members prepare or hone their entries for this year's Honey Show. It's never too early to start planning for the big event!

Paul Appleton
Librarian & Chairman

Fondant and syrup for sale

David Bough has plenty of syrup and fondant in stock as usual: syrup is £18 per jerry can and fondant is £19 per box.

David is in Holtby. Contact him via email at: david.bough@wardstheflorist.co.uk or by phone 07713 256522

Alan Johnston also has syrup and fondant for sale at the same prices. Alan is near Selby, his phone number is 01757 633202. For the one-hive beekeeper, Alan will sell a single 2.5 kg pack of fondant at £4.

Alan provides some seasonal advice on swarm control

Swarm control without finding the queen

Yes, it can be done, although if she's marked, then the task of finding her is made all the easier. Even so, marked queens can hide, and if you've got swarm cells starting, then you need to do something about it.

Step 1. Move any supers away to one side. Move the brood box a few feet away onto an upturned hive roof, leaving the hive floor on the original site.

Step 2. Place a new brood box on the original floor, on the original site.

Step 3. Identify which queen cell/s you want to retain. Ideally, they should be unsealed and the larva inside them fat and well fed. Mark theses frames in some way, and treat them carefully.

Step 4. In the new, empty box, insert four frames, two at either end. They can be frames of food/pollen from a known, clean, healthy colony, or frames of foundation, leaving a large 7 or 8 frame gap in the centre of the box.

Step 5. Shake or brush all the bees from the non-queen cell frames into the gap in the new box. Very gently brush the bees from the queen cell frames into the new box, making sure not to jolt or damage the queen cells. Brush any bees clinging to the sides of the old box into the new box. The queen should now be in the new box.

Step 6. Put a few frames of brood, but not your chosen queen cell ones in the new box. Remove any queen cells which may be on them. Fill the remaining space with foundation.

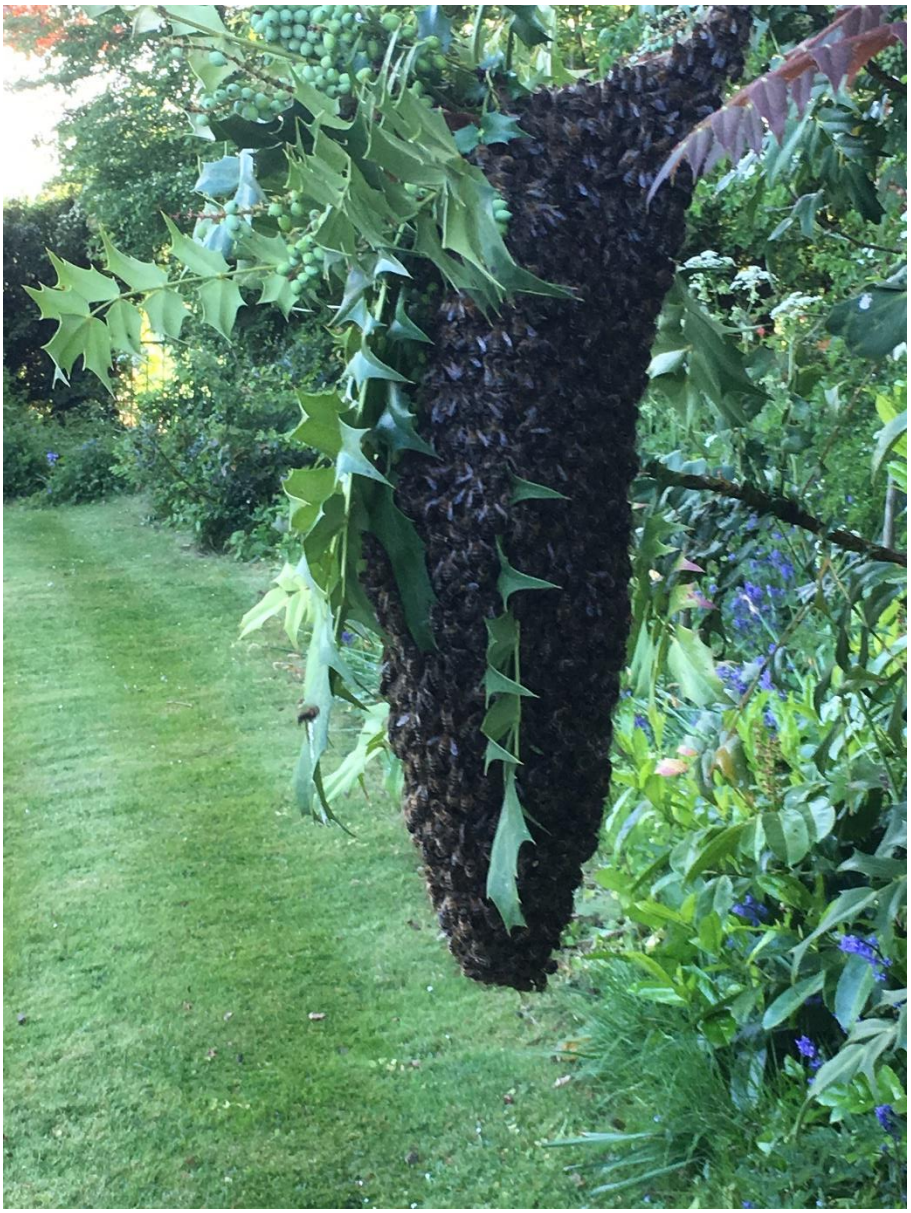
Step 7. Put a queen excluder on top of the new brood box, and any supers on top of that.

Step 8. Place the original brood box (presently on the upturned roof) on top of the supers or the queen excluder and insert all the remaining frames. Double check that your chosen queen cells are ok and remove any others. Fill any gaps with foundation.

Step 9. Twenty-four hours later, nurse bees will have moved through the queen excluder and supers to look after the brood and chosen queen cells in the top box. The queen and zero queen cells should be in the bottom box. The top box can then be moved away, adding a floor and roof to start a new colony.

Steps 1 – 9 are basically the classic artificial swarm ("Pagden" method) but carried out vertically rather than horizontally.

Reader's Swarms.



A nice image of a swarm collected by Paul Appleton.