

COMBINGS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE YORK AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION.

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METHYLGLYOXOL appears in some honeys. What is it?

ASSOCIATION NEWS

PLEASE NOTE :- Treasurer Chris Robinson has a new e.mail address. It is
meandit1@btinternet.com

This is a communication from Chairman David Gray regarding the use of Association equipment dated 8th July 2009

In October 2008 the Committee agreed to purchase a lap-top computer and power-point projector, plus an electronic microscope and camera, for use at YDBKA events such as "meetings, presentations, the beginners' course and rainy-day apiary meetings".

The possibility that individual members of the Association might wish to borrow this equipment for personal uses (whether committee members or not) was not raised in connection with the purchase decision.

The equipment took some time to buy, searching for favourable prices and sources. But at the 21 January 09 YDBKA meeting at Murton the equipment was demonstrated to members by Nigel Davies (our microscopist) as part of a presentation assisted by the Bee Research Team from Sand Hutton, focussing on detection of disease by microscopy.

At that meeting, a member asked if he might personally borrow the power point projector for a beekeeping talk he was to give soon. But the Committee members present felt that they had no mandate to lend the equipment for individual members' use, and proposed to bring the question to the next Committee Meeting, in March.

At the 11 March 09 Committee Meeting the Committee minuted (Minute 12) "... that this equipment was bought for use by the Committee and should not be loaned out to the membership..." The Chairman, David Gray, was asked to write to the member concerned, which he did, quoting from the above Minute, and explaining that for the time being the equipment would be used only at YDBKA events and operated by appointed committee members only.

The Chairman reported this matter to the half-yearly-AGM on 18 April 09, and the Committee's decision was challenged by the member concerned. The Chairman promised that the Committee would review the matter at its next meeting, on 13 May. At that May meeting the Committee reaffirmed its decisions, but recognised that the wording of the Minute of 11th March might be misunderstood.

The Minute states that the equipment was "bought for the use of the Committee". This might seem to suggest that individual committee members could make their own personal use of the equipment, and that other members of the Association could not. Not so. No member of the Association may borrow this electronic equipment for their own use (whether a member of the Committee or not) and no one has done so.

The issue was discussed at the Committee Meeting on 13 May 09. The wording was clarified: "The equipment is for use at York + District BKA events only, and by appointed personnel." This is not a change in policy but a clarification.

The only times this projection equipment has been used is at York + District BKA events, and operated only by the appointed and trained committee members. Each use has been previously approved by the Committee in its normal sessions.

I expect that the Committee will keep this matter under regular review. 🐝

This is a repeat of the message I slipped in at the last minute of your June "Comblings"

Thursday 21st May. Tom Robinson 'phoned me this evening to tell me that he has had four hives stolen from an out apiary.

They are modified nationals, with just a single brood box. Some are branded BBS. Please keep an eye on your out apiaries, and, if offered bees from people you don't know- be wary. If you have any information give Tom a ring. 🐝

There was an entry in the Coming Events section of June's "Comblings" regarding Yorkshire BKA's Field Day at Temple Newsam near Leeds. It was not until after I had sent your "Comblings" off that I learned from a Member that the event had been called off for health and safety reasons on the 10th May.

My apologies if you were misled.

This is a copy of the e.mail sent to Association Secretaries by Bill Cadmore who is Chairman of Leeds BKA who where to host the event:-

"With regret we have to announce that this years YBKA Spring field Day has been cancelled.

Problems with the venue, specifically health and safety issues with regard to animals in the pastures and the serving of food from marques in the pastures means that we cannot offer any refreshments.

We feel that this will make the day less pleasant for members who deserve high quality services rather than 'make do and mend'". 🐝

Tom Robinson sent me this as an e.mail on the 6th August. He in turn received it from Wendy Maslin – a member of Beverley BKA. As she says, she is expected to take over from Dudley Gue as Yorkshire BKA Examinations Officer later this year.

The message is self explanatory. I would urge those of you with a Basic Certificate to go for the modules. In doing so you increase your beekeeping knowledge enormously.

"As part of the Yorkshire BKA commitment to education and the BBKA examinations we are proposing to run a four year programme to support candidates undertaking the BBKA correspondence course for the modular examinations.

This will start in October for module 1 - Honeybee Management. A tutorial will be held at the Normanby pavilion between 10 and 12 midday on the third Saturday of each month from October to February inclusive. These will be led by a tutor and will tandem with the topics the candidate will have been studying during the previous month. The course will lead up to the exam in March.

The cost for the correspondence course is £45 and there is no additional charge for the tutorials.

These tutorials are for those wishing to take the exam and will be an excellent opportunity for learning and support through the exam process. This is open to all those who are members of Yorkshire BKA and have already successfully achieved the basic examination.

More information and the examination syllabus can be found on the BBKA website at www.britishbee.org.uk

As I hope to take on the role of examinations officer in the autumn I have been asked to co-ordinate this project and would like anyone who is interested to contact me, by email or telephone (01 482 656 018)

Please could you pass this information to as many members as possible and especially those who may be thinking about doing the exams. We hope that this will be successful and we will progress to the other modules completing all of them over a four year period". 

THIS YEARS BEGINNERS CLASS .

This years beginners was very well subscribed with fifteen people being enrolled, meaning that they had to be split into two groups with lessons on a Tuesday and Thursdays. All have a lot to learn, so if you can be of any assistance to them please do so.

Those attending the course where:-

Jo Birch.
Chris Caller.
Alison Gould.
Simon Howard.
Peter Johnson.
Ron Leath.
Julia Mander.
Joan McBurney.
Dick Parker.
Edward Pettifer.

Debra Butterworth.
Kim Galley.
Ruth Hodging.
Richard Jackson.
Evelyn Kilvington.
Hugh MacPherson.
Don McBurney.
Linda Morton.
Andrew Pepworth.
Tawfik Saabi.

Karl Sherman.
Debra Spink.
Sylvia Strong.
John White.
Lorraine White.

Eileen Snitch.
Anthony Strong.
Christian White.
Nicola White.

The class was organised by Sue Hesp.

Already we have a list of people interested in next years course. If you know of any one wanting to keep bees, then have them contact Sue on 01 904 489 449. 🐝

Our annual barbeque was a great success. Read Jenny Smith's account under Past Events. Those of you that where unable to attend missed a good do. 🐝

Our annual Honey Show is to be held at Murton on the evening of Wednesday 18th November.

Last year there was a very low turn out, so please, this year put some thing in the show and help make it a success.

More information can be got from Nigel Davies on 01 904 468 001 🐝

EDITORS MUSINGS.

You hear of bees being stolen all the time, but with bees being in short supply it is some thing we have to be aware of. Our apiaries are particularly vulnerable. Even if you know the land owner well – if he sees a body in a white suit looking in your bees he will think nothing of it – all beekeepers look the same when suited up.

Should you be in the unfortunate position of being the victim of rustling, let me know and I will put it in “Combings” and inform Linda Carey – our web master - she will put it on our web site. A call to Alan Johnston or Ivor Flatman would be wise as they are looking at bees all the time and may spot something.

Some form of indelible identification is a big help. It will act as a deterrent to thieves, and will positively identify your property if recovered.

Branding was common at one time, but I do not know where you can get a branding iron these days – none of the major equipment dealers stock them. All I can suggest is going round engineering works – you may be lucky.

I bought one a few years ago and thought it expensive then. 🐝

We are always taught that, when introducing bought queens into a colony, we should remove her attendant workers first (this can be a long winded job, as it always seems to be the queen that wants to get out before her workers).

I have often wondered why, as the attendant workers will come with the smell of your new queen. I would have thought that it would be an advantage putting the queen and her attendants straight into your hive.

A couple of years ago, prompted by Alan Johnston, who in turn got the idea from CSL. I put the cage with queen and workers straight into a queenless colony. It worked well. I did the same this year with good results. Another idea to simplify queen introduction - in stead of putting your cage between frames of eggs / larvae simply put the cage on top of the frames. When the queen emerges she will quickly go down into the brood nest. To delay emergence wrap news paper over the candy end of your introduction page.

I spoke to a few beekeepers while rape was in flower. They like me where of the opinion that a different "type" of rape had been planted this year. It did not grow so tall, nor was it the same dense yellow of previous years.

When I came to bottle the first batch shortly after extracting, it caught me on the hop by becoming fully liquid very quickly, when I wanted it set. I will see how long it takes to rest in the jar.

In the 28lb buckets that I use it set within a few days of being extracted as I would expect.

I spoke to a nearby farmer and he told me that in the past, they would sow rape seed close to together; this forced the plant to grow upwards to get light. Nowadays it is planted in 15 inch rows. This allows the plant to spread out more get its light.

In my garden I have a conifer of the Pinus species. Every year in June it sheds its pollen in huge quantities. This year was no exception. On one particular night there were light winds with light rain. The wind blew the pollen off the tree and the rain carried it to the ground.

The next morning the path in the area was covered in primrose coloured pollen. I find it difficult to imagine the numbers of pollen grains shed by that one tree every year.

I got a panic telephone call in the middle of July from a frantic neighbour –"I was strimming my grass when I was attacked by a swarm of bees". On further investigation the swarm of bees turned out (as I had predicted) to be wasps.

The grass had not been cut for a couple of years or more, so was dense and matted. I cleared the grass around the nest and went back at dusk to kill it off. I went back the following morning and killed off the remaining wasps and then dug the nest out. It was roughly globular about six inches in diameter.

The interesting thing about the nest was that it did not have the outer envelope that nests in the open have. I suppose being in a hole in the ground it did not need any protection from the elements.

A couple of other points of interest. I took the nest home and left it on my work bench. When I went back later the unsealed larvae were moving about – much as young birds do when parents return to the nest with food - where they begging for food from in coming workers?

Mature larvae were sealed over with paper and emerged from their cells during the course of the next week. 🐝

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The following is a message I have received from Linda Mills, Membership Secretary for Harrogate and Ripon Beekeepers Association, regarding feral bees.

The original message is from Catherine Thompson, E-mail Address:- c.e.thompson0@googlemail.com phone – 07 929 303 208.

It is self explanatory.

"I was wondering if you or any other member of the Ripon and Harrogate Bee Keepers Association know of any feral bees that are persisting in the area. I'm doing a study with Leeds University examining the health of feral bees. Theory dictates that feral colonies shouldn't really exist without beekeeper intervention or if they are found they are likely to be swarms from the current year. Anecdotally however this doesn't seem to be the case!

If anyone knows of feral colonies that seem to be occupying an area for a couple of years I would be interested in learning more about them. We are hoping to analyse the bees genetically and use a new technique RT-PCR (real time PCR) to quantify the level of disease in the bees. Previous we have only been able to assess presence or absence of disease. This would entail collecting about 40 bees from the colony so should have no detrimental impact." 🐝

Nigel Davies sent me this piece in July. I find it interesting

A little story about a colony I collected from an ash tree in my village.

A distant neighbour informed me that an old ash tree was to be felled as it was hollow and had been surveyed as being unsafe. The tree was almost 5 feet across at the base and believed to be at least 100 years old, and contained a colony of bees which appeared to have there for the past 13 years. Their entrance was through the stump of a removed branch some 12 feet from the ground. The evening before the felling was due I climbed a ladder to the entrance to the colony and fastened a travel screen across the entrance.

I considered how best to recover the bees from the tree after felling and decided to make a bee vacuum out of some readily available hive parts. With all the joints between the various components taped together with 2" wide gaffer tape. I have included a diagram of the collecting device below.

The tree was felled and all the bees were contained by the screen I had fitted the night before. By midday the main branches had been removed and the trunk was cut in half just above the entrance to the nest.

Amazingly the bees seemed totally unconcerned that their home had come crashing to the floor and they had been subject to the vibrations and exhaust of a chain saw. Working through the open end of the hollow tree I vacuumed the bees up as I pulled the combs apart. The bees seemed almost oblivious to this destruction of their home.

The bees were put into a hive on new foundation and left with a feeder full of sugar syrup for 4 days, a couple of miles away from their original home. I then examined them and to my surprise found the queen had a pink disc with 32 on it. I telephoned the National Bee Unit which is only a mile or so away from where the nest had been, and enquired if the queen was one of theirs. It was, and they were keen to have her back. I arranged that they were to come and recover her the following week. She had been missing for about 4 weeks. When we went to recover the queen she was no longer in the hive, the number of bees had reduced by half, but there were some emergency queen cells amongst the brood. She had either swarmed again or had been damaged by the vacuuming process and had been ejected from the hive. No sign of her in the long grass outside the hive entrance.

I did not use a queen excluder on top of the floor, under the brood frames, to prevent her leaving, but would do so in the future.

I believe the queen was one bought in from Germany, and as such would have had a high proportion of *Apis Mellifera Carnica* in her, which would account for extreme calmness of her and her colony. Hopefully the emergency queen cells will provide me with a viable queen to breed from.

My lack of computer skills does not allow me to reproduce the drawing that Nigel sent me so I shall endeavour to describe it.

It consists of a brood box with a solid air tight floor. On top is a travel screen and on top of that another solid board where the suction hose from the vacuum cleaner enters. The collecting hose comes out of one side.

Editors note:- Using vacuum cleaners as Nigel has is nothing new. The system works well. By adding extension tubes you can reach swarms that would otherwise be out of reach.

The down side is you need a mains electricity supply to run your vacuum cleaner which limits where it can be used. I cannot see that the 12 volt vacuums that run off a car battery will have enough oomph to do the job. Any comments? 

MANUKA HONEY.

This is part of an advert for Manuka honey I came across recently. All honey has anti bacterial properties. This comes in the form of hydrogen peroxide. Manuka honey appears to have something else.

Prices quoted for 500 grams of UMF 5 was £8.99 (or £8.16 per lb) and £13.99 for 500 grams of UMF 10 (or £12.79 per lb).

You will have to be a very strong believer in the therapeutic value of honey to pay those sorts of prices.

Manuka Honey is harvested from the Manuka bush found in the Wairarapa region of New Zealand

The honey contains a unique and powerful antibacterial property.

This antibacterial property was named the 'Unique Manuka Factor' (UMF) by New Zealand scientist Professor Peter Molan, MBE in 1985

UMF indicates the antibacterial activity and ranges from UMF 5 to UMF 25, the higher the factor, the better the healing properties

Manuka honey has an amazing range of healing applications when taken internally. It may help boost the immune system against infection; help rehydrate the body after diarrhoea, vomiting and stomach upsets; promote healing and tissue growth; and support the body's natural defences

Externally, it can be applied to cuts, burns, wounds, acne, abscesses, eczema, cracked skin and skin ulcers.

This further piece appeared in Yorkshire BKA's newsletter, written by Chris Coulson of Beverley BKA.

Research by Prof Henle at the Technical University of Dresden has shown the antibacterial factor in manuka honey to be **METHYLGLYOXOL** (C₃H₄O₂).

This compound is certainly not unique to the manuka bush it but occurs in many other organisms including humans. Although some of the biochemical pathways for its production are understood the reason for its synthesis is less obvious. Methylglyoxal can in fact be bought from chemical supply companies and apparently is sold in various formulations to treat certain medical conditions. It seems to be inhibitory against a number of pathogenic bacteria but not against yeasts. It is said that outside the honey milieu it is less effective on the skin as an antibacterial agent. The result of the discovery of methylglyoxal as the active ingredient in manuka honey has led Henle to devise a new scale of antibacterial activity called the MGO scale. MGO stands for methylglyoxal. MGO like UMF is a registered trade mark. The MGO scale measures the concentration of methylglyoxal as mg/kg of honey and active honey goes from 100-700 mg/kg. Thus for instance, manuka honey of MGO 200 is 200 mg methylglyoxal per kg of-honey. Some non manuka honeys have, on average, 3.1 mg MGO/kg, much below that of active manuka honey.

There seems to be a swing to this newer scale and manuka honey is now being advertised using it though no doubt because of the commercial advantage of having a trade mark activity scale the matter is not yet settled 

We are all short of honey, but how many of us would go this far?

Beekeeper's killer jailed

A man who shot a beekeeper in the back as he slept was jailed for life last month after being found guilty of murder.

Donald Robert Alcock, 34, also listed as a beekeeper in some reports, denied the 2007 murder of Anthony Ross Knight in Woodford, a rural town in Queensland state, despite admitting to police that he shot the respected beekeeper so he could steal up to A\$50,000 (£17,000) worth of honey. But a jury at Brisbane Supreme Court, Australia took less than a day to convict him and he was sentenced on March 19.

The crime came to light after Alcock, said to be in financial difficulties, was caught in a literal 'honey trap'. He was crushed by a 1400 kg drum of honey as he tried to sell it to a major distributor. Photographs taken by rescue services showed marks on the drum identifying it as Mr Knight's. 

This is an article that appeared in The Times newspaper of Wednesday 4th March written by "Suggs" who is the lead singer of a band / group called "Madness". After reading what he has to say on bees and beekeeping, I think you will agree with me that he should stick to singing.

When our house was abuzz with sweet therapy.

It's a bad time for bees, especially my bees. I had two hives that we kept on the flat roof of our home in London and they just disappeared. My wife was heartbroken.

They do just swarm sometimes but this time it may have been something more sinister, such as collapsed colony disorder (CCD). We don't know what happened. We won't be getting any more. This time it's the end of the road.

It wasn't always thus. A few years ago a friend of ours took us to a North London Bee Keepers meeting in a magical place at the back of Highgate Woods and I had an epiphany. We got our own. It was wonderful to have such a productive set-up at the back of the house - the neighbours weren't even aware of them.

I loved the way they made a figure of eight in the sky and collected their pollen from the trees, plants and window boxes in our small back garden. The only stress was the time we had to retrieve them from next door's washing line, where they were found sitting in a row.

It is remarkably therapeutic. When the honey was ready it was like harvest-time in the countryside.

We would borrow the extractor from the beekeepers association and get pounds and pounds of honey from each hive.

The kids loved it and it would end up on their faces and in their hair. It got to the point where people would get sick of being given honey for Christmas.

But then the bad times came. In beekeeping you have to be super-vigilant and look out for when they try to produce another queen. When that happens, half the hive will swarm but you are still left with a queen.

If you see the bees trying to produce another queen one of the cell starts looking bigger and, it sounds cruel but you have to take that prospective queen out and squish it. You want to keep them as compact as possible to keep them healthy. Ours had another disease, varroa, which you can spot because you see dots on the legs of the bees. You can't cure it but a chemical knocks the mites off and stops it spreading. They are like ticks on a dog; they suck the lifeblood out of the poor bees.

The most positive thing that can be done to combat CCD is to direct more funding to wards the official beekeeping organisations. They give excellent advice. Keep bees but get an expert to come and tell you how to do it properly.

I don't know how the mooted audits of domestic beekeepers would work (I don't love the idea of someone with a clipboard coming to my house to inspect my bees). But we have a deep rooted affinity with bees and we need to work with the experts to save them.

Editors' note: - Perhaps we should coin a new phrase – BBD – Bad Beekeeper Disorder . 🐝

PAST EVENTS

Wednesday 20th May.

Nigel Davies organised a trip to the Central science Laboratory at Sand Hutton. Twelve members attended.

Sunday 14 June. "THE ANCIENT CRAFT OF BEEKEEPING" at Murton

As part of their "Educational Events Programme", set up each year by the Yorkshire Museum of Farming at Murton, York BKA were invited to run a Sunday afternoon event, called "The Ancient Craft of Beekeeping".

At the main entrance to the Museum the public were greeted by Mike Marshall and his two grand daughters (disguised as honeybees) whilst the Museum's overhead video screen showed a beekeeping DVD (set up by David Bough) and below it Tom Robinson invited all those coming in through the Museum door to do some hands-on beeswax candle making.

Mike brought a portable observation hive that he had built beautifully (from a design by Bryan Hateley) and he set it up in silhouette inside the plate-glass window in the new entrance foyer. Brilliant! It caught the eye of all who came past, encouraging them to make their way to the Bee Pavilion.

At the Pavilion, Chris Robinson demonstrated two other portable observation hives (one lent by Ken Barran) and explained the intricacies of the bee colony and beekeeping to an eager crowd.

Nigel Davies and David Bough had erected see-through netting between the Pavilion and the beehives, so the public could safely approach the protected hives. Parents and children could examine bees through our new microscope, under Nigel's guidance.

Fiona Davigs- brought a living; display of bee friendly plants, destined-for our new -Bee Garden. David Gray gave a brief talk on beekeeping in past times. Sue Hesp was on hand to register the names of (yet more) people wishing to join next year's Beginners' Classes. We ended with a demonstration of honey-extracting, using a super brought by Nigel and Fiona Davies, and loads of children queued up to turn the handle on the honey spinner, followed by a honey and mead tasting. And (after the public had gone) we had a tea party in the Pavilion for all the York team and guests.

And how many of the Museum's public got a new view of beekeeping? Hard to say; but at one stage the Pavilion was so full that the crowd outside were leaning in through the windows. Murton made a donation to York BKA that covered all our costs. So - "A good day was had by all.

David Gray.

Saturday 20th June.

This was organised by Tom Robinson at his apiary at Sherriff Hutton. It was a very disappointing day for Tom as only four Members turned up.

Saturday 18th July.

Jenny Smith sent me her account of our annual barbeque, hosted this year by Nigel + Fiona Davies.

After unsettled weather for a few days the sun came out and I set off to collect Sue and Ken from Murton and we made our way to Claxton avoiding the A64 - a lovely drive through the lanes and villages on a nice sunny day - we two ladies ignored the back seat driver (only joking Ken!) who thought it was a long way round!

About forty beekeepers, family and friends made their way along the path admiring the rows of fruit and vegetables and flowers finally arriving at a clearing and the BBQ site. What an incredible garden! We all enjoyed catching up with bee talk and the lovely food prepared by Fiona (and Nigel of course!) . I'm not sure if all the cooked food was as nice as we suddenly saw flames coming from the BBQ and Bob's steak was on fire - he said it was very nice!

As it cooled down we retired into the very large poly tunnel to see the peaches, grapes etc. growing and sat and enjoyed a nice warm drink.

Thank you very much to Nigel and Fiona for hosting a lovely evening which I am sure was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone attending. It was so nice to see quite a few new beekeepers from the recent beginners classes too. Those who didn't attend missed a great evening.

Saturday 1st August.

Alan Johnston and Kate Wallace represented York BKA at Tockwith Show talking to the public about bees and honey in general. It was a bad day with continuous rain which reduced attendance considerably.

Non the less they had a busy day. As always their observation was a big draw. A few people showed an interest in wanting to keep bees and their details will be passed on to sue Hesp.

WORDS FOR YOUR BEEKEEPING DICTIONARY.

CHELICERAE. The mouth parts of varroa.

WHAT YOU ALL WANTED TO KNOW!

A single bee collecting pollen can bring back a load of up to 35% of its own weight. 🐝

FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Wednesday 16th September Murton. 😊

The first of our winter programme is "Preparation of colonies for winter and varroa control". David Aston is the speaker.

Tuesday 15th to Sunday 20th September.

Apimondia in Montpellier , France.

Friday 18th to Sunday 20th September.

North of England Horticultural Society's Autumn Flower Show at the Yorkshire Showground.

Wednesday 21st October. Murton. 😊

Annual General Meeting.

Thursday 29th to Saturday 31st October.

The National Honey Show will be held again at St George's College, Weybridge, Surrey.

If you wish to exhibit at the National, you do not have to present your exhibits in person. You can put them in the post, or get them to either Thorne's or Northern BeeBooks and they will take them for you.

Wednesday 18th November. Murton. ☺

Our Annual Honey Show and social evening. Bring and share supper.
Entries for the honey show from 18.30.

Saturday 15th May 2010.

Proposed date for York BKA's next auction at Murton.

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FOR SALE

CLARO BEES for all your beekeeping supplies.

Large stock and very keen prices on all items.

Cedar National hive parts, frames (all in first and second quality), clothing, gloves, foundation, jars, spacers ,tools, smokers, medicines, straps etc. etc. all normally in stock and at below list prices. Advice on the selection and use of beekeeping equipment always available. Open every Saturday morning 09.00 to 12.30 April to October inclusive.

Beside the Harrogate Arms, past the RHS Harlow Carr Gardens, Crag Lane, Harrogate, HG3 1QA, or by arrangement: - 01 423 567 315. A map showing our location is available at www.hrbka.org.uk 🐝

12oz/340gr hexagonal honey jars in boxes of 84 with lids at £23.50. **Ambrosia syrup** at £16.00 per 14kg tub. Contact Colin Hattee on 01 430 860 972. 🐝

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And finally :- Red meat is not bad for you. Its fuzzy green meat that is bad for you.

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The following are the minutes of recent Committee meetings for your edification.

Minutes of the Committee meeting held on Wednesday 11th March 2009

Present: David Gray (Chairman), Tom Robinson (Secretary), Sue Hesp, Kate Wallace (Minutes) Nigel Davies, David Bough, Jenny Smith.

Apologies: Alan Johnston, Chris Robinson (Treasurer), Matt Atkinson, John Fuller (Combings Editor)

Minutes of the last meeting:

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2009 will be amended at

Item 4 – The Treasurer produced the half yearly accounts and these were approved.

Item 6. The date of the Honey Show will be Wednesday 18th November 2009.

The amended Minutes will be sent as soon as possible to the Chairman and the Secretary.

Matters arising:

The Member suggested at the last meeting as being a candidate for the CSL Disease Liaison Contact has declined and the position is being advertised in Combings.

2009 Auction Nigel Davies, David Bough & Tom Robinson will form a sub-committee to organise the event.

Treasurer's report.

This was submitted in Chris Robinson's absence.

Correspondence

A Committee visit to Harrogate BKA has been arranged for Saturday 21st March 2009. This is to be an information gathering and fact-finding visit. Transport will be by car with David Gray & Nigel Davies offering to drive. Meet at Rawcliffe Park & ride site at 1 pm.

The visit to Chainbridge Honey Farm is arranged for 6th June 2009.

If there is sufficient interest a 25 seater bus can be arranged for a cost of £450, names of those who are interested in going are to be collected at the half yearly meeting by Tom Robinson.

Constitution

The Charity Commission has rejected the amended Constitution. Although there have been several amendments over the years, the last version held by the Commission was the 1977 Constitution.

Tom Robinson will re-draft the document for the next committee meeting and if approved, this will be presented to the Membership at the half-yearly meeting.

2009 Beginners' courses and Association bees.

As there are 30 candidates for the 2009 Beginners' course, these will be split into two separate classes to be run on Tuesday and Thursday evenings each week for the duration of the course. Sue Hesp will organise the Tuesday session and Tom Robinson the Thursday class.

Each class will follow the same BBKA syllabus.

There have been winter losses at the Murton teaching apiary and only one weak colony survives. It is essential that the beginners' courses have bees to work with by the second class of the course – these will be held on 12th & 14th May.

Tom Robinson will ensure that there are at least 4 colonies available at the Murton site by 8 May, but these colonies may be on loan, depending on the availability of the shook swarms.

Alan Johnston, in his capacity as Seasonal Bee Inspector, has agreed to inspect all colonies concerned.

Tom Robinson has paid a 20% deposit to Mark Evamy – a commercial beekeeper from Bridlington - for 10 shook swarm colonies, each with a 2008 queen, the colonies will not be available until sometime in May. After some discussion it was agreed that Tom Robinson would collect the bees and take them initially to his workshop site. There will be a considerable amount of feeding to be done for 10 shook swarms and the Murton site does not have easy access for vehicles and heavy equipment.

The Committee agreed to pay Tom Robinson £120 for each colony – this will include bees and full second hand cleaned hive woodwork.

It was decided, as the plan is to sell on the 6 excess colonies through the beginners' courses that new woodwork would be provided with these colonies. David Gray will purchase this, (Thorne's cedar seconds in flat pack) at Stoneleigh, on behalf of the Association.

Chairman's Intermediates Apiary meetings.

Although it is recognised that it would be good use of the Murton apiary to hold these sessions there, DG wishes to tie-in these sessions with his own apiary checks, and not give himself unnecessary work.

DG will hold a beekeeping taster day at Murton on 14 June.

Reports on discussions between York BKA & Museum of Farming Murton

David Grey distributed draft plans for the refurbished pavilion and bee garden area.

The last management meeting at Murton was very positive - some new volunteers and committee members have been recruited and a healthy financial position was reported.

9.3 It was decided - on the advice of the site manager – to put just 4 items from the York BKA “wish-list” before the Museum Committee. These were:

- o To re-establish a bee-garden on the knoll between the pavilion and the pond – this will extend the area.
- o Requirement for a stock-proof fence around the whole of the area.
- o New doors at the north end of the pavilion
- o Re-think vehicle accessibility to include all year access, as the paddock access is very boggy in wet weather.

The Museum has agreed to all these requests but we should share the cost of the new doors to the pavilion. No agreement has been reached on costs nor have the internal refurbishments been discussed.

The York BKA Apiary Manager will need to have assistance with the proposed 10 colonies and a bee garden. He is to be kept up to date with all developments.

Concerns were expressed regarding the public safety aspects of keeping 10 colonies at Murton.

The Pavilion is to have a spring clean – there will be two sessions

Thursday 9 April. (evening)

Saturday 11 April. (all-day)

Kate Wallace to email the membership to ask for volunteers, also volunteers will be sought at the half yearly meeting by Tom Robinson.

Letter of agreement with Murton

David Gray circulated a draft letter for consideration.

It was noted that there are letting spaces for 6 York BKA events per year, not 8.

Rents are agreed in September, not October

The Sunday sessions by York BKA run through July & August and do not include June.

David Gray will check if the Museum has a First Aider available.

The Anaphylactic shock treatment poster is to be permanently displayed in the Pavilion.

The insurance of the Pavilion contents will need to be set up

David Gray will check the public liability insurance position with BBKA

Summer programme finalisation

Tom Robinson has completed the summer programme and agreement to send the finished item for printing to a commercial printer was given.

Policy on lending equipment.

A request to borrow some of the equipment bought at the end of last year has been received from a member of York BKA.

After much discussion it was agreed that this equipment was bought for use by the Committee of York BKA and should not be loaned out to the membership, the only exception being where a visiting speaker wishes to use the laptop and/or projector to address a meeting of the York BKA.

The reasons for this decision included:

- o Possible compromise of members' personal data such as is held on the laptop.
- o Possible damage to equipment.
- o Possibility of the equipment being out on loan when it is required for an official purpose.
- o The initial decision to purchase this equipment did not include a consideration to loan it out.

It was further agreed that the next Committee should review this decision in 12 months time.

These agreements were proposed by Tom Robinson, seconded by Jenny Smith and carried unanimously.

David Gray will write to the York BKA member concerned and will make an abstract of his letter available at next week's meeting, should anyone wish to query it.

Date of next meeting.

- o Wednesday 1 April 2009 at the Fulford Methodist Hall 7.45 pm
- o Half yearly meeting Wednesday 8 April 2009 7.30 pm Museum of Farming Murton.

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Minutes of the Committee meeting held on Wednesday 13 May 2009

1. Present: David Gray (Chairman), Tom Robinson (Secretary), Sue Hesp, Alan Johnston, Kate Wallace (Minutes), Jenny Smith, Nigel Davies, David Bough, Matt Atkinson

1. Apologies: Chris Robinson.

2. Minutes of the last meeting. These were agreed as correct.

Matters arising.

David Gray's invitation to last year's beginners resulted in 19 people attending the first session at his apiary. Other sessions are planned.

The plan for bees for Murton and the beginners' classes has not worked out. Currently two colonies are on loan to the beginners' classes from David Gray and this loan will continue for one month. DG will telephone Mark Evamy to see if we can purchase 20 shook swarms to supply some of the beginners with colonies, once the classes are completed.

2. Correspondence.

There has been a lot of interest in beekeeping courses and the course has been over subscribed. Tom Robinson has collected contact details for those people who have not been able to get onto this year's course – he will pass the details to Sue Hesp. Kate Wallace is to email Minutes of Committee Meetings to John Fuller for inclusion in the magazine.

3. Treasurer's report.

In Chris Robinson's absence there was no report, however, he has spoken to David Gray by phone and reported that the finances look good.

Chris Robinson has been asked to investigate the BBKA Risk Insurance, with regard to contents insurance for the Association's equipment at Murton

4. Beginners' course update.

This year there are 29 people on the course so there are two sessions per week with 15 attending on Tuesday and 14 on Thursday evenings.

Sue Hesp feels that there are too many people of each course – there is a lack of space in the Pavilion and 15 people trying to look in one hive is not practical. Sue Hesp asked that some committee members drop in to the sessions at either 7.30 or 8.30, in order to chat with the beginners.

John Fuller has asked for a report on the beginners' classes for the magazine, he would like to include a list of speakers. Sue Hesp will deal with this.

5. Auction arrangements.

Tom Robinson & Nigel Davies have held a planning meeting.

Tom Robinson has left messages for Colin Hattee, who holds the auctioneer's podium, asking him to return this.

Martin Ainsley is to act as Auctioneer.

It was decided that the Membership would need to be consulted before any items belonging to the Association were sold off.

David Bbough has been enlisted as Equipment Officer; he will give a report on the inventory at the next meeting.

6. Bee pavilion update plans and costs.

Two estimates have been received for the proposed new double door entrance and the removal of some of the cupboards.

Murton have agreed to supply new fences and gates.

David Gray, Tom Robinson & Chris Robinson are to continue discussions with Murton to decide which party will pay for the various proposals, bearing in mind that the Pavilion does not belong to York BKA, but to the Murton site. DG will report back to the Committee.

10. Letter of Agreement with Yorkshire Museum of Farming.

Some time ago David Gray circulated a draft letter of agreement but as yet, no responses have been received.

The discussion resulted in an amendment to the final paragraph covering donations to the Museum, as this was thought to be ambiguous.

It was agreed that the open Sunday sessions should be from 2 pm – with no close time specified.

This was proposed by Matt Atkinson, seconded by Nigel Davies and carried unanimously.

11 Loans of equipment.

The decision not to loan out the projector was challenged at the half-yearly meeting and it had been agreed that the letter to the member concerned, based on the Minutes covering the decision made at the Committee meeting on 11 March 2009 was badly worded.

It was thought that this should be clarified and the wording "After much discussion it was agreed that this equipment is for use at York BKA events only and by appointed personnel" was agreed. This is not a change in policy but a clarification.

This was proposed by Tom Robinson, seconded by JS and carried with one Committee member against.

The wording is to be typed up and sent to David Gray by Kate Wallace by tomorrow for inclusion in the next issue of Combings.

12. AOB.

o David Gray is to run a Sunday event at Murton on 14 June 2009.

Tom Robinson, Nigel Davies, Kate Wallace, David Bough have all offered to help. Sue Hesp is willing to help if further help is needed.

- The visit to the National Bee Unit is to be held next Wednesday 20th May but as yet there has been little interest expressed from the Membership.

Kate Wallace will email the Membership to raise more support for this visit – and the planned visit to Chainbridge Honey Farm

- The Murton Sunday rota is being formed and volunteers are sought, Kate Wallace will email the Membership to ask for volunteers.
- Nigel Davies (as Membership Secretary) has been asked by some of the Members about the retention of membership details. Nigel has checked with the office of the Information Commissioner and it has been confirmed that the Association complies with the Data Protection Act.

13. Date of next meeting - Wednesday 17th June at Murton 7.30

YORK + DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION.

HONEY SHOW 2009.

The Associations annual honey show will be held at the Yorkshire Museum of Farming, Murton on Wednesday 18th November 2009.

Schedule of classes.

- Class 1. Honey light clear.
- Class 1a. Honey light clear. Novice.
- Class 2. Honey medium clear.
- Class 2a. Honey medium clear. Novice.
- Class 3. Honey dark clear.
- Class 3a. Honey dark clear. Novice.
- Class 4. Honey naturally set. Not stirred.
- Class 5. Honey soft set.
- Class 6. Heather honey.
- Class 7. Jar of honey for sale.
- Class 8. 8 oz cut comb.
- Class 9. Dry mead.
- Class 10. Sweet mead.
- Class 11. Block of beeswax less than 1 lb.
- Class 12. Block of beeswax more than 1 lb.
- Class 13. Honey fruit cake made to the standard recipe.
- Class 14. Honey cake to your own recipe.
- Class 15. Plain moulded beeswax candle. Minimum dimensions to be 1½ in diameter and 3" high. (Excluding the wick).
- Class 16. Beeswax candle. Any shape or size or method of production.
- Class 17. One shallow frame suitable for extraction.
- Class 18. Any beekeeping related photograph.

NOTES.

Classes 1 to 6	To be in 1lb round squat honey jars.
Class 7.	Can be any shape or size.
Classes 9 and 10	To be shown in 26 oz clear glass bottles of round section, with rounded shoulders. White flanged corks to be used.
Classes 11 and 12.	Moulds without a pattern are to be used.

The judge will decide on the best Honey in the show regardless of the class entered in, and the best exhibit which will take account of all entries.

Class 13 The standard honey cake is to be made to the following recipe.
(A change to previous years)

Ingredients

Clear Honey 200ml	Butter 25 g
Wholemeal Flour 140g	Plain Flour 25g
Pinch of Salt	Mixed spice 1/2 tsp
Ground Cinnamon 1/4 tsp	Ground Nutmeg 1/4 tsp
Free Range egg, beaten	Bicarbonate of Soda 3/4 tsp
Milk 3 tbsp(45ml)	1 Medium Apple peeled,cored,cut into chunks
A handful of Blackberries(optional)	

And to drizzle:- Honey 3tbsp, Lemon or Orange Juice 1/2 tbsp

Method

Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F/Gas mark 5).Grease and line a 9" (23cm) sandwich tin.

Gently heat together the honey and butter until the butter melts. Sift the flours, salt & spices. Off the heat, beat in the flour, salt, spices and egg. Blend the bicarbonate of soda with the milk and add to mixture.

Place mixture into tin and sprinkle over the chopped fruit.Bake for 30-35 minutes until golden & firm to touch. (It may take a little longer depending on what fruit is used.)Gently warm the extra honey with the lemon or orange juice and drizzle all over the cake straightaway. Leave to cool before serving.

GENERAL.

The Honey Show is open to paid up members of the York +DBKA.

A novice is a person who has taken up beekeeping since the previous years Honey Show.

Novices may also enter classes 4 to 20 on equal terms with experienced exhibitors.

Only one entry per person per class.

Candles entered in classes 15 and 16 may be lit at the judges discretion.

The honey and wax used in exhibits shall be from the exhibitors own bees.

Points will be awarded to prize winners thus: - 3 points to the winner of each class, 2 points will go to second place and 1 point to third place.

John Fuller's Trophy will be awarded to the winner of Class 12

The Alf Race Memorial Cup will be awarded to the member with the most points. In the event of a draw, the member with the highest number of first places will be the winner.

The judge's decision will be final.

Entries will be accepted from 18.15 to 19.15 on the day. Judging will commence at 19.15.