



BUZZWORD

The Newsletter of the
Norfolk Beekeepers' Association

June/July 2021

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Call for copy!

If you have any ideas about what should go in *Buzzword* over the next year or would like to write something, please email the Editor (buzzwordnbka@gmail.com)

Next issue in August

All articles, events and things of interest to the beekeeping world should be sent to the Editor by **24th July 2021** at:

buzzwordnbka@gmail.com

Chairman's Buzzwords

Trevor Nash

The better weather arriving over the past few weeks has seen an increase in the number of swarms. It has been a busy time dealing with them and I would like to thank the swarm coordinators and collectors who have been busy collecting and rehoming them. We need to bear in mind that foul brood is still around in some areas so please take the usual precautions when bringing swarms back to your apiaries.



Things are moving ahead at the new apiary site at Coston. I mentioned in my last article that we had been donated two colonies of bees by a member. Both of these colonies have now been artificially swarmed and also a nuc made up. So hopefully now we have five colonies at the site. We have a team of six members who are carrying out inspections on a regular basis.

I have pleasure in announcing that we have appointed an apiary manager to oversee the running of the apiary. Ian Watkinson, who has up until recently been the apiary manager at Easton College, has offered to take on this position. Ian brings a great deal of knowledge with him, which we will benefit from as he takes up this job. Also, George Male has agreed to take up the position of quartermaster for the new apiary. He will be responsible for the general maintenance of the site and once we are ready to offer bulk purchase items he will coordinate the distribution to the membership. I am sure you will join me in wishing Ian and George best wishes for their new roles.

All being well, we have arranged for the new apiary to be officially opened on Saturday 25th September. I am pleased to announce that our new Vice President, The Bishop of Norwich (The Rt Revd Graham Usher), will conduct the opening ceremony in the afternoon. We also hope to hold our Autumn honey show on the same day at Coston. Dina & Jamie Hambro have kindly offered the use of their facilities for the show. More details on both of these events will be sent out in due course.

I expect most of you are in the process of extracting your first crop of honey for this year. After a miserable start to the year, in recent weeks with the better weather, the bees have been able to catch up and hopefully you will now have an improved harvest.

Best wishes to you all, Trevor (chairnbka@gmail.com)

Bees in the news

What's a bee's favourite flower? Something from Norwich! <https://bit.ly/3gLorP5>

Protecting honeybees from the *Varroa destructor* mite. Although this is commercial, it's interesting. <https://bit.ly/2ShQ0Yg>

What is honey: Not exactly bee vomit. Or is it? <https://bit.ly/3gJBz7w>

Killer Asian hornets reach record levels in UK. <https://bit.ly/2SCGSPs>

How urban beehives and artificial insemination are protecting Australia's bees. <https://bit.ly/2Tlvpwu>

Charitable status for NBKA?



David King

NBKA has operated for many years as an association for the benefit of members, but as many beekeeping associations now operate as charities, including our Norfolk partners WNKLBA, the committee agreed that the time was right to consider assessing the benefits of charitable status.

A subcommittee was formed in February this year, composed of Trevor Nash, Garry Bowler, David Goodwin and myself. Over the course of the next few months, we evaluated the possibility of changes to how the association would operate, and how the finances would be affected, especially with the exciting news of the association apiary.

Members will be pleased to know that the benefits of charitable status are significant, mostly thanks to the financial benefit of Gift Aid. Additionally, there are some legal aspects of a charity that are particularly useful, such as the ability to own property in the name of the charity, exemption from Corporation Tax on trading profits, and so on. There will be some administrative changes, such as appointing a board of trustees, and re-writing of the constitution to be in a form suitable for review by the Charity Commission, which the subcommittee is tasked with working on over the coming months.

As this is a significant change for the association, the committee will draft a proposal for the AGM in 2022, to seek approval by the membership, and this will be circulated to the membership in good time. At this stage, it is not likely that the day-to-day operation of the association would change, and the most visible change for members would likely be a request to have their membership fees counted under Gift Aid during annual renewals.

The charitable status subcommittee is currently in the process of reviewing changes to the association constitution, as well as preparing the Charity Commission application paperwork. We would like to invite members with relevant expertise to get in contact; please email membershipnbka@gmail.com or any of the other subcommittee members, or the executive committee if you prefer, and watch out for further announcements before the AGM.

Useful resource:

Several — on last looking there were over 500 — online beekeeping events are available (some charge, others are free) to keep you entertained through to the summer and beyond: <http://bit.ly/3a43XPH>.

Back to basics

Venetia Rist, Examination Secretary

Why not enter for the Basic Assessment this year and have the opportunity to receive a badge and certificate to show that you have reached a certain level of proficiency in your beekeeping career?

To take the Basic Assessment all you need is to have managed at least one colony of bees for a minimum of 12 months. The Basic Assessment syllabus can appear daunting at first glance but on closer inspection will show that it merely lists the basic things that all beekeepers should know.

Practical Assessments and Theory Exams

BBKA members can now apply and pay for examinations and assessments online rather than use a paper form.

The new examination application administration system (EXA) went live last February. To get an online application form please ask me, your NBKA Exam Secretary (examsecretarynbka@gmail.com), to email you a link. This link can be used to fill in the application form and pay online. You will get an email receipt to confirm your application has been received.

In the case of applying for your Basic Assessment please let me know when you have confirmation so that I can arrange the assessment date and venue for you.

Further information can be found on the BBKA website; you will need to log in to get all the information: <https://bit.ly/3qazyFy>

NBKA supplies: acetic acid

Alvan Parker

NBKA makes 80% acetic acid available for members needing to treat disease.

There has been an increase in the number of hives in Norfolk getting European foul brood (EFB). Acetic acid is an effective sterilising solution but members may be having difficulty in obtaining it at a reasonable price. This is because some bee equipment suppliers charge in excess of £18 per litre (in 1 litre containers) and will not deliver, choosing only to offer collection.

As a consequence, the NBKA is obtaining a supply delivered to Norfolk that members will be able to purchase at cost. The cost will be approx. £26 per 5 litres in a sealed container.

The reason for autumn dry comb sterilisation is if any of your bees have unknowingly been exposed to an EFB infection and have contaminated some of your equipment with EFB bacteria, it will help stop its transmission from hive to hive via contaminated combs. Untreated, the EFB bacteria can stay infectious for around 3 years. Other benefits of comb sterilisation are for controlling nosema and wax moth in all stages.

If you wish to make a purchase, please contact Alvan Parker on 01603 873383, or via email at alvanthomas@yahoo.co.uk, giving your name and best contact phone number. If you have any questions about why you may wish to, or how to carry out this procedure please phone for advice.

Norfolk Natterings 2

Jeff Rounce, BSc

This article by the late Jeff Rounce from the June 1997 edition of the *British Bee Journal* is introduced by his daughter, Pat Marshall:

“Dad talks about the high losses where varroa had been detected the previous year, he also talks about alternative methods of control. I remember going to the site at Tatterford that Dad is talking about and the losses were devastating for him. He said at the time that beekeeping would never be the same again, we were then treating twice a year and the cost per colony was more than it is now as it was all new to the market.

“He also talks of his visit with bee farmers to a distillery in Wales that distilled whisky, which he found very hard to believe. Also hard to believe for him was the fact that they distilled gin and vodka as well. How things have changed since then with the microbreweries that have sprung up all over the country as well as all the popularity with the local gin and whisky distilleries, even a Norfolk whiskey. What on earth would he think if he knew that our honey (Walsingham Apiaries) is being used in a local gin (produced by Black Shuck Distillery). “Vision Gin” is flavoured with orange and Walsingham honey, which I believe to be the first gin with honey used in the distilling.”

As we enter the last week of April, the swallows, at least three of them, have arrived and disappeared. Not such an odd occurrence in this part of the world if the weather turns cold. Actually they were first seen about three weeks ago at Potter Heigham on the River Thurne, part of the complex of rivers and lakes, both natural and man-made, that make up the Broads. That is probably where ours have gone for cold northeasterly winds that have set in with the advent of flowering of the blackthorn, the so-called “blackthorn winter”.

The problem with northeasterly winds associated with anticyclones is that they bring little or no rain, something of which we are desperately short. Unless conditions change for the better by the end of the month, we shall have had only about a third of the year’s rainfall to date, that following on the two previous years will pose serious problems. I have already mentioned the fact that some streams have dried up, that is bad enough in itself but the sad thing is that the breeding places for frogs and toads have disappeared; we no longer see the squashed corpses of these amphibia spread across the road just below the house.

Apart from the recent hiccup in the weather the winter was very kind to us; *Iris reticulata* was in flower only a few days after St. Valentine’s Day, quickly followed by early narcissi; those together with all the other spring flowering bulbs have gone, even the Crown Imperials are on the way out and crab apples are in full flower.

So far the weather has not been sufficiently warm for a good look in the brood chambers: that is not to say that

the opportunities for inspections have not arisen, they have. The temperatures were sufficiently high in mid-March for a quick look into brood chambers to see how colonies had fared over the winter. The loss rate varied, on some sites the losses were about normal, but on those where varroa had been detected last year they were horrific, not helped by the fact that, for a variety of reasons, I was not able to treat last August. On one site 75% were dead, and the remainder were weak, on the other just over 50% had succumbed, but the survivors were stronger. All colonies were treated with Bayvarol, and it is because I do not wish to disturb them that I will not look into the brood chambers until the six week period is up, that is why no further inspections have been carried out.

It is interesting to read in various beekeeping publications of the experiences of other beekeepers when dealing with varroa. What is obvious is that where alternative methods of treatment have been used, the results seem to have been disastrous; this seems to apply, particularly, to homeopathic remedies. Having enquired about the formulations of these preparations, I am at a loss to understand how their users can expect them to work. Likewise some of the other treatments. I hope these remarks don’t offend my friends who are believers in homeopathic medicines, but I feel we are dealing with something so serious when it comes to varroa, that it would be foolish in the extreme not to listen to those who have had first-hand experience of dealing successfully with this problem. Maybe there is a magic cure just around the corner, just as was with Frow mixture. Such a discovery would be very fortuitous for, unlike *Acarapis Woodii*, *Varroa Jacobsoni* is not a natural parasite of *Apis mellifera*.



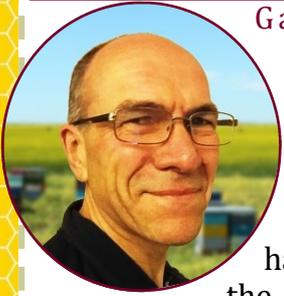
I can understand beekeepers looking for an alternative treatment for this problem, but at present I can see no alternative; formic and other organic acids are not recommended for use in this country, in any case they are not the most pleasant of substances to handle; thymol might be effective, but so far I feel that like so many other treatments, there have not been properly conducted trials; here I mean trials which have been carried out with controls. The same could be said about substances like methyl salicylate, at least the latter like thymol are not likely to leave residues in honey or harm the person handling them. Maybe I am being a trifle pessimistic, but I fear we are having to deal with a problem which, if not tackled correctly, could result in beekeeping, as we know it, becoming a thing of the past in these islands.

The Bee Farmers’ Association held its Spring Meeting in Wales for a change; this year it was held in mid-Wales at one of the many spa towns in that region, Llanwytrd Wells. A very fine venue it was too. It was the first time that Verna and I had been to those parts. Apart from the scenery which was a pleasant change from the relatively flat country around here, I was impressed by the fact that there was very little arable land, almost all of it pasture with sheep but very few cattle. It is not since my childhood that I had seen so many well laid hedges;

(Continued on p5)

The Secretary Matters

Garry Bowler



As I have got into the habit of starting previous articles with some comments about the weather I shall stick to the routine. I expect that we have all found the tail end of the winter and the spring rather interesting. As I write this it has definitely been too warm and the dramatic change in the weather has continued to provide a beekeeping year that can only be described as 'mad'.

It is certainly proving my most challenging year since I started beekeeping in 2006. In the last issue of *Buzzword* I mentioned that I was concerned about how my bees had come through the winter. Well, the challenges continued and I began to wonder whether it was more than bad luck so I have been studying my notes from last year and comparing with previous years. It does seem to be a run of bad luck as I hate to think that I have been careless. However, it does look as though things are improving with my bees, temporarily at least, but to achieve that I have had to collect a couple of swarms (one needed me to climb up on someone's shed roof) and scrounge a colony split off a fellow member. I only have 3 colonies out of 8 likely to provide honey but I will be happy with that.

Insulation matters...

You will have seen the update on the Association Apiary in Trevor's column. A year later than intended but it is now up and running and you will soon be hearing more about plans for teaching, demos etc. One challenge we do have is with the shipping container we are using for storage. It is dark green and is getting extremely warm when we have sunny conditions. Do we have any members who are, or know of, insulation experts and can help decide the best way of keeping the temperature more suitable, particularly important if we are storing heat-sensitive items such as foundation?

One thing we would like to do is order consumables with a bulk discount which we can then pass on to all our members. Options we have under consideration are a) lining with 50mm Celotex covered with plywood and b) a proprietary lining such as the one produced by TP Solutions (<https://tpsolutions.eu/container-liners.html>). This second option would probably also need some means of protecting it from damage. Any experts out there who can advise on the best solution?

Supported charities

Each year NBKA supports selected charities associated with beekeeping including Bees Abroad, and BBKA Research funding. Another we support is EARS, the East Associations Research Studentships and we have circulated information on these in the past. This is a collaboration between Associations from the East of England and has funded studentships for the past 10 years. The students are currently supervised by Professor Giles

Budge at Newcastle University. To date there have been 3 successful projects and we have just received details of EARS4 which will fund a PhD student looking to develop a better understanding of varroa mite biology and its interaction with beekeeping practices. We consider it is very valuable to continue to support such areas of research which will be of value to us all.

Previous EARS studentships are:

EARS 1: Student Ricarda Kather supervised by Stephen Martin at Sheffield University. The project finished in the summer of 2013. This researched how varroa camouflaged itself using the colony smells. As a result of this research the mechanism of acquisition of the colony odour by the mite is now known. It soaks up the odour into its cuticle in a passive way – it doesn't ingest the smell. When mites are on pupae the same process of acquisition takes place. <https://bit.ly/3wH6oAz>

EARS 2: Student Emma Brown and the supervisor Alan Bowman at Aberdeen University. The project looked into the transmission of DWV when passed through the varroa mite. It transpires there are two variants of the virus, 'A' and 'B'. Varroa are very poor transmitters of DWV-A, but much better adapted to transmit DWV-B. Less than 1% of DWV-A remains in varroa within 48 hours unless it is actively being replaced by a dietary source of DWV-A – this is not true of DWV-B which is better able to multiply in varroa. <https://bit.ly/3gDjDwi>

EARS 3: Student Theodora Commandeur and the supervisor Giles Budge at Newcastle University. This project started in the autumn of 2018 and is looking at why Chronic Bee Paralysis is becoming more common. The virus can be transmitted between adult bees mechanically and faecal orally. There is clear evidence this viral disease is emerging, but the drivers are currently unknown. The project seeks to find why this virus has increased significantly in recent years. *Still to be reported*

Hay fever (again)

On Tuesday 14th, Chris Goreham of Radio Norfolk covered the subject of local honey and its benefits for hay fever sufferers. I have a feeling they discussed the same thing this time last year (see *Buzzword*, June 2020 with Venetia Rist being interviewed by Zoë Ball). There were plenty of recommendations to find local sources of honey so hopefully we benefit from that. My brother was in the studio and as he is a hay fever sufferer was involved in the discussion so I got a mention. I don't want a rush of customers just yet though, I still haven't taken any honey off this year.

Apiary site offered

Pete and his family live on the cliff top in Mundesley and have a large garden. They would love to have a bee hive in their garden and receive honey but they have not got the time to look after it. Would any member like to place a hive in their garden? Please contact Pete on: 07721924833.

Norfolk Natterings (cont. from p3)

there was no need for any additional proofing of the fields against the occupants.

Welsh Whisky

One is never too old to learn, and one of the new things to me, and I think most of the beefarmers, was the production of that most delectable spirit, whisky, in Wales; not only did the distillery, on the outskirts of Brecon, produce whisky, but gin and vodka into the bargain. The story of the connection with American whisky, though I felt it was tenuous, was told and depicted most clearly.

The visit to a nearby honey packing plant, which deals not only with imported honey but also with honey from this country was revealing, not for the many honeys and methods of packaging but with the fact that "organic" honey from Africa of all places and New Zealand, was being bottled. I have no intention of going over old ground except to comment that I find it difficult to understand how a body such as the Soil Association can lend its name to the claims made for such honey. Is it not a marketing ploy?

Last night I took part in a broadcast by Radio Norfolk, and was asked to take samples of honey to form the basis of the discussion. Having sold all my heather honey, I prevailed upon a friend, Eddie Rix of East Winch near King's Lynn, to let me have a jar and some cut-comb, which I was sure would be new to the interviewer; it was! When I collected the honey from Eddie, two days ago, he told me that he was moving his first load of bees into Bramley apples that evening, and the second load tonight. That is about a fortnight earlier than normal.

Beekeeping Examination

Many years ago, 1976 to be exact, I attended a week's course organised by one of her Majesty's school inspectors, it was about beekeeping in education. Not only were school teachers involved, but so too were a number of experts on the fringe of education; they included Dr. Eva Crane, then Director of IBRA and the late David Little, at that time chairman of BBKA Examinations Board. During discussions on beekeeping examinations I raised a matter that had troubled me for a long time, that was the format of the Intermediate and Senior Examinations of BBKA. I felt that essay type questions were all very well for the likes of me who had a grammar school education, courtesy of a county scholarship, but were off-putting to anyone not so fortunate. At that time CSE examinations, mainly for secondary modern and lower stream grammar school students, were well under way. If CSE boards did nothing else, they introduced new methods of questioning such as multiple choice and structured questions, which though they required shorter answers, were very searching. Unfortunately, my ideas seemed to fall on rather stony ground. It was with a feeling of self-satisfaction that I greeted the modular method of examinations for both qualifications. For my sins I became somewhat involved in Modules 1 and 2 this year. What pleased me was the knowledge that there were almost fifty beekeepers who sat the two papers. Unfortunately I found myself unable to mark the papers, so cannot comment, not that I would be able to anyway. It would have been interesting to compare them with the old type questions which I helped set and mark last year.

Membership notes

David King, Membership Secretary

Midway through the year, there is not generally a great deal of activity for the membership secretary, besides several swarm collections! However, there are some changes to renewals that may be of interest to members.



Firstly, partner membership is a type of member introduced last year by the BBKA, which reduces by £6.50 the cost of BBKA capitation for the second member who lives at the same address. The second member does not pay a BDI premium, and does not receive a paper copy of BBKA News, but still receives the other benefits of BBKA membership, including public liability insurance. There are several members who would seem to be eligible for this benefit, so please contact me by email at membershipnbka@gmail.com if you would like more information.

As a reminder, if renewing your membership, the first member selects full membership, and only the second member selects partner membership. I will send out a reminder along with renewal forms, to hopefully nudge some members into making savings.

Another new class of membership recently introduced by the BBKA is that of the "Country member". This is an odd name, as the membership class is for those who wish to receive a subscription to BBKA News, but no other benefits. This may be suitable for social members, or more generally for those who do not keep bees. It is not likely that this will be offered as part of the renewal process, but if any current or potential members are interested, please contact me.

I occasionally receive queries from schools who would like information about beekeeping from the BBKA, and our help in doing so by joining NBKA as a school member. Although there are a few such queries each year, the interest generally fizzles out, partly because the concept of school membership is poorly-defined (for most schools, it equates to a BBKA News subscription and easy access to an information pack), and also as most schools do not have the committed beekeepers in place to look after bees on site.

Sadly, this means we have not had a successful application for school membership in recent history. If any member knows of local schools that are interested in membership, or would like to discuss benefits, such as the available information pack, please let me know.

In previous years, subscriptions to *BeeCraft* and *Beekeepers' Quarterly* were offered to members at a discount. While dealing with *BeeCraft* has always been a smooth process, it became impossible to continue dealing with Northern Bee Books, as they stopped replying to emails regarding renewals, and were not much help by telephone either. Sadly, this means that the association no longer offers a subscription to *Beekeepers' Quarterly* as part of the membership renewal process.

Things 'For Sale'

For sale:

2021 queen **6-frame nucs** available, late June/early July

BS National 8 x 12" frames, £150

Collection or installation by arrangement

Contact: **Venetia Rist**, 07710 753307

9-frame stainless steel manual radial extractor (+ 3 Frame tangential adaptor). Clean and in good order. (Selling because I am upgrading my extractor to one with a motor.) £300 ono (they are £450 new).

Contact **Mike Raw** on 07787525656

2-frame tangential extractor, used but in good condition. Takes 2 shallow or 2 deep frames: £50 (currently retailing at Thorne for £108).

For a handy video on using it, please see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MtZv8pTu2M>

Contact: **Venetia Rist**, 07710 753307



Hive thefts: please be aware of reported thefts. If you are offered a nuc/hive from a 'strange' source please contact the Secretary.

Nucs and queens for sale

Nucs: 6-frame National, £150; 14x12, £180

Delivery and installation available

Queens

Open mated from good-tempered stock, £20 + postage
Viewing prior to purchase welcome

Contact **Lee**: 07717 676262 or leechapman91@live.co.uk

Buzzword glove survey!

Suggested by member Mike Raw, what gloves do you use and why do you think they're the best thing since sliced bee-bread? Please complete our survey and tell us what you think. Results published in the next edition. Please email the Editor (buzzwordnbka@gmail.com) or go online to complete the survey at: <https://bit.ly/3gLRemK>

Gloves preferred:

- "Marigold" Extra-life kitchen gloves
- "Marigold" Extra tough outdoor gloves
- Other brand kitchen-style glove (which?)
- Heavy duty leather (cowhide)
- Standard leather (goatskin)
- Mordant leather
- Plastic (with integral gauntlet)
- Latex (with integral gauntlets)
- Latex (disposable)
- Tough nitrile (long cuff)
- Standard (thin) nitrile
- No gloves
- Other (state):

Why:

Local suppliers listing

Please bear in mind the advice of Public Health England for social distancing and essential journeys for everyone in the UK when buying or picking up supplies.

Applebee Apiary, Rockland St Mary

John Everett, Master Beekeeper

Large range of beekeeping equipment from Thorne and other suppliers. We breed and sell honey bees. 01508 538231 everettapplebee@hotmail.co.uk
<http://applebeeorchard.co.uk/>

Closed Sundays

Don Cooper, Roughton NR11 8QP; 01263 761517

5/6-Frame BS nucs available from £160;

Other sizes of nuc available to suit customer;

30lb Buckets of honey;

Advice on "all things bees"

Glebelands Apiary, Rocklands St Mary NR14 7BX

Peter Beckley, Thorne agent (reportedly the longest serving in the UK). 01508 480262; orns@btconnect.com

Anglia Honey Services

Honey extraction, jarring and labelling services and hive management:

Hill House,
Framingham Earl Road,
Yelverton,
Norfolk NR14 7PD

Tel 01508 491115 or
07711 517896

angliahoneyservices@yahoo.com



Forthcoming Events

All future events are being held online until further notice because of COVID-19.

Please see regular emails from the Secretary for further information.