



BUZZWORD

The Newsletter of the
Norfolk Beekeepers' Association

Aug/Sept 2021

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Any thoughts?

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 October

All articles, events and things of interest to the beekeeping world should be sent to the Editor by **30th September 2021** at: buzzwordnbka@gmail.com

Chairman's Buzzwords

Trevor Nash

As we approach the end of another beekeeping season, our thoughts turn to preparing our colonies for winter. Hopefully, there will be a reasonable last crop of honey to remove before the bees receive their treatment. It has been a mixed year for some; the weather has had quite an influence on the bees.

Although Covid restrictions are now being eased, there still remains an air of caution. We hope to have our 'live' talk on Saturday September 4th by Kirsty Stainton. Kirsty will be talking about her work with honey bee viruses. She currently works at the Pirbright Institute. I am sure you will find this talk very helpful and interesting and would encourage you all to attend.

I can appreciate that some of you may still feel a little uneasy attending a talk "in the flesh". We have therefore arranged for the talk to be given on Zoom as well as at a live venue. This will still allow those who wish to hear it do so in the more comfortable surroundings of their homes. At the moment we are not sure where the live meeting will be held as the conference facility at Easton College is presently not available. We will confirm the details of this in due course.

We are also looking forward to our Autumn Honey Show on the 25th September at Manor Farm, Coston. The schedules for this will soon be sent out to you all. It would be great to see as many exhibits as possible for this show, which will be the first since the Autumn Honey Show of 2019. Also, in the afternoon we will be having the official opening of our new apiary by the Bishop of Norwich.

I look forward to seeing you all soon. Best wishes, Trevor (chairnbka@gmail.com)



Bees in the news

Farm pesticides killing more bees: an analysis of 90 studies suggests that agricultural pesticides sold to farmers ready-mixed into "cocktails" can kill twice as many bees. On a positive note, another study suggests that resistance is increasing to varroa. <https://bbc.in/3jP7uVy>

Dutch honey bees resistant to varroa mite imported to Australia to help guard against the pest. With Australia remaining the only continent still free of varroa mite this is a pre-emptive move on the part of beekeepers, although some may consider it to be a dangerous intervention. <https://ab.co/3si5DMI>

Royal beekeeper fined for giving bees banned drug. The beekeeper, who has produced honey for both the Balmoral Estate and Prince Charles' Duchy Estate, runs over 3,000 hives in Scotland and parts of England. He bought unlicensed Terramycin from the United States over the internet, used it to treat European foulbrood and found himself with a £2,500 fine. <https://bbc.in/3CPUKqb>

"The great apiary in the sky", remembering: some 'notable' beekeepers for the BBKA who have passed away this year. <https://bit.ly/2XoRdit>

Does a 'flow hive' work?

Ian Watkinson, Committee Member

A few years ago, while chatting with some new beekeepers, someone asked me what I thought of the new flow hive. I had never heard of such a thing. So they explained how there was a new hive where you didn't have to clear bees before taking supers off and you didn't have to go through the long process of extracting the honey. With this new hive you simply put some tubes into the super, crack open the frames and the honey runs out, while it's still on the hive!

My first thoughts were that it must be some sort of online joke; was it April the first? A good while later, a new beekeeper told me he had bought two flow hives and what did I think? I was intrigued and went to see them for myself. Not only were they not a joke, they seemed very well constructed. To cut a long story short, I was interested enough to get one myself.

Well, in fact I bought just the flow hive super, which fits on a standard British national brood body.

Once the super is on, the bees readily fill the cells and cap them over as usual. There is a window at the side of the super where you can see a portion of the outer frame. When bees are filling these cells it is time to harvest some of the central frames. At the front of the super there is access to the ends of the frames.

Extraction made easy

In order to extract some honey you remove the panel and you can then remove the small round plastic plugs below the frames you want to extract. Short plastic tubes, provided with the hive, can then be inserted into the exposed holes. Above the frames are rectangular holes with plastic covers that need to be removed to access the mechanism for splitting the frames down the middle. These get propolised and I always need pliers to get them out.

It is difficult to describe how this mechanism works. There is a long "L"-shaped steel rod that is inserted into the bottom of the rectangular hole and twisted through 90 degrees. This opens the frame. You need a receptacle under the tube you inserted below the frame since the honey will start to run out shortly after 'cracking' the frame. I use large glass jars. You need something to stop bees being drawn into the jar with the honey; I use a bit of cling film.

Once the honey is running you just sit back and wait until the frame is empty! When it's done you remove the short tube and put the round plug back in. The "L"-shaped rod is then put back, this time into the top of the rectangular slot and twisted 90 degrees the other way, causing the mechanism to close up the centre of the frame again.

The advantages of this system are fairly obvious: no need for an extractor, dealing with frames of hon-



ey or uncapping and the honey runs out easily as it is still warm, on the hive. The main disadvantages are that it is quite difficult to decide when the honey is ripe for extraction and, when full, the super is very heavy and awkward to remove in order to inspect the brood chamber.

Recommendation?

On balance, would I recommend it? Based on my experience, probably not, mainly because of the difficulty of inspecting the brood when the super is filling up. You also don't want to use it with fast-setting honey such as oil-seed rape. Judging the right time to extract would be tricky and if it set in the frames you would have quite a problem. They are also quite pricey.

Insect of the month

With the butterfly count underway*, this seems like an appropriate choice for August. The Common Blue (*Polyommatus icarus*) can be found all over the UK. Despite its name, the females are less conspicuous than their male counterparts, with wing colour varying across the country and within local populations. *<https://bit.ly/3iMWvfZ>



Readers' glove survey

Chris Coath, Editor

Thank you to all members who completed the readers' glove survey in the last issue (June 2021), suggested by a reader, Mike Raw. Mike recently had to knock down queen cells on a colony that was very 'waspish' and they had a real go at him.

Mike wrote in about his experience with some of the Marigold outdoor/gardening gloves which are black not yellow. These gloves are double layered latex and all he got was a partial sting on the back of one hand and it didn't go all the way through. He suggests that these could be recommended to new beekeepers and we were interested to know what you use.

Would you like to see what other members think of equipment or techniques? Write to the Editor at buzzwordnbka@gmail.com and suggest something.

We didn't have a clear winner, as you can see from the results (top right) but there is a general preference for the kitchen-style gloves, with a combined total of over 64% among members. Following that are the various forms of disposable latex and nitrile making up 54% and the standard leather had just 9%. The sharp-eyed among you will note that the total is more than 100%; that's because you could choose more than one glove (as the Editor did) if you combined gloves or had more than one favourite. More is explained in the selected comments below.

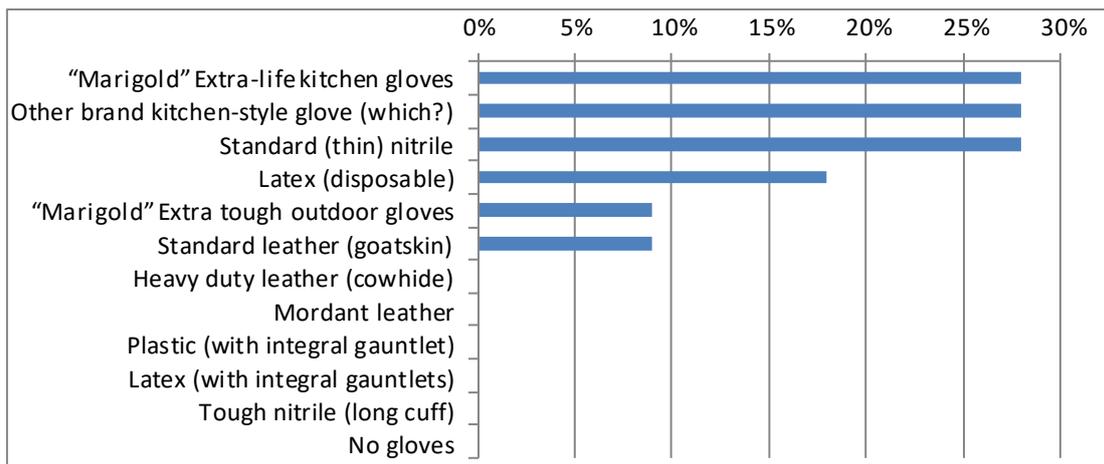
What is perhaps surprising is that there were no members who responded to the survey who didn't wear any gloves at all. I'm sure there are some but maybe they all now use latex/nitrile in an effort to prevent the spread of disease.

Finally, there are a few members who are very against the use of leather gauntlets (or other thick gloves), probably for good reason. Maybe we as an association should offer advice to new members about not using them unless they have a great fear of being stung and have an allergy to bee stings.

Selected comments from the survey

Marigold/Extra-life and other marigold-type gloves:

- "Stings don't penetrate, but scent may be an issue." (Marigold)
- "I like to wear a small tight glove but I am so indifferent to being stung that I would wear thin nitrile gloves. The brand simply reflects where I am shopping when I need them." (Marigold Extra-life and Other brand)
- "Compromise between feel and ease of sting removal. Also reasonably durable. I did try leather gauntlets and



think they should be strongly discouraged." (Marigold Extra-life)

- "When they are cheap enough the Marigolds last a couple of seasons. I usually add the disposable latex gloves not for protection but for infection control between hives. I have a bee-sting allergy, so I won't rely on the latex alone. The problem is that the gloves make my hands extremely sweaty and it's not at all pleasant." (Marigold Extra-life)
- "Cheap and cheerful rubber washing up gloves, easy to clean and although they do not last long, can then be used up in the garden. Standard leather gloves with attached gauntlet when moving hives, but not for hive inspections." (Other brand kitchen-style)
- "Supermarket own brand as same quality as Marigold and cheaper" (Other brand kitchen-style)

Nitrile and latex disposable gloves:

- "Relatively cheap, disposable, close fitting allows good sensitivity, moderate sting protection, protection from propolis and sticky nectar/honey while inspecting." (Latex (disposable))
- "I am using gloves less now but when I do and where propolis is abundant then a good quality long cuff nitrile does the job, and can be reused. Ansell Micro+Flex is what I now use." (Tough nitrile)
- "Leather gauntlets are fine for pruning the roses but not good for beekeeping – you just can't feel what you are doing at all. And as for picking up a queen, forget it. They also get propolised and can harbour disease. I have some somewhere, just in case I have to inspect a 'colony from hell'. Thin nitriles enable me to pick up queens and feel what I am doing but leave clean hands afterwards. They are slippery enough that bees don't get a good foot-hold if they want to commit suicide on my hands, so the chance of a sting is much reduced." (Standard (thin) nitrile)
- "Feel and ease of cleaning between hives." (Standard (thin) nitrile)
- "Thin gloves preferred simply to keep fingers clean, and to have good feel during inspections." (Standard (thin) nitrile)

Things 'For Sale'

For sale:

Acetic Acid Supply: NBKA has a supply of 80% acetic acid available to members at cost. 1 litre bottles at £6.30; 5 litres at £26. These can be collected from Alvan in Reepham. For details contact 01603 873383.

Nucs and queens for sale

2021 queen **6-frame nucs** available

BS National 8 x 12" frames, £150

Collection or installation by arrangement

Contact: **Venetia Rist**, 07710 753307

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

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

Do you want to help improve *Buzzword*?

We're very keen to have you write something for *Buzzword* — after all, it's a newsletter for members. If you have any ideas either for writing yourself or for someone else to write it, please sound out the Editor. Just email him on buzzwordnbka@gmail.com.

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;

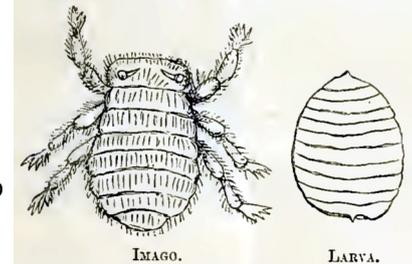
Advice on "all things bees"

Query No. 558 from the *British Bee Journal* April 1 1883

Question "I have forwarded, by post, a small box containing two bees, with four small insects, to all appearance like lice. I first discovered them last summer in a bar-frame hive, between the wings of several bees. ... Last week on examining the hive I found the queen dead with a number of bees, with several of these insects on the live bees. Would you kindly inform me in the *April Bee Journal* what they can be? Was the death of the queen caused by them?" — G. Ledger, Weybridge.

Reply to Query No. 558 — The parasite on the bees you forwarded is the blind bee-louse (*Braula coeca*); it was at one time called the 'Italian' bee-louse ... Mr. Abbott has found as many as eighteen, Mr. Cowan twenty-three on the queen; the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* mentions fifty or one hundred being found on one. In the south of Europe they worry and irritate, and devitalise the bees; ... in England, they disappear soon after the queens are introduced, the climate not seeming favourable to their existence.

Beekeepers generally remove them from the queen by the aid of a sharp-pointed knife or a forceps. Queens have been watched with two or three on them, but they have never given any indications of being incommoded by them. We should therefore conclude that the death of your queen was not caused by their presence. Seen under a microscope they are most repulsive looking creatures.



Glebelands Apiary, Rocklands St Mary NR14 7BX
Peter Beckley, Thorne agent (reportedly the longest serving in the UK). 01508 480262; orns@btconnect.com

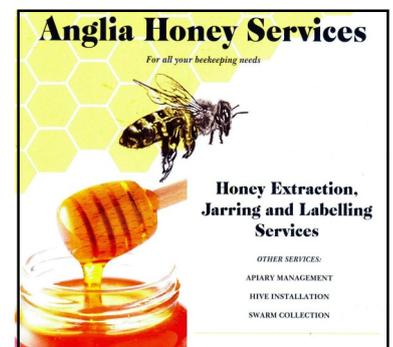
Anglia Honey Services

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

25th September

Time: TBA

Autumn Honey Show

NBKA Apiary, Manor Farm, Coston

Some future events are being held live, online or a combination of both until further notice.

Please see regular emails from the Secretary for further information.