BUZZWORD

First prize, National Honey Show

The Newsletter of the Norfolk Beekeepers' Association

July 2020

Inside this issue:

Next issue in September

All articles, events and things of interest to the beekeeping world should be sent to the Editor by **25th August 2020** at:

buzzwordnbka@gmail.com

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Chairman's Buzzwords

Trevor Nash

Over the past year, the Executive Committee has been working on establishing a site for the association as a teaching apiary. We have looked at two sites and have agreed on a site at Coston, a village just outside Barnham Broom. The site is owned by Jamie and Dina Hambro who have kindly offered some land to site an apiary. They have also agreed to let us have a storage container and Portakabin on site as well.

The Portakabin will allow members to meet up for demos and have refreshments. It will also be used for extracting honey from the apiary. The container will be used to store NBKA equipment. We will also be looking into providing bulk purchase of equipment such as jars and foundation, which could be sold on to members at discounted prices. These would also be stored in the container.

It had been our hope to establish the apiary this year. Unfortunately, due to the present restrictions, we have not been able to proceed any further for the time being.

It may be possible that we could install the Portakabin and container later this year. We would then look to get the apiary stocked with bees in 2021. We are proposing up to ten colonies for the apiary.

When the apiary is up and running, we would very much like to have a team of volunteers to help set up and run the apiary. If you feel this is something you would be interested in, please let me know by sending me an email to chairnbka@gmail.com. Kind regards, Trevor

Bees in the News

Scientists translate honey bee queen duets

Scientists using highly sensitive vibration detectors have decoded honey bee queens' "tooting and quacking" duets in the hive. The queens quack when ready to emerge – but if two are free at the same time, they will fight to the death. So when one hatches, its quacks turn to toots, telling the workers to keep the others captive. https://bbc.in/2Z2HZah

Beckham builds a beehive

Hot on the heels of Chris Hemsworth keeping bees, another unexpected potential beekeeper. May we welcome him to our hobby and wish him luck with his new adventure. https://bit.ly/3guRfth

Hand-painting 50,000 bees

How a 'muralist' has plans to paint bees all over the place after he has been converted to the joy of bees. https://bit.ly/2VIKHQ8

Chronic bee paralysis

Regina Nickel, Seasonal Bee Inspector, Norfolk

One of the many nightmares of beekeepers is their bees suddenly dying en masse. Until recently this was a relatively rare phenomenon and usually linked to poisoning by pesticides or insecticides[1]. But these days hardly a week goes by without a phone call or email from beekeepers worried about mounds of dead and dying bees in front of the hives. Beekeepers may also report clusters of trembling bees, bees crawling on the ground and/or guards attacking hairless, dark and shiny bees at the hive entrance.

So what is responsible for these distressing and increasingly common observations? Many (agro)chemicals as well as parasitic infestations with the microsporidium *Nosema apis* (Nosemosis), the amoeba *Malphighamoeba mellifica* or the tracheal mite *Acarapis woodi* (Acarapisosis) can cause the observed symptoms, all but the presence of hairless, dark and shiny bees. The concurrence of adult bees with behavioural symptoms and 'black robbers' strongly suggests an outbreak of chronic bee paralysis (CBP).

The symptoms of CBP have long been recognized[2], though the causative agent of this infectious disease was not confirmed until 1963, when the godfather of honey bee virology, Leslie Bailey and colleagues, isolated and characterised the chronic bee paralysis virus (CBPV).

Although CBPV is one of the most widespread honey bee viruses, it persists mostly as a covert (or inapparent) infection causing little or no harm to honey bee colonies for generations. Yet in certain circumstances, such as parasitic coinfections or the exposure to certain agrochemicals, the virus may be activated to replicate rapidly, thus causing an overt and often fatal infection[3]. Symptomatic bees can contain many millions of virus particles, of which about 50% are concentrated in the head. The presence and multiplication of CBPV in the central nervous system of honey bees is responsible for the nervous and behavioural symptoms of overt CPBV infections.

CBP outbreaks used to be rare, but in recent years there have been numerous reports from around the world of a significant increase of overt CBPV infections. Confirming the anecdotal evidence from my contacts with beekeepers, a very recent (and much publicised) study analysing NBU inspection records showed that CBP outbreaks in England and Wales have increased exponentially since 2007[4]. Follow-on studies are underway to determine the reasons for this increase.

Figure showing bees affected by Type-2 syndrome (aka 'Black robbers') ©Crown Copyright

Clinical signs

Historically, overt CBP infections have been characterised by two syndromes. Both syndromes often coincide in an affected colony, but usually one or the other dominates. Type-1 syndrome[5] includes the abnormal trembling of the wings and bodies of CBPV-infected bees. The paralysed bees are unable to fly and their wings may appear partially spread and dislocated (K-wings). Diseased bees may have bloated abdomen caused by the distension of the honeysac with liquid and show dysentery-like symptoms. Symptomatic bees die within a few days and severely affected colonies may collapse within a week.

Bees affected by Type-2 syndrome[6] become almost hairless and appear dark and shiny. Symptomatic bees are subjected to nibbling attacks (which may account for their hairlessness) and are prevented by guard bees from entering the hive. Type-2 bees are able to fly at first, but soon they begin to crawl and tremble, and die shortly afterwards.

Transmission

High levels of CBPV particles have been detected in the honey sacs and in excreted faeces of diseased bees and in pollen from symptomatic colonies.

Infection studies demonstrated that many millions of viral particles are required to cause CBP when ingested orally, but fewer than one-hundred particles when injected directly into the haemocoel. Furthermore, contaminated faeces have been shown to cause CBP in asymptomatic bees following their confinement in cages previously occupied by diseased bees, and CBPV-contaminated pollen traps have been implicated in the relapse of CBP outbreaks.

It is therefore thought that in order to provoke an overt CBPV infection, virus particles excreted by diseased bees in their faeces invade the haemocoel and/or epithelial tissue through wounds created by broken bristles and the feeding sites of varroa mites parasitising adult bees. The persistence of CBPV in asymptomatic colonies is likely to be the consequence of trophallaxis, contact between adult bees and possibly the vertical (transovarial) transmission from infected queens to their offspring.

Contributing factors

Confinement and overcrowding of bees within a colony because of inclement weather, poor nectar flow or beekeeping practices have been identified as important factors contributing to overt CBPV infections. High colony densities both within an apiary and a geographic area have been associated with past CBP outbreaks in England, possibly by increasing the viral transmission through drifting of infected bees. Although there is no conclusive evidence so far for a direct transmission of

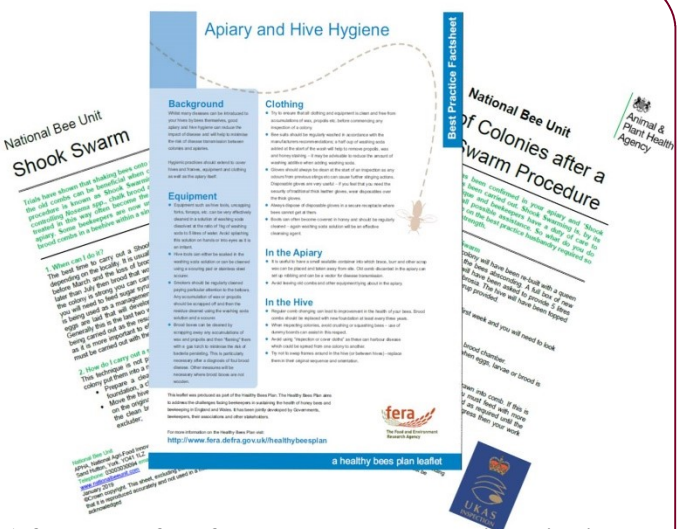
CBPV from varroa to honey bees (as is the case for DWV, see *Buzzword*, May 2020), it is likely that the injuries caused by the parasitising mites increase the bees' susceptibility to CBPV infections. The exposure to certain agrochemicals, such as the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam, and the resulting weakening of the bee's immune system has been linked to increased CBPV loads. In addition, the predominant forage of honeydew has long been known to induce CBP-like symptoms in honey bees[7]. A genetic predisposition of certain strains for CBPV has also been suggested based on the observation that not all colonies are equally affected by the disease within an apiary.

Prevention and control

As with any disease afflicting honey bees, good husbandry and apiary hygiene[8] are the foundations for preventing and controlling CBP. In particular, minimising the risks of overcrowding (e.g. by adding brood chambers or supers, particularly during prolonged periods of poor weather in spring and summer) and reducing stressors to honey bee health (e.g. by effectively controlling varroa and avoiding starvation) may reduce the likelihood of a CBP outbreak.

In the absence of vaccines and antiviral drugs, the underlying principles for the management of CBP symptomatic colonies are to minimise the viral transmission and to lower the viral load within the colonies.

Dead bees, which may contain trillions of CBPV particles, should be regularly removed and destroyed to prevent the contamination of healthy bees (and ants[9]). The viral load within a colony can be reduced by removing as many symptomatic bees as possible. This may be achieved by shaking out adult bees (without the queen) several meters from the hive (e.g. on to cardboard or into a wheelbarrow). The majority of infected bees will be unable to fly back to the hive and can be removed and destroyed. It may be necessary to repeat the shake-out several times to reduce sufficiently the CBPV load in the colonies. Because of the contamination of the hive with infectious faeces it is advisable to combine the shake-out with the removal of the comb and brood by carrying out a modified shook swarm, provided the colony is still strong enough. Rather than shaking the bees directly into a clean brood box containing frames with new foundation[10], the bees are shaken from the old frames several meters from the hive.



A full range of the fact sheets and best-practice guidelines referenced in this article, plus a host of others that are really useful, can be found at the NBU site: http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167. It's a really good idea to register with the NBU for alerts in your area (for example, disease and feeding alerts) and for lots of information. Details on their website and it's free.

Because of the possibility of transovarial transmission of the virus and genetic differences in the susceptibility to CBP between strains, it may be prudent to requeen colonies with a history of CBPV infections.

Some affected colonies may recover spontaneously. However, for weak and severely infected colonies the only option may be their destruction (including the contaminated comb).

At the moment much of CBP-related advice is based on anecdotal evidence, but several research groups have now set out to determine the underlying mechanisms and contributing factors of CBP outbreaks, and effective ways of preventing and controlling the disease.

Until we know more, I would be interested to hear from members about their experiences in dealing with CBP at regina.nickel@apha.gov.uk.

Footnotes

[1] Signs particular to insecticide poisoning include dying bees circling on the ground and a carpet of dead bees with their tongues sticking out.

[2] Arguably, the black 'thief' bee with a broad abdomen described by Aristotle more than two thousand years ago may well have been CBPV positive.

[3] Molecular studies have detected a billion-fold (10^9) increase in CBPV copies/bee between asymptomatic and symptomatic colonies.

[4] see https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-020-15919-0

[5] Incidentally, Type-1 symptoms are the same as those attributed to the 'Isle of Wight disease'.

[6] Type-2 syndrome is also known as 'little blacks/black robbers' (UK), 'hairless black syndrome' (US), *maladie noire* (France) or *Schwarzsucht* (Germany).

[7] This condition is known as *Waldtrachtkrankheit* (sickness of the forest).

[8] See NBU factsheet 'Apiary and Hive Hygiene' (http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167).

[9] Ants with CBP-like symptoms carrying dead honey bees from CBPV infected colonies have been reported and several species of ants have been identified as a possible reservoir for CBPV.

[10] See NBU guidance on shook swarms (http://www.nationalbeeunit.com/index.cfm?pageid=167).

Candle-rolling wax for sale

The Association still has a supply of candle-rolling wax that it would like to pass on to members at a heavily discounted price. Most colours are available: blue, green, pink, red, buttercup, lilac, moss, purple and sky (almost white).

Use it for candles or adding pizzazz to your broodbox!

Just 50 pence per sheet, mixed packs available. Contact the Secretary: secretarynbka@gmail.com.

Casts, colts and fillies – July

Paul Metcalf, NDB, President

Through the summer months from April to August, beekeepers open up hives to inspect them either every week, or ten to 14 days. There are reasons for opening colonies, such as checking on progress, adding supers if required and always keeping an eye out for problems such as poor laying patterns, disease and food stores. However, the main reason is to try and control the swarming of the colony and to take steps to try and mitigate the effects of it.

May and June are always thought of as the main swarming months but, depending on weather and the season, swarms are equally likely to occur in April and July, so checking for queen cells continues through July. Colonies that swarm in July and go wild are going to struggle. They have to establish the nest and collect sufficient food to see them through the winter and breed sufficient young bees to see them through to next spring. Swarms taken by beekeepers have the advantage of someone to care for them.

When a honey bee colony swarms, the population reduces by approximately a half. Colonies can go on to throw subsequent swarms, casts, colts and fillies*, each time reducing by a half. By the time they have got to the cast, the colony will have become much depleted, and if they throw a filly then very little will be left.

It is when colonies are going to throw casts, colts and fillies that you are likely to hear virgin queens piping as they call to each other to fight. If the colony is going to throw a cast (or colt or filly) then the workers will prevent the queens getting to each other by keeping them confined in their cells. Fortunately, the number of colonies throwing a cast, colt or filly reduces at each occasion.

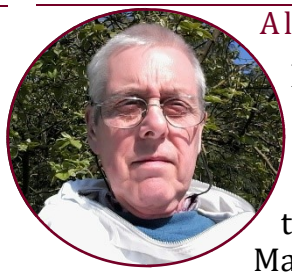
After having taken off the early crop, honey colonies, in particular on single brood chamber BS Nationals or WBCs, do need to have the food stores watched. With a combination of the June gap and poor weather conditions it is easy for them to run out of stores.

paul.metcalf@btinternet.com

[*The first swarm is called the 'prime' swarm, and is usually the strongest and best. The second swarm is termed a 'cast' and generally emerges from 10 to 14 days after the prime swarm. A third swarm from the same colony is termed a 'colt' and a fourth swarm is called a 'filly'. These are relatively rare and tend to follow the second swarm after only one or two days.]

Alvan's top tips

Alvan Parker



My bees are in an area where the early spring crop has oil seed rape in it. When the honey is ready to be extracted, usually around mid-May, we often have some very cold nights. The consequence is honey setting in the combs. This means I take longer to extract the honey and return the empty supers to the hives, often several days.

I clear my supers with porter bee escapes and these stay in place until I return the supers for the bees to reuse. In the meantime the bees have a jolly time playing 'annoy the beekeeper' by coating the springs in the bee escapes with wax and propolis, so they no longer work. The best way to restore them to working order is by soaking them in a solution of soda crystals and water, about a cup-full to two pints of water. The solution will soften the wax and propolis enough for you to brush off with an old tooth brush. Finish the job with a wash in a mild detergent and a rinse in clean water. Leave to dry and reset the springs.

Washing soda is a cleaning agent that is really good at cleaning hive tools, smoker bellows, plastic gloves etc., and it will take a lot of the 'sticky' out of your beekeeping. It is a good idea to clean your hive tool, smoker bellows and gloves between hives. Leather gloves should only be used when covered with disposable gloves, as it is not possible to clean leather enough to prevent the transfer of disease. In my opinion beginners' beekeeping kits should not include leather gloves and certainly should include soda crystals. Keeping your kit clean with this solution will also help prevent the accidental transfer of any unnoticed diseases from hive to hive and between apiaries, should you have more than one. It's a good idea to have a couple of bags of soda in stock.

While on the subject of disease transfer, COVID-19 has certainly focused everyone's mind on infection control. The same principles can easily be applied to your beekeeping routine. Reepham, where I live and keep my bees, is a European foul brood (EFB) hot spot and unfortunately it is here again this year. One simple precaution is to assume anything of an unknown origin is infected, so sterilise, or in the case of a swarm, house in a clean hive on foundation and do not feed for a minimum of 24 hours (put a queen excluder under the brood box as they may abscond before you start feeding them). Then quarantine until you are sure they are healthy.

Photo: Pat Marshall

A reminder – If you are displaying symptoms of COVID-19

NBKA are offering support to you if you have COVID-19 and are too unwell to manage your colonies. You should contact a member of the committee or Trevor Nash (contact details on p1). You should always keep good records, not least to aid someone who will be temporarily looking after your colonies.

Nuc box construction and uses to 'stop' swarming

George Male

Last year, I saw a video about a hive called the "Nat hive". After quite a few attempts, I gave up trying to construct one for a British National hive. Then came a eureka moment, whilst building a couple of nucs.

So, what I am about to say in this article has totally failed for me this year. Probably due to my own actions, but I say that a lack of nucs available is my excuse. All my nucs were in use at the time.

The Nat hive, is a method for trying to control swarming. A frame is taken from each end then placed into a brood box above, replacing the originals with a couple of empty frames.

Whilst building the nucs, I thought that two nucs are the same size as a brood body, so why not try to attempt the method with two nucs above a brood box. As I needed two nucs of bees for a couple of queens that I had purchased (from the UK, not imported) I decided to give it a go.

As you can see from the photo (left), this is the result. I put the queen excluder on top of the brood box with the nucs on top of that, then the super, crown board and then the roof.

In the first week, I took two frames of brood from the brood box (a total of 4), placing two of them into each nuc, replacing each frame with a frame of foundation.

The second week onwards I simply took just one frame for each nuc. That way, after a few weeks, I had two queenless nucs with the brood hatching and emptying the frames for future weeks.

That hive didn't swarm! "Aha", I thought, something to try next year. Unfortunately, they all swarmed before I could build some more nucs (horlix, as the saying goes). Still, the method appeared to have worked.

In order to feed them in the autumn, I had some perspex that I cut down to make a crown board, cut a slot into it and placed a pickle jar (from the local chippy, photo below) on top, then a nuc and then covered with a roof.

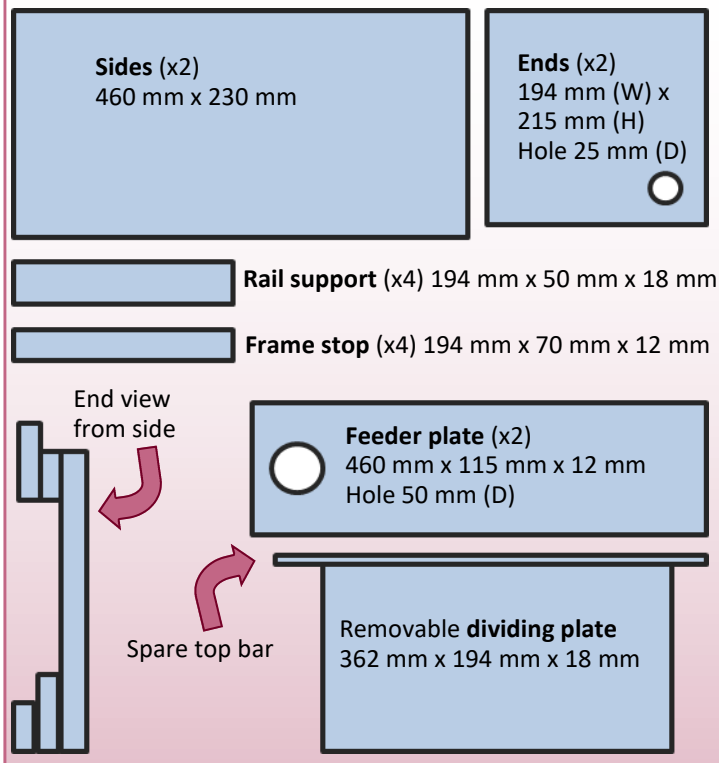
Two-way, two-frame nuc

Further to that, as well as all your best efforts, you're bees have still made up their minds to swarm and you find queen cells on inspection. As we are taught, if there are eggs present, remove all the queen cells, hoping that they will stay. Another method, is to make splits.

Using the two-way nuc, you can easily make two frame splits by taking a frame with a queen cell, along with a frame of brood. Obviously making sure that the queen is not on either frame. Needless to say, you could always use a normal nuc in the same way, 2 of brood, 1 of food. The two-way nuc can be fed with 1:1 sugar water as per the diagram.

This year, I went through all the hives carefully, removing all queen cells, as eggs were present, resulting in numerous queenless hives (hurrumph!).

Constructing the "two-way, two-frame nuc"



I prefer to use entrance discs on all of our hives, especially nucs, so they can be transported easily. Therefore, an entrance hole of 25 mm needs to be drilled into the bottom right corner of each end.

Using a spare top-bar, attach centrally to the top of the dividing plate. That means that the two feeder plates will sit on top of the frames, without a gap to let a potential queen through.

Attach the rail support to the top outside of the end plate, attach the frame stop to the outside of that, as detailed above. At the base, reverse the two fillets. Fix the ends to the sides, I prefer glue then screws. The feeder plates sit on top of the frames. I use 1 litre jars, with a few very small holes punched through with a very fine nail, gimp pin held with pliers works well.

Can COVID-19 live in honey?

***Q**: Can the virus that causes COVID-19 live in honey? We know that some viruses/phages can survive in space and in very inhospitable places on earth so can it survive in honey?*

A: Interesting as the question may be, I hope it is a theoretical one and beekeepers refrain from coughing and sneezing into their honey!

In the absence of any experimental evidence one can only make an educated guess. On the basis of available data about the environmental stability of SARS-CoV2 and the survival of other enveloped viruses such as the sacbrood virus in honey, it is possible that SARS-CoV2 could survive in honey for a short period but the transmission risk is negligible.

If beekeepers want to make sure they have a SARS-CoV2-free honey, they could heat the honey to 56 °C for 30 min (and adhere to good food hygiene standards).

Please keep the questions coming in. They will be answered quickly by email and then published in *Buzzword* in the next issue. Please submit it to the Editor (or any committee member) at: buzzwordnbka@gmail.com.

Redemption for poly hives

Elaine Gibbs

I am gradually converting all my heavy wooden kit to polystyrene hives and nucs as I have now started to concentrate on raising new queens and smaller colonies, not heaving heavy honey boxes!

The nucs are very useful 5-frame units and easy to lift and transport; three will sit side-by-side in the car boot and sealing the lid with tape and blocking the entrance up are a doddle. Arthritis in my neck now makes old wooden boxes totally impractical for me. The only problem is cleaning up propolis deposits on the polystyrene at the end of the season. We can't heat it and can't scrape it with a hive tool, so how can we do it?

Light bulb moment today! A gently abrasive block sold as 'hard skin remover' for feet (Lloyds/Boots). Brilliant! It does not damage the polystyrene and cleans them up well (also gentle on fingers and blocks can be cut into suitable-shaped slices with a hacksaw). I particularly like it because it easily removes the propolis from the rebates on which the ends of the frame hang and any extra plastered around the edges and walls. The dust produced shakes out easily and rinses away.

I am so pleased with the result I just had to share with others who might have 'gummed-up' poly-kit!

To old, creaky beekeepers like me, I say "do not give up, go poly" (the bees really love the warm, dry boxes too).

You give me fever...

Some of you may already have heard but on June 24th, Venetia Rist (NBKA Committee member, Exam Secretary and WNKLBA Chair) was interviewed by Zoe Ball on Radio 2. Venetia was asked about her beekeeping, becoming a master beekeeper and, particularly, about whether local honey could cure Zoe's hayfever.

You can listen to the interview by typing the link https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000k87b into your browser.

This will take you to a recording of the whole show, Venetia is from just after 1 hour 10 minutes in (just slide the red time bar along). The recording is available on the BBC website until 23rd July.

Migratory beekeeping extremes

The hive, if 'active' brings a new slant to the concept of migratory beekeeping! Photos taken on the Ashby Canal by Andrew Taylor

Apiary sites offered

Enquiries, unless otherwise indicated, to the Secretary please (secretarynbka@gmail.com).

Andrei is based in Topcroft and would like to offer an apiary site to a member. They have about 1 acre that they have planted with wild flowers, vegetables and fruit trees and are in a rural location. He would be interested in hosting some bees to begin with and maybe learning from a skilled beekeeper (at a distance).

Ian lives on the edge of Aylsham and has just under an acre down a quiet farm lane. He would be happy to 'house' someone else's beehives in an area that is out of the way on a bank at the end of the garden.

Chloe has a family owned holiday home in Holme (postcode area PE36). There is a fairly large field behind it with a wild flower space being created at the back. She was wondering if any local beekeepers would like to use the space to keep their hives, in exchange for a small amount of honey! Chloe can be contacted on: chloe.witham@gmail.com

A Norfolk Beekeeper's Record 1918 – 1932

Peter Beckley

1929 – 1932

I have put these years up to the end of the record in one group as Mr Thouless's beekeeping had settled into a comfortable habit and many of his observations and activities became repetitious.

There are, however, observations and little 'snippets' of information that I have found of interest. It was interesting reading his observation of the bees working the sallow for pollen. Of course there was, and still is, an abundance of sallow and willow in the Wroxham and Hoveton area. I have not heard the word sallow used for some time (*I know, I should get out more, Peter*).

Another interesting comment – "Colony died out over the winter. The bees appear to have been destroyed by the chickens". (*This conjures up a wonderful picture! Having said that, bees were often kept on the same plot of land with chickens, particularly at the time of the 'land settlement initiative' after both world wars. Peter*)

He did, however, have another problem and one that is experienced by many beekeepers: "This colony is hopeless and attacks any passer. As tenants are coming to the *bungalow next week I must destroy it. Sulphured the whole colony. It was a pity this was necessary as it was a splendid lot, very strong and containing much brood and stores. Note, brood continued to emerge after adults were dead. Two days later put 20 frames from this into another colony".

**This reference to the bungalow may mean that it was a 'holiday let' and would account for the entries in honey distribution – "1 section to bungalow" which appears regularly in the list. Peter.*

At the end of 1932 he records his honey yield as 145 lbs run honey and 35 sections.

1930

Mr Thouless's "Note on the Season 1930"

"An unusually bad year for bees. The colonies were forward and during June stored well. Then weather broke at end of first week in July and continued cold, wet and stormy for many weeks. Breeding was rapid and the colonies very strong and during the bad weather cleared the supers and by end of July were on the verge of starvation: needed feeding for the remainder of the season".

Honey yield: 14 lb run honey. 0 sections

1931

The early part of the year saw a recovery from the previous year's disaster but the return to the Norfolk Beekeepers' Association shows a significant loss of colonies over the winter 1930/31:

"Statistics to NBKA":	
No. of Stocks Spring	3
No. of Stocks to date	4 (*probably September, Peter*)
Surplus extracted	95 lb
Sections	40
Average per hive	45
Surplus for Sale	?
Disease noted	none
Wax	4 lb

1932

Started the year with 4 stocks of bees

Honey yield for the year: 104 lbs run honey. 19 sections

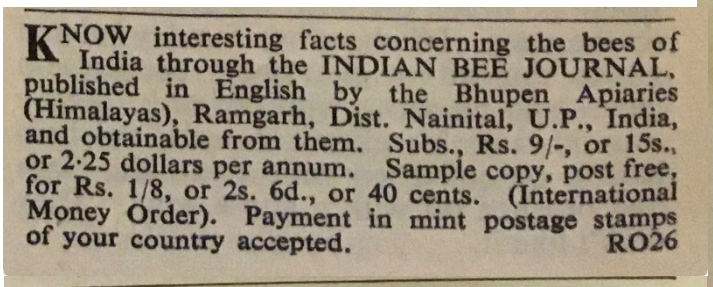
Here the record ends. There is still some space in the notebook and it can only be speculation as to why the record ceased. Did he go over to a new notebook? Did he just stop recording? Did he give up beekeeping? What was happening in the early thirties that might have had an influence on this?

Whatever the cause we are fortunate to have a continuous record of the journey of a beekeeper through starting out; through a long learning process and onward to a period of regular routine which is the experience of many beekeepers. It is a very interesting insight into a period of change from 1918 to 1932 with all the problems of each decade being overcome and the experience built upon. Whatever else, I wish I could produce sections as successfully as he did!

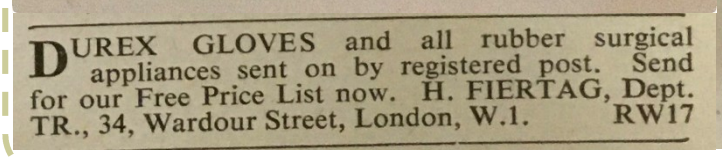
Peter

British Bee Journal, September 9th 1954

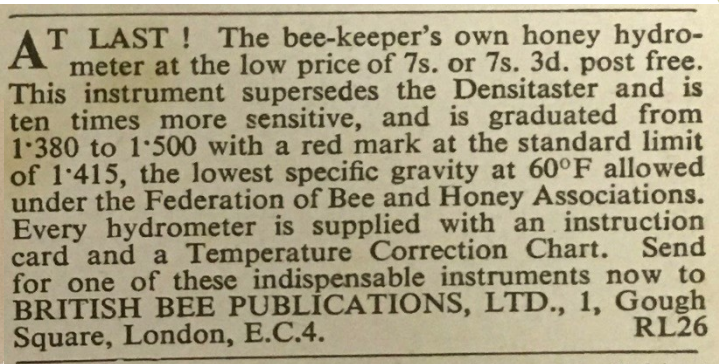
A look back at selected (amusing?) and interesting adverts from the past (courtesy of Pat Marshall).



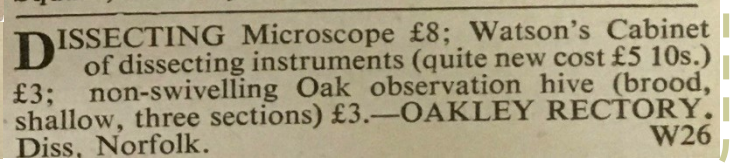
KNOW interesting facts concerning the bees of India through the INDIAN BEE JOURNAL, published in English by the Bhupen Apiaries (Himalayas), Ramgarh, Dist. Nainital, U.P., India, and obtainable from them. Subs., Rs. 9/-, or 15s., or 2·25 dollars per annum. Sample copy, post free, for Rs. 1/8, or 2s. 6d., or 40 cents. (International Money Order). Payment in mint postage stamps of your country accepted. RO26



DUREX GLOVES and all rubber surgical appliances sent on by registered post. Send for our Free Price List now. H. FIERTAG, Dept. TR., 34, Wardour Street, London, W.1. RW17



AT LAST ! The bee-keeper's own honey hydrometer at the low price of 7s. or 7s. 3d. post free. This instrument supersedes the Densitaster and is ten times more sensitive, and is graduated from 1·380 to 1·500 with a red mark at the standard limit of 1·415, the lowest specific gravity at 60°F allowed under the Federation of Bee and Honey Associations. Every hydrometer is supplied with an instruction card and a Temperature Correction Chart. Send for one of these indispensable instruments now to BRITISH BEE PUBLICATIONS, LTD., 1, Gough Square, London, E.C.4. RL26



DISSECTING Microscope £8; Watson's Cabinet of dissecting instruments (quite new cost £5 10s.) £3; non-swivelling Oak observation hive (brood, shallow, three sections) £3.—OAKLEY RECTORY, Diss, Norfolk. W26

The Secretary Matters

Garry Bowler

Not a great deal in the way of Association matters to report I am afraid. As you are aware, we have taken the decision to cancel events scheduled for this year unless there is a dramatic change in the course of the pandemic.

Your Committee continues to keep in regular contact behind the scenes as necessary and Committee and Subcommittee meetings are held as scheduled but by video conference. Although we will not be able to set up hives on the apiary site this year, we are making plans for 2021 and you will have seen Trevor's statement on the front page.

My email inbox has not been quite as busy as in a normal year but not far off. There are still plenty of Tree Bumblebees about to cause concern. They just love to nest in bird boxes, behind fascia boards, under roof tiles. People seem to think we can magic away any sort of bee problem so I take it upon myself to explain what they are, that they should not be a problem and suggest looking at the Bumblebee Conservation website to learn more about them.

One thing lockdown seems to have done is given people time to move old sheds and nearly always there is a bumblebee nest underneath. Again, a polite explanation that it is not a good idea to try and get them out of the ground. The best advice, again, is to live with them and enjoy having them as lodgers.

I have to say that, this year, practically everybody I have replied to has thanked me for my help. That has rarely been the case in the past, perhaps people are taking a little more time to do things and appreciate life a little more.

A reminder about the stock of candle rolling wax that we have and which is available at 50p per sheet. Each sheet will make 2 short or 1 long candle and we have a good selection of colours. If you ask nicely I will slice the sheets in half for you and it comes with wick too whilst stocks last.

I hope all is well with your bees, anyone else noticed any 'lively' behaviour or a bit of bad temper over the last few weeks? Presumably because we had plenty of bees but the usual shortage of forage that we get at this time of year. Let's hope they improve from now on.

What hives?

Finally, the Association is interested in what type of hive (or hives) you run and where they are located. Clearly we don't want too much detail but for example do you run Nationals, Langstroths, top-bar hives and in what location, for example rural, town, rooftop etc.

I have heard from a member who runs top bar hives and would like to know who else is running them so they can exchange experiences. Please could you drop me a line and let me know on secretarynbka@gmail.com.

Electric extractor for sale

Two former members of NBKA have had to stop keeping bees for health reasons and they have an electric extractor they would like to sell.

Stainless steel 9-frame radial electric extractor with variable speed and reversible action motor.

This was only used for about 4 seasons on two hives so is in very good condition, £500.

All enquiries to Graham Ford (who is selling on behalf of the vendors), email graemarbees@btinternet.com, 01508 493430.

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 Thornes 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 in May from £150

30lb Buckets of honey; advice on "all things bees"

Glebelands Apiary, Rocklands St Mary NR14 7BX

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

Stephen Crowe, Lingwood NR13 4BL, 01603 712101

Sell 1lb jars of local Norfolk honey, bees and nucs from £150 this spring. Also have 30lb buckets of honey for sale.

Forthcoming Events

All future events are cancelled until further notice because of COVID-19.