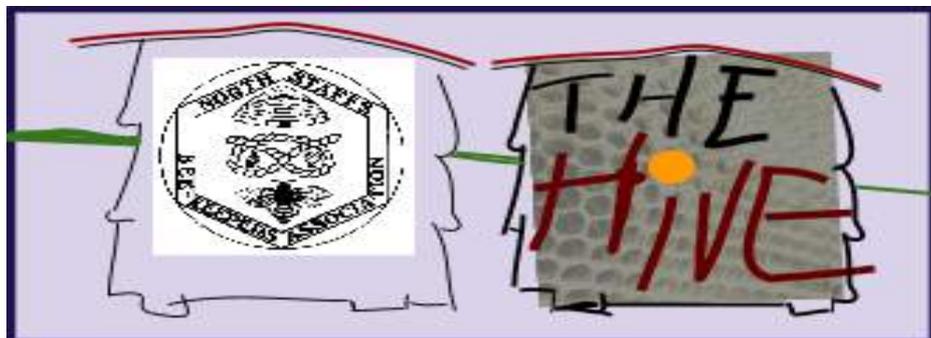


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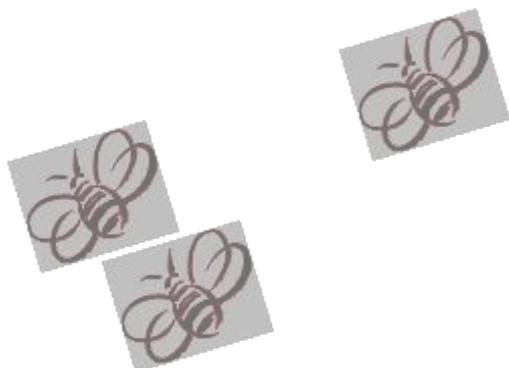
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The Newsletter has now moved to a four monthly publication with the intention of it being a more comprehensive document. It is intended that the first page shall carry, amongst other items, association news, important dates and the programme for the coming months: this will be sent out in a hard copy form to all members as well as it being part of the complete emailed version.

Well I'm not sure how you feel but for me this year appears to have flown by. It has been a productive year with the bees taking advantage of the somewhat extended summer. So now as we look forward to the new season I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a **HAPPY BEEKEEPING NEW YEAR!**

ps. keep the "Hive" informed of your progress.



Website Note: To access the Members only area of the NSBKA website the password is:



MEMBERSHIP SUBS

"Will members please note that NSBKA 2015 subscriptions will due by 1st February 2015 and members who have not paid by then will be removed from both the NSBKA and BBKA membership register and will not continue to enjoy the numerous benefits provided by membership. It is important to note that only a single reminder, with payment details, will be emailed/sent to members during January"

Make payment easy. Fifty members have already set up direct debits. Simply go to the NSBKA website and click the link on the homepage.

Once you have set it up, we will email you each year to let you know the amount we plan to take. You can cancel anytime

Attached...

With your printed front page copy of the "Hive" you will find a flyer .

Could you ask shops, Libraries etc in your locality if they could display it to publicise the forthcoming "Beekeeping for Beginners" course at Keele.

Basic Assessment Course

Could we remind those members at the beginning of their beekeeping journey that the NSBKA are running a Basic Assessment Preparation course with the choice of taking the assessment at the end ...only if you wish to!

This is a real opportunity to build on the current beekeeping knowledge that you have, creating a solid platform that will serve you well as you progress in the craft of Beekeeping.

The preparation course consists of a series of theory and practical meetings with support being offered by experienced NSBKA members...Why not give it a go !

Honey show 2014



see the results on the NSBKA website

The Black bees of Colonsay & Oronsay



Back in 2013 two remote Hebridean islands became Britain's first reserve for the native black bee. Below is just one of the reports that covered this important beekeeping event.

There are around 250 native species of bee in Britain but just a single honeybee – the *Apis mellifera mellifera*.

The isles of Colonsay and Oronsay are currently home to around 50 colonies and have now been named in a new Scottish Government order to protect the species from cross-breeding and disease.

The Bee Keeping (Colonsay and Oronsay) Order 2013 comes into force on 1 January and will make it an offence to keep any honeybees on the islands except *Apis mellifera mellifera*, whose hardiness allows them to survive the harsh climate of Scotland's west coast.

Beekeeper Andrew Abrahams has campaigned for the islands to be recognised as a sanctuary for the species. He began keeping bees on Colonsay 35 years ago, but the island has an even longer tradition as a haven for the black bee. Its isolation and lack of an existing honeybee population saw it chosen as the site for an experimental breeding station for the native bee in 1941.

Welcoming the new legislation, Abrahams said: "It's the government's acknowledgement that native bees should be conserved because they are much more suitable to our difficult environment, and the increasingly difficult environment global warming will bring us."

Most of Britain's native honeybee species were wiped out in the early 20th century by the "Isle of Wight disease", caused by a parasitic mite which spread throughout the country. A few isolated populations survived and formed the basis of apiaries set up by Abrahams in 1978.

The biggest threat to bees kept in apiaries today is the deadly *Varroa* mite, which was first discovered in the UK in 1992 and has led to the virtual elimination of feral bee colonies in many areas. Colonsay was chosen as a reserve because its bees are free from the disease and are genetically pure.

The Scottish Government granted the order after a public consultation received overwhelming support.

Nigel Southworth, editor of the Scottish Beekeeper magazine, said: "This is great news for beekeeping, not only in Scotland, but the whole of the UK and beyond.

"Congratulations to Andrew for achieving this and full credit to the Scottish Government for going ahead with the reserve.

"At a time when honeybees are facing perhaps the greatest threat to their survival, this very positive move could be seen in future years to be one of the landmark decisions that helped not only to save this kind of bee, but triggered new initiatives to help both the honeybees and mankind."

Eric McArthur, vice president of Glasgow and District Beekeepers' Association, said: "The need for this reserve has been a long time in coming."

McArthur added that the Colonsay and Oronsay reserve ranks in importance with Australia's Kangaroo Island, which was designated as a reserve for the native bee of Italy, *Apis mellifera ligustica*, which was imported there in the 1880s. It is now believed to hold the last remaining pure stock of the species anywhere in the world.

McArthur said: "The honey bees on Colonsay and Oronsay have the same significance for future *Apis mellifera mellifera* genetic purity as Kangaroo Island has for *Apis mellifera ligustica*.

"These islands will become a Mecca not only for worldwide beekeepers interested in seeing the pure race *Apis mellifera mellifera* for themselves but also for scientists investigating the limits of genetic diversity in any closed and isolated population. "The importance of the Colonsay and Oronsay honeybee reserve to Scotland's economy cannot be stressed strongly enough and the islands should be developed as a Centre of Excellence for the black bee of Scotland."

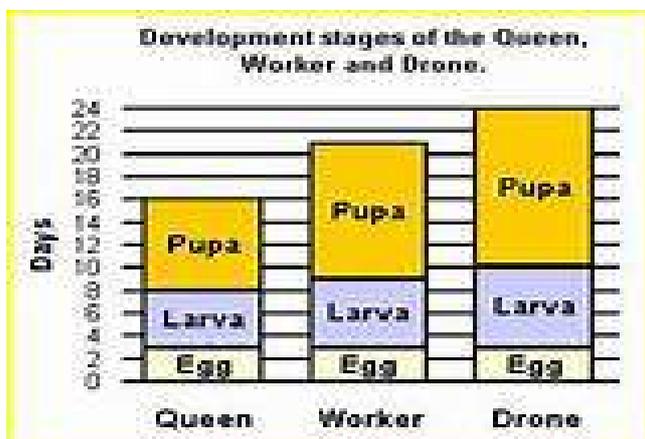
Environment and climate change minister Paul Wheelhouse, who signed the order, said the new reserve fits in with wider work being undertaken on bee health in Scotland and would be significant in ensuring a bright future for black bees on the island. "The Bee Keeping Order illustrates how our non-native species legislation can be used to protect our native wildlife," he said.

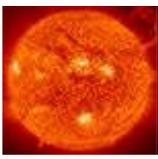
"The order is a targeted measure to protect an important population of black bees on Colonsay from hybridisation with non-native bees." "We are working in close collaboration with the Scottish Beekeepers Association and Bee Farmers Association to deliver the ten-year Honeybee Health Strategy, which aims to achieve a sustainable and healthy population of honeybees for pollination and honey production in Scotland."



education

date:12/01/2015	Basic Assessment Preparation Course
time: 19:00-21:00 location: Newcastle fire Station cost: £14:95 Course Leader: A.Fearon	5 weeks theory, followed by practical sessions at one of the associations teaching apiaries You need to have kept bees for 1 year or more before enrolling on this course. The aim is to provide beekeepers with a goal which will give them a measure of their understanding in the basic skills of the craft. A pass in the Basic Assessment is a requirement for entry onto the next level of assessments. The basic assessment is an oral and practical one conducted by the BBKA and will be held at Longsdon/Stoke Apiary. The entrance fee would be paid by the NSBKA for members of the association who complete the course and undertake the assessment in summer 2015. For further information or to book a place, please visit the NSBKA website.
date: 7/03/2015	Beekeeping for Beginners Course
time: 10:00-17:00 location: Sustainability Hub Keele University Tutors: W.Kirk & D. Buckley	This 1 day course will enable complete beginners to make a confident start, whilst enhancing the skills and knowledge of those who have recently taken beekeeping up.
	Future Educational Plans
	<p>We are looking at running a more in depth beginners course in Spring 2015- details will be published once course details have been confirmed.</p> <p>Nosema testing event - members can bring along a sample of bees for testing. This event will take place in Spring 2015 and further details will be published in due course.</p> <p>If any members of the association would like to discuss, or suggest possible courses for the future, please get in touch with Angela Fearon.. email address: angelafearon@gmail.com</p>





Thanks to William Kirk, for suggesting the following piece of research that was published by IBRA on 23/01/2014
 The link at the end takes you to the full research document
Sunspot activity affects honey bees' ability to find their way home.



INTERNATIONAL BEE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

IBRA promotes the value of bees by providing information on bee science and beekeeping worldwide

Fluctuations in magnetic fields, including those caused by solar storms, may interfere with the magnetoreceptors in honey bees so that fewer bees return to their hives from foraging trips. A new study published today in the Journal of Apicultural Research finds that this disruption may be so severe that the flying bees disappear from their hive and that these losses may contribute to colony failure.

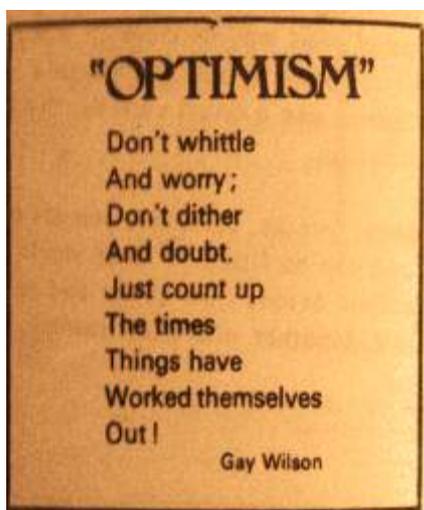
Bees can sense and use the earth's magnetic fields to help them to identify their position and find their route home. This ability called magnetoreception is similar to that found in birds, fish and dolphins. Whilst bee magnetoreception has long been known, this new paper by Dr Thomas Ferrari from Pollen Bank, California, USA, for the first time identifies solar activity as one of the many causes of honey bee disappearance.

Widespread honey bee colony loss is not a new problem, and we now understand that many of these losses are due to various interacting factors including pests, diseases, pesticides and availability of suitable forage. Yet sometimes bees disappear without showing signs of illness, leaving adequate food, healthy brood but only a small cluster of bees. With good husbandry these remaining bees can sometimes be restored into a vibrant colony, and the disorder is not transmitted to other colonies. This situation can be distinguished from swarming behaviour and is one form of colony collapse - the flying bees simply vanish and their colonies fail.

Like humans, bees use several different senses for navigation, but magnetoreception seems to become increasingly important the further the bee is from its hive. Through a series of experiments that subject foraging bees to magnetic fields to disrupt their ability to navigate, Dr Ferrari shows that they are less able to find their way home. Their homing ability also seems to be affected by uncontrolled, natural fluctuations in the Earth's magnetosphere. The study links documented periods of increased levels of solar storms and disruption to the magnetosphere to increased levels of honey bee colony loss.

IBRA Science Director Norman Carreck says: "For humans, the impact of sunspots on magnetic fields and their effects on bees is a difficult concept to grasp. Perhaps we could liken it to humans, who rely on sight, becoming lost in fog when we have no visual clues to help us identify our location. In unfamiliar territory any landmarks would be harder to recognise, so we find it harder is to work out where we are. This interesting study throws light on a curious aspect of bee biology. It is only part of the story of colony losses, but an aspect which merits further study."

1. The paper: "Magnets, magnetic field fluctuations and geomagnetic disturbances impair the homing ability of honey bees (*Apis mellifera*)" can be viewed at <http://www.ibrabee.org.uk/index.php/component/k2/item/3598>



Having recently received some old copies of Combings from Ron Clewes I took this from a 1979 edition. A few words of encouragement when working with our bees.

I shall be taking a good look at these wonderful A5 size booklets, which were produced at a time when there was no computers, and will share some of the material with you in future copies of the Hive.





Aggressive bees – but I think I may be winning...

The Ups and Downs of a Second-year Beekeeper

I began beekeeping in July 2013. My first bees (a collected swarm) were a pretty tetchy lot from the outset. This year, the character of this very strong colony went from bad to truly terrible. Even my mentor was pretty appalled at the goings on. From the start of weekly inspections in April this year, I've been attacked - stung, pinged and followed. Indeed, it was not uncommon for 20-30 bees to follow us many yards away from the hive, often stinging us and on one occasion in the kitchen - shocking stuff!

Other visitors, who ventured into the vicinity of the hive in the days following an inspection, also endured stings. By mid-May, when one corner of the garden had become a virtual no-go area, it was time to do something!

On good advice, I purchased a 2014 marked and mated Buckfast queen. She and her attendants arrived in a buzzing jiffy bag – much to the surprise of the postman. In she went into a queenless hive. Twelve days later I looked. No queen to be found anywhere in the brood box, despite three of us looking for her. There was some sealed brood but no eggs and no open brood. However, there was one large, sealed queen cell in the middle of one frame... I left this well alone.

Two days later, I was generously given a virgin queen from the Association apiary. I put her into the hive - nothing to be lost I felt. Hopefully, the bees would choose whichever queen suited them. By now it was the end of the first week of June.

Following advice, I left the hive alone for a number of weeks, except to check and add supers. Towards the end of July, I carried out an inspection. It was now 7- 8 weeks on from the introduction of the apiary queen and 8 weeks on from finding the queen cell. I found well-layed up brood comb, eggs, brood in all stages and plenty of bees - and with a third super filling up, good reasons for them to be aggressive.

But despite a thorough look through the frames, I was not attacked. Some bees were quite fizzy and there were quite a few flying around during my work but overall, their behaviour was a great deal better. They were generally calmer and when we walked away, only one bee followed - my husband speculated that this one was probably a survivor from the Old Brigade.

As I write this piece in late September, inspections have ended and winter-feeding, following treatment, is progressing in my apiary. The bees have continued calm and easy to handle. There have been no attacks on other people. I feel I may be winning with a colony that I had begun dreading looking through.

Although it's taken time, I would like to think that re-queening has been the answer to a difficult problem. However, I would also question my handling skills (which I hope have improved with practice) which may also have been influential in how the bees in this hive, have behaved. I look forward to the spring and emergence of, hopefully, the same placid bees that I have looked after and prepared for this winter.

Thanks to David Teasdale for the apiary queen and a really big thank you to Phil Hulme and David Groom for their endurance during several difficult (and painful) inspections.

Thanks to NSBKA member Melanie Bishop for this interesting article ...I'm sure that most beekeepers irrespective of their level of experience can empathise with this problem ! Do you have a story to tell...then let me know : bryan@bryanholdcroft.orangehome.co.uk

Honey show pics : Margaret Teasdale & Jenny Green brought together an excellent Honey show and a good day was had by all



For those who didn't attend... We all hope that you will enter in 2015



Bee Anatomy

ACROSS

- 6 Rallying call gland in 7
- 8 The organs for the disposal of waste two words 10 and 6
- 10 The middle portion of the bees body in 6
- 11 pincer like appendages in 9
- 12 three simple eyes in 6
- 13 Much of the bees body is covered by small movable plates which make up the 7 in 11

DOWN

- 1 In the early stages of evolution this part of the anatomy began as an ovipositor in 5
- 2 The brood food gland of the worker nurse bee in 15
- 3 Where the nectar is stored for transport back to the hive two words in 5 and 7
- 4 A pair of large lateral eyes in 8
- 5 mouth tube for collecting nectar in 9
- 7 The breathing tubes in 7
- 9 Sensory appendages in 8
- 13 total number of wax glands of the worker in 5

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SWARM PREVENTION.

January / February is a time for planning and preparing for the forthcoming season. Part of these plans should be your chosen method of swarm prevention.....do you have the appropriate equipment, are you familiar with the method you intend to use.

One of the association's elder members Ron Clewes, who possesses a wealth of beekeeping knowledge, shares with us his preferred method of swarm prevention below.

I am assuming that the bees are kept in national hives, either single brood or double brood, and that there is at least one super above a queen excluder. (Not the messy brood and a half method.)

A special board is needed, it will need to be made, 18 and 1/8 inches square with a hole in the centre (about three inches diameter is suitable but if you are adapting a cover board the two porter escape holes will do.). A strip of wood should be planted all round the edge of one side, and ideally it should be three quarters of an inch square in section but with closable hinged entrances on opposite edges. On the other side of the plywood a strip should be planted all round the edge this strip should be 3/4 of an inch wide and 5/16 of an inch thick but one side will need a hinged entrance arranged to be in line with one of the entrances on the other side of the board. The hole in the centre of the board will need to be covered with perforated zinc or metal gauze, (both holes if you have adapted a cover board).

Weekly inspections should be carried out and if queen cells are found, I would proceed as follows. It will be very helpful if two empty brood chambers and a spare floor are available and of course the special board.

PROCEDURE.

After smoking the bees in the usual way lift the roof and supers aside leaving yourself a good space round the hive. Move the hive to one side and put a new floor and an empty brood chamber on the original site of the hive. Find the queen and put her with ONE frame of brood (preferably mature brood) in the new brood chamber, make up to the usual eleven frame using empty comb and/or foundation.

Place the queen excluder on this box and then put all the supers on top.

Place the second empty brood chamber on top of the supers. Proceed to examine the brood in the box that you set aside and break down any sealed queen cells, note the approximate age of the most mature queen larva so that you will have a good idea when the new queen will emerge. The reason for breaking down the sealed cells is that there is no way of being sure that there is a healthy larva or pupa inside, and you don't know when there will be a virgin queen.

Put all the brood combs in the second new brood chamber, if there is some leftover distribute them to the other stocks in the apiary or use them to make up a nucleus. Replace the cover board and roof. Give the bees a few minutes to sort themselves out, the nurse bees will migrate in the correct proportions to cover the brood, the foragers and the workers that receive nectar will go down to the bottom of the hive near the entrance with the queen. After a few minutes lift off the roof and the top box and put the special board on top of the supers with the side with two entrances at 90 degrees to the main entrance, open the upper of these entrances. Any flying bees that are in the upper brood chamber will leave by this entrance but return via the main entrance as is their habit, this will leave the upper brood without foragers. The workers will be able to communicate, solicit and exchange food through the gauze and the warmth will rise to help the weaker colony. After one week, that is to say at the next weekly inspection close the side entrance in

the special board and open the one immediately below it, open the entrance on the opposite side. The bees that have grown used to using the upper entrance will go into the new entrance immediately below, and go in to join the old queen. The bees in the bottom box will have plenty of room for a while but if you feel that you wish to inspect either lot be sure not to allow the new queen any opportunity to get into the wrong part of the hive. If you feel the need to feed the top lot candy would be preferable to syrup.

When the queen in the top box is mated and you see sealed worker brood you can cull the old queen and unite the two, making it into a normal double brood stock, or take away

the top colony to make increase

