



**THE LEEDS BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION
BRANCH OF THE YBKA
AFFILIATED WITH THE BBKA**



“The Leeds Beekeeper”

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And so the 23rd July 2017 was the day I became a ‘proper beekeeper’ as I finally filled my first jars of honey after 2 years of waiting :) Unfortunately it would seem that despite ordering what I thought was a large number of jars that I would never manage to fill, I had in fact under clubbed it, and thus I emptied the cupboard of glass bowls and storage vessels to contain my precious treasure. With rain hammering on the window outside and the other half away for the weekend (and thus oblivious to the sticky kitchen), it was the perfect time to do a spot of extraction. Now I just have a large amount of cappings to purify..... but that is for another day.....

CHAIRMAN’S NOTES

Well time marches on. Have you noticed the leaves on the horse chestnut trees turning a shade of brown? Winter is on its way.

For those of you that haven't been down at the apiary recently here's a little catch-up of events. Mr Barrett has concluded his very successful queen rearing course and virtually every member that went on the course has now got a beautiful young new queen I hope that this will become a regular feature in our beekeeping year at Temple Newsam. For those of you that want to take your bees to the heather there was also a master class on this topic presented by Dave.

A lot of you have now taken your honey crop off and by the number of extractors that are going out it seems to have been a good year. Old hands will know that when cleaning up the extractor it is best to wash first with cold water and detergent followed by hot water and detergent. If you start with hot water the effect is to soften the particles of wax and smear them out when they become much more difficult to remove. Please don't forget to bring the extractors back CLEAN!



Teasel Time

So what should you be doing in August? It may be school holiday time, but for our bees August is definitely the start of autumn. Usually in August the summer flowers are coming to the end of their life and the nectar flow is finishing. However, if you are, as I am, in an area where there is abundant Himalayan Balsam or you are going to the heather then things will be different. For most beekeepers though the season is finishing and the honey is safely stored in food grade containers awaiting the final stages of straining and bottling.

When you have taken your honey crop have you left enough stores for the winter bees to live off till next spring? To assess the amount of stores in a colony going into winter it is useful to know that a British Standard brood frame holds just over 2 kilograms or around 5 pounds, so 9 full frames of honey will be needed. If you don't have sufficient honey you can top up with sugar syrup. The winter feed or "heavy syrup" is made up of a 2 to 1 mixture that's roughly 2kg of sugar to 1 litres of hot water.

Don't forget that you should be thinking of your Varroa treatment but I will mention this next month.

Regards Duncan

The average British Beekeeper is 66 years old

ST JOHN'S BEES



Bees in their new location

On Friday 30th June, the St Johns Shopping Centre welcomed their first colony onto the roof of their office block. With the fantastic help of Dave Cook and Andy Gowdy from LBKA, four members of their team have completed their Bee Keeping course and introduced their bees into the new hive. It has been a long project spanning over a year but they are very excited to become bee keepers and help to preserve such an important species.

BEES ON THE BOX

A recent edition of Countryfile, contained a piece on the International Young Beekeepers competition held at Marlborough College, catch up at the link below.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b08zk5sw/countryfile-wiltshire>

STOLEN EQUIPMENT

There have been thefts of beekeeping equipment in the Kirkstall Road area of Leeds at the end of July 2017. Two of our members have had various pieces of equipment stolen, totalling more than £250 in value, and it could only have been by someone who has some knowledge of beekeeping. As most beekeepers do, we kept bits of equipment stashed away in the tops of hives and in the bushes nearby. It would only take a beekeeper to know this and lift the roofs to see what is inside.

Can I ask members to please be on the lookout for someone selling used equipment? It has been reported to the Police so if you have any information you can contact me on the details below and we can report it.

The items stolen are all National size;

- 1 Jacket and veil
- 1 Hood
- 2 roofs
- One super with frames
- 2 smokers
- Gloves
- Several queen excluders
- 4 or 5 contact feeders
- Assorted bits...Marker pens, hive tools, clearers, queen cages, bee brushes, queen clips.

Best Wishes

Lance Penketh and Carlos Grattoni (lancepenketh@outlook.com, Tel: 07960 838364)

In light of this news it is probably a timely reminder to label your equipment with a name, postcode or similar. Yes these can be removed but it takes more effort for the would be thief and also makes the items identifiable should they appear at any of the local bee auctions

CAN SOMEONE SMELL BURNING?

I have a nice big smoker. To extinguish I simply grab a bunch of grass and use it to plug the end and lay the smoker down on its side. It's now pretty much closed to air and, deprived of oxygen, it goes out. When driving between apiaries I sometimes manage to rekindle the smoker at the next stop by removing the plug of grass and working the bellows hard. It saves the faff of relighting the thing.

So far so good. Very occasionally the plug of grass comes free and I'm left with a van that smells heavily of kippers! It takes ages to go, but the upside is that we use my wife's car more when going out as she's not keen on the aroma! Recently, however, the jolting about during driving between sites dislodged the top of the smoker itself.

Embers glowed and spilled out onto the carpet covering the floor. Fortunately the smell of smoke was so bad that I pulled over to see what was going on. If the carpet had caught alight then I would have been in trouble!

Something had to be done. I bought an old metal ammo box from eBay to sit the smoker in. Whilst it did fit, it had to stand upright and I'd have preferred for it to be laid down. So I continued looking out for a metal box. I tried car boots but the closest I came was an ancient enamel bread bin. It was ideal, but the price asked marked it out as a valuable antique rather than a utility metal box. The search continued. I popped into the LCC "re use it" shop at the council tip at Seacroft. Voila! There was a metal box, complete with lid, for just £2.00. Success :-)

No more kipper cars (or fire risks). Looks lovely - don't you agree?

Dave Barrett

APIROUTES

For those of you who haven't yet booked their Summer jollies and fancy something with a bit of a beekeeping theme rather than sitting on a Spanish beach supping sangria, then ApiRoutes are running a Slovenia beekeeping tour in late September details [here](#).



Ideal smoker storage

QUEEN REARING COURSE... 4TH SESSION



D Barrett demonstrating during Queen course

Great excitement, anticipation, smiles all round as we gathered to enter the apiary. Nervous chatter. Well, the long awaited evening arrived, time to look into our nucs and see if we had a queen, and was she laying; if this was the case, then we were to mark and clip the Queen.

Waiting with baited breath, excitement and anticipation we opened our nucs. Mine, no sign of a Queen at all, would have to wait another week longer, however, in my case I was to go away on holiday for two weeks.

One man had a laying queen, many congratulations. Big smiles all round. Everyone sharing in his achievement. Success of the queen mating successfully. The latest news on mine, sadly, no queen, just laying workers. The beginner beekeepers on Wednesday evening were interested in see the laying pattern.

These remaining bees in the nuc would not accept any queen introduction under these circumstances. So, with advice from David Haigh our Apiary manager, they were shaken out of the nuc, away from the hive area. Having removed the hive stand and any sign of 'home' for the bees.

They flew and found new hives to join, so all was not lost in the end. I am very grateful to Leeds BKA, David and Chris, for running this fabulous Queen Rearing Course, despite the failure of my own Queen. I thought the 'hands on' course was extremely worthwhile, and recommend it to all Beekeepers in a supportive environment. It's great fun and informative.

Happy Beekeeping

Eunice

HONEY REQUIRED

LBKA have been contacted by a shop in Leeds City Centre who are looking for some honey both to sell in their shop and to use as a natural sweetener in their baking, if you think you can assist please contact the secretary (secretary@leedsbeekeepers.org.uk) for more details.

WAX STEAMER

A few weeks ago I got thinking about a more cost effective way of wax processing, after looking at the expensive prices on Thornes web site and even so on eBay. I decided to look on YouTube to see how the rest of the world went about it. Most seem to use old brood boxes with a steam generator (wall paper steamer), the cogs started to turn and I hatched my plan over the next few days. A steel drum, suspended mesh floor, a few plumbing fittings, wood for legs and my better half's wall paper steamer.

Looking on eBay I bought a 30ltr steel barrel with a tight fitting lid.

Then plumbing bits n pieces from B&Q,



Plumbing fittings



Barrel from ebay

- 2 x 15 mm header tank fittings 1 for steam in and 1 for wax/steam out,
- A pack of 50 mm coach bolts for the legs which came with nuts and washers.
- 1 x 15 mm to 8 mm reducer compression fitting, 8mm is the right size for the steamer's screw on pipe.
- 2 x 400 mm x 4 mm steel bars.
- 2 x 30 mm pieces of 15 mm copper pipe
- Copper wire to attach floor to floor legs
- I needed stainless steel mesh which I found to be cheapest on eBay.

I decided to make it 3 legged with one leg about 30 mm longer this goes at the rear to give the steamer a forward slope. After marking up for the inlet, outlet and legs, I drilled the holes, first one low down at the front which is home to the first of the header tank fittings with one of the 15 mm copper tubes fitted, this is the wax/steam outlet. 180° from the outlet is the larger rear leg 2 holes per leg then fitted to the barrel using the coach bolts, washers and nuts the other two legs are at 120° from the rear leg, fixed in the same way as the rear leg. Next is the other header tank fitting which I fitted a third of the way round from the outlet and about 70mm up from the base attached to this is the other 15 mm tube with the 15 to 8 mm reducer on the end.



Connector in position



2 finished u-shapes ready for welding

The two steel bars come next, they bend fairly easily in a vice. I needed to make a platform to hold the suspended mesh floor (just like 2 upside down "u" shapes) they were then bent to 90° and welded together, see the photos

I'm sure the photos explain better that I can. The mesh floor comes next cut about 60 mm larger diameter than the barrel lid, this then has 40 mm slits cut 30 mm apart all the way around the edge which are then folded up making a snug fit inside the barrel. The steel rod legs were then attached to the mesh floor using copper wire.

The whole floor assembly was then inserted into the barrel.

Screw the steamer hose to the 8mm inlet and the other end to the steamer, fill the steamer with water, switch on, put all the old wax cut out from old brood frames along with any other bits and pieces of wax into the steamer, put the lid on, after 5 min of steam, wax will start trickling from the outlet into pre-prepared containers (clean used ice cream tubs are ideal) have a few at the ready. Once wax stops running, turn off the steamer and remove the lid (carefully, it is very hot).



Wire supports in position (top) and finished wax steamer after first use (bottom)

All that's left is the old brood cocoons. I removed these with a trowel, refilled and repeated.

When this was done I put some finer mesh onto the mesh floor and run it all through again, which cleaned the wax up to a decent standard.

Russ Wales



Processed wax

BASIC EXAM

Well the weather was indeed glorious on Sunday 16th July as members of LBKA journeyed to David Haigh's apiary to undertake their basic exam under the watchful eye of Patrick Martin. For those who haven't partaken in the Basic exam so far it consists of three main parts; making up a frame, inspecting a hive of bees and a question and answer session.

So the first task was to construct a frame – I had taken my own and “dry assembled” it at home in advance to make sure it all fitted together as sometimes they need a bit of fettling, which isn't what you want to be doing with a beady eye watching you..... Frame assembled it was onto the main event; inspection.

As I was the final appointment of the day this hive had already been opened quite a few times but despite this they were still remarkably calm – no need for my carefully lit smoker. Nectar, pollen, capped drone and workers were all identified along with a smattering of capped honey. Whilst the queen was not visible – presumably she had got sick of the interruptions and put her feet up in a darkened corner with a cup of tea, signs of her activity were – with eggs and larvae aplenty.

“Now if you could just take a sample of bees?” Well the theory had been covered during Dave Barrett's Basic Masterclass the previous week – get a matchbox, the bigger the better (I had gone for an empty box of Cook's matches), block the entrance, wait two or three minutes for flying bees to return, once there are about thirty, slide the matchbox along the hive front scooping up 20-30 bees, close the matchbox – job done. Simple!

Well David Haigh has two entrances on his hives.....so I blocked up what looked like the busier front entrance with a bit of foam and waited my two minutes, two minutes became four minutes, a smattering of bees had congregated around the entrance but not the thirty that were required. Small talk was getting scarce and as I was the last of the day I think the examiner was ready for home “You're not the only one who has found this tricky today”. At this point I should mention that because of David Haigh's choice of frame alignment rather than having a “flat front” to his hive, like I have at home, there is the hand hold indent above the bottom bar directly above the entrance and the bees were congregating into this recess.

Just as the awkward silence and waiting had reached a new level I decided now was my moment, ran the matchbox across the front of the hive snapped it shut and then opened it a tiny smidge to inspect my quarry; four bees – twenty-six to go. Marks were made on the exam paper and friendly advice offered, “Yeah the matchbox never seems to work, I go for a plastic bag.” Well as luck would have it I had a spare freezer bag in my bee kit which had contained some spacers and not one to be beaten I decided to give it a go. The idea of this approach is to put the bag over the entrance give the hive a sharp tap and watch as the bees stream out of the entrance into your clear plastic bag, which allows them to be counted. Well by this time the front entrance had been closed for well over five minutes, I removed the foam, bag over the entrance and before a tap had been applied to the hive bees were

streaming into the bag like machine gun fire. 30 bagged! So whether I got the marks for “a sample of bees” I don’t know but as they say – you learn something new every day.....

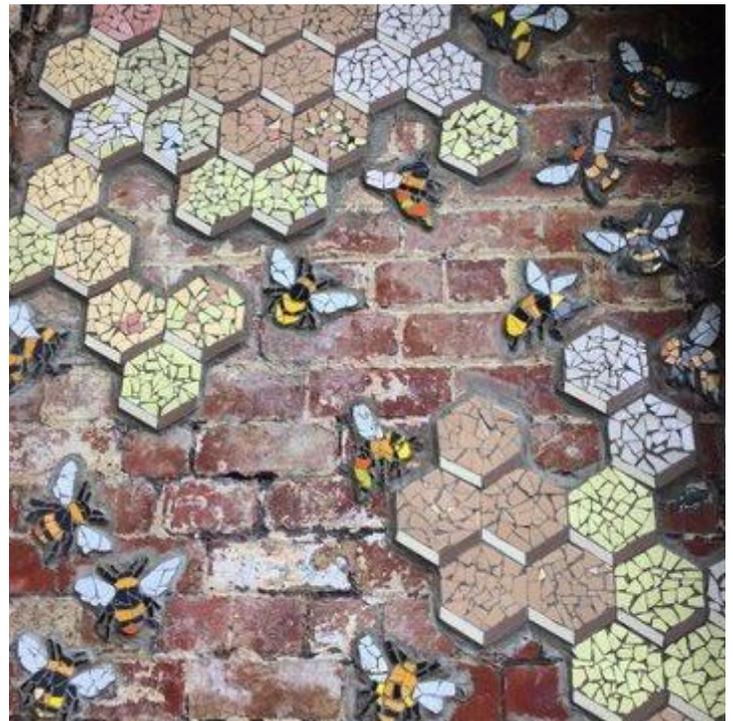
With the inspection complete it was off to David Haigh’s shed which had been decked out with two plastic chairs; I was fully expecting a spotlight in the corner for the full Mastermind experience. Questions on bee disease, swarm control and emergency feeding were to follow and as for the outcome.... Well I am still awaiting the results to drop through my letterbox.

For those who have not chosen to take the Basic exam yet, but are interested in doing so, please speak to our education officer Chris for further details (education@leedsbeekeepers.org.uk).

BEE MURAL

For those of you who have been down to Kirkstall Abbey recently, you may have seen the new bee mural created by Seagulls Paint. Founded in 2004, Seagulls collect paint from Leeds City Council Household waste sites across the city and then re-sell it preventing it from being wasted. In fact their work has seen over 800 tonnes of paint that would have gone to waste be reused. In recent years they have also branched out into community mosaic projects which have seen several major

projects across the city. Recent work has seen the creation of the mural in the Kirkstall area.



Bee Mural



<http://seagullsreuse.org.uk/mosaic/community/>



'THE ART OF MEAD MAKING'

A workshop for those who fancy making a drop (or two) ...

Have you ever wanted to make mead but not quite sure how to go about it?

Ever tried and it hasn't quite gone to plan? Well worry not. This workshop is for you.

A one-day course on the art of making mead led by Dave Shannon, author and honey judge, and Tony Jefferson.

Saturday 16th September 2017 Honey Pavilion, Harrogate

Workshop to include:

History, origins and cultural aspects of mead

A copy of Dave's new book to purchase (optional)

An opportunity to learn to make your first batch of mead

Ideas and recipes to make dry and sweet meads and melomels

Advice on showing and exhibiting meads and melomels

Cost of course is £35 which includes lunch and a starter Brewing Kit with all the equipment you need to begin your mead making journey.

To reserve a place/make a booking contact:

Yvonne Kilvington. Tel: 07876 618071

Email: ykilvington@btopenworld.com

ASK THE BEEKEEPER

Have you got a burning beekeeping question that you want an answer to? Then please send it to editor@leedsbeekeeper.org.uk and we will do our best to find you an answer!

12OZ HEXAGONAL JARS

Hopefully your bees have been busy and you now have lots of honey and not enough jars to put it in.... fear not LBKA have the answer! 12oz (340 g) hexagonal jars with lids are available in the shop at a bargain price of 23p each, they come loose so you can buy as many as you require. Please bring a cardboard box to carry them home in. If you require a large quantity, please email Duncan thebeeman@hotmail.co.uk or ring him on 07855 308143

Got an article for the next edition? Please email to editor@leedsbeekeeper.org.uk by 31st August.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

August

Tuesday 1st – Yorkshire Day Event – Lotherton Hall 11 am – 4 pm

Saturday 12th - Apiary Day – 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon

Saturday 12th - Apiary Day – Taster Day

Saturday 26th – Sunday 27th – Temple Newsam Open Weekend

Wednesday 30th – Winter Course begins

September

Saturday 9th - Apiary Day – 10.00 a.m. – 12.00 noon