

# Beeline

News from ABKA

October 2014

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## Get your dancing shoes on!

The biggest date in our social calendar is coming up soon! Make sure you've got your tickets for our annual Bee Bash at East Riddlesden Hall Barn on 28 November. Fun, frolics, food and some fab four tributes from our lovely live band the Pretend Beatles!

The Bash is always great fun, also it's a key element in our fundraising for the year, so do please join us and bring along family and friends. There'll be a buffet and a bar with local ale a-plenty.

Doors open at 7:30pm. Tickets are £17.50 each from Sue Chatfield [Suebeebuzz@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:Suebeebuzz@tiscali.co.uk) or telephone 07975 626391.



## Keighley Show Report

Many thanks and well done to all the volunteers who turned out to set up, staff and dismantle our stand at this year's Keighley Show on 6 September. The exhibits proved a big draw with adults and children alike and some fascinating questions were asked and answered. It's reassuring to see once again just how interested the general public is in most things bee and honey related, especially children..

We rapidly sold out of all our fantastic honey baking and the honey tasting was a good draw, with many jars of members delicious local honey sold. Many candles were rolled and questions answered.

The only real disappointment this year was how few entries there were into our Honey Show. Staging this event is a cost to the Association since we have to organise and remunerate a judge – a little embarrassing to have so few entries for him to consider. Please let's all try and make more of an effort next year, after all, there's little to lose but glory to be gained for your efforts!



## ABKA AGM report

The AGM was held on 8 October at Keighley Rugby Club. James Thompson as Chairman reported on the previous year. He commented that the committee had done a good job, particularly noting the work in education and development of the East Riddlesden Hall and East Morton apiaries. James also remarked that he was standing down after a four year stint as Chairman (a post usually limited to three years). We wish him well. Sue Chatfield stood down from her post as Secretary after 20 years and will take over as Chairman.

Updates on the work of the Association were received via the Secretary, Education Officer and Treasurer's reports, together with a report on the Keighley Show. New Committee officers were then elected to the Committee (listed right for information). A pie and pea supper was then enjoyed by all!

## A Real Threat from Small Hive Beetle

FERA (Food, Environment and Research Agency) now believes the UK faces a very real threat from the invasion of small hive beetle. This pest has landed in southern Italy – more than likely due to neglectful beekeeping and because the beekeepers did not recognise it if they did see it.

The Small hive beetle (SHB) is native to sub-Saharan Africa, where it is a minor pest of weak honeybee colonies and stored honey supers. However, European honey bees have fewer natural defences against SHB and so the harmful consequences are far greater in Europe. SHB was confirmed for the first time outside Africa in Florida in May 1998 and has since become widespread in the USA (now in more than 30 US states and as far north as Minnesota). SHB was also detected in New South Wales and Queensland in Australia in October 2002 and more recently in Canada (traced to imports of unrefined wax from Texas, USA), Mexico, Jamaica and Hawaii.

SHB spells disaster for beekeepers, far more so than varroa. It flies independently of the bee and burrows into soil around the hive, overwintering up to a foot deep - making it undetectable. SHB larvae eat every part of the brood in all stages and comb. Adult bees then abscond carrying the small hive beetle with them. The beetle represents a plague of biblical proportions – having no natural predators in its introduced locations. Affected apiaries in Italy – 44 to date - have a 100 kilometre cordon around them. Several have been destroyed and the soil ploughed and given a pesticide drench; many more will also be treated with pesticide. An utter nightmare, especially for all of the indigenous insects that will also be obliterated and the mammalian, reptilian and avian species that depend upon them.

If FERA perceives there to be a threat, then there is one. So, please - check out these little beetles at the FERA [website](#). Maybe once long, long ago, before varroa, we could leave our bees alone to do what they should. Sadly this is not the case anymore. A weekly check now means so much more than just checking for queen cells during high summer.

*Chris Hardy*

## ABKA Committee Members, 2014-15

<i>Chair</i>	Sue Chatfield
<i>Secretary</i>	Louise Mallinson
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Helen Gibbs
<i>Treasurer</i>	Jackie Town
<i>Equipment Officer</i>	Linda Schofield
<i>Education Officer</i>	Suzanne Starling
<i>Webmaster</i>	Mark Cook
<i>Publicity Officer</i>	Christine Solloway
<i>Social Secretary</i>	Andy Thackray
<i>Apiary Manager (East Morton)</i>	John Tatham
<i>Apiary Manager (East Riddlesden/Cliffe Castle)</i>	Chris Hardy
<i>Committee member</i>	Jill Mastin
<i>Committee member</i>	Mike Barlow



## Preparing for Winter

A hive should have 5 frames of bees minimum (including a queen) to get through the winter. If it is smaller put in into a poly nuc or you can give your brood box an insulating wrap (eg. Kingspan, polystyrene) around the sides and on the roof. Keep the open mesh floor open for ventilation.

The colony should have stores on the outermost frames inside the brood box – about six is good. If you are lucky then you will have a super filled mainly with stores over this brood box too. Remove the queen excluder. I'll say that again because it is so important. *Remove the queen excluder.*



Image courtesy of [Surrey Docks Farm](#)

Why? Because bees will travel vertically for stores before they move laterally, so **up** to the super stores first – if you have a super on. They must travel with the queen and are always in very close proximity to their food stores. They will, if desperate, abandon the queen, which spells absolute disaster for the hive as she will die from starvation and cold. They keep the centre of the cluster very warm. So, you should not exclude the queen from any part of the hive during winter.

If you have the perfect arrangement of a nice big box of bees with lots of stores in the brood box and in the super above it, then you won't need to feed with thick syrup. If you have about 5 or 6 frames of bees and it looks like they could do with more stores then feed before the end of October with thick syrup. Inverted is best because it will not ferment and some say you can leave this on for longer.

(Cheap feeding tip) If you have no rapid/contact feeder - get a clean 1lb jam jar with a lid; poke a dozen or so holes in the lid with a thin nail. Fill the jar with thick (preferably inverted) syrup (2:1 pure white sugar to water, sugar diluted in water), screw the lid on, tip it upside down and let excess fluid run out. Put this over the crown board hole, then put an empty super on or eke and put the roof on.

Get some bee fondant in now so that you have some ready for a winter feed. This should go from late December early January. There are many ways to apply this and I will describe these closer to the time. Some beekeepers never use anything other than what the bees have provided for themselves but I have never found myself to be in that luxurious position. The fondant goes on in the cold - it does not ferment and has just the right amount of moisture so will not give the bees diarrhoea (and as they can't defecate outside the hive because of the cold, having diarrhoea means the spread of disease inside the colony). Bees can also digest fondant quickly. I have found that they not like cake makers' fondant.

You should have done your varroa checks now. If you haven't and you genuinely suspect there is a problem then treat for this in December/ January with oxalic acid. It will be very cold and the bees will be in a cluster. Dribble each seam of bees with a 5% solution (buy this pre-made to be safe). It has to be cold as this works by close transference of the fluid onto each bee. You have to be quick and efficient with this too. Don't be fooled, oxalic acid does have a degree of toxicity to the bee and it should not be administered without due consideration.

Make sure your hive is watertight and fit mouseguards at the end of October. And finally, this is the time to clean down all your spare equipment. Scorch and bleach are the techniques to use for home beekeeping. Varroa brings with it a whole host of associated pathogens and nosema is one of them. Be clean for 2015! Happy beekeeping.

*Chris Hardy*

### Winter prep checklist:

1. Do your bees have enough stores?
2. Is the colony big enough, do you need to help them a bit?
3. Have you got a couple of slabs of fondant ready?
4. Oxalic acid. Do you need it?
5. Scorch and bleach old equipment

## Dates for the Diary



**Thursday 30th, 31st October and 1 Nov 2014** National Honey Show [www.honeyshow.co.uk](http://www.honeyshow.co.uk)

**6 November - ABKA Winter talk**

7.30pm, Riddlesden Institute, Scott Lane, Riddlesden  
Mr & Mrs Joyce, Denholme Gate Apiaries

**11 November - ABKA Committee meeting**

**28 November - ABKA's Annual Supper and Dance**

East Riddlesden Hall Barn, with live band, the Pretend Beatles  
Tickets £17.50 (inclusive of supper) from Sue Chatfield

**6 December - YBKA Annual General Meeting**

Normanby Pavilion, Yorkshire Showground, Harrogate.  
All members welcome

**6 & 7 December Christmas Fayre, East Riddlesden Hall**

ABKA will have a stall at this on both days, Volunteers welcome!

**17 January 2015, Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders' Association (BIBBA) Workshop**

*Bee Improvement for All*

9:30 am - 4:30 pm, Barwick in Elmet Village Hall, Leeds. Tickets £10.

For more details click [here](#)

(<http://www.ybka.org.uk/events/bee-improvement-for-all-one-day-bibba-workshop/>)

Or contact Dave Barrett tel. 07905949311

**14 March 2015, YBKA Annual Spring Conference**

8.30 am to 4.30 pm, Manor C of E Academy, York

More details and application form available from Louise Mallinson ([loumalli@hotmail.com](mailto:loumalli@hotmail.com)) or direct from  
John Whitaker tel: 01937 834 888 or e-mail : [johnmartinwhitaker@hotmail.com](mailto:johnmartinwhitaker@hotmail.com)

*We hope you have enjoyed this new-look issue of Beeline. Please tell us what you think of it! The next edition will be in December - if you have any interesting news, articles, dates for the diary or photos you would like us to include, please send them c/o The Editor ([chris@wordbird.net](mailto:chris@wordbird.net)) before the end of November.*