



# FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

November 2003  
Number 570

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The Federation, its Council and its Officers cannot be held responsible for  
the views expressed in the Newsletter or possible errors.

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## Future Events

13th-15th November 2003	The National Honey Show	
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## FROM THE FEDERATION SECRETARY: -

By the time you read this, the Federation Autumn Event & Honey Show will have taken place. I hope that many of you will have attended and made the whole event the success that we hoped for.

Thank you, our efforts will not have been in vain.

The Federation A.G.M. takes place on February 17th 2004. As this is a General Meeting, any member of an Association within the Federation is entitled to attend and participate, although voting rights are held by your Association Representatives only. (If you don't know who they are, ask your Association Secretaries or myself).

As a rather early New Year's Resolution I will endeavour to publish Agendas for next year's meetings in advance in the newsletter, enabling you to have prior warning of matters to be discussed. I will also (copy space allowing) try to give brief reports on the outcome of discussions.

If there is something that you feel strongly about and want put on an Agenda for discussion, or a point to express regarding an Agenda item at one of the regular Federation Meetings talk either to your representatives or myself.

Don't just keep it to yourself; get involved! It's your Federation.

Sandra Napper

Internet access to the beekeeping world  
[www.beedata.com](http://www.beedata.com)

## IN THE APIARY NOVEMBER:

**THIS MONTH** .As in recent years the ivy yielded a crop this year and I will average at almost a super full from most of my hives. As I write on the 24th of Sept it is still coming in but a strong frost last night will probably mean the end of it. This crop will ensure some good set and creamed honey later on, but its strong flavour and brick-like set means that it will have to be blended with summer honey.

- Maximise hive ventilation by opening feed holes, putting triangles of hardboard under each corner of the crown board or using mesh floors.
- Check that mouse guards are tight and that roofs are waterproof and adequately weighted to prevent them being blown off in the winter gales. Beyond this we can start the winter policy of as little disturbance as possible. I consider that providing there is no sign of trouble (dead bees, wax chippings dysentery) at the entrance
  - the feed hole smells sweet
  - the hive hefts heavily -ALL IS WELL. None of these checks disturb the bees, if done gently.
  -
- When the weather starts getting bad get to work on cleaning up supers, spare brood chambers, frames and other gear. I try to get mine done by Christmas and all packed up and protected by broken up mothballs. It lets you concentrate on the garden in the New Year. Incidentally there is a rumour that mothballs and PDB are going to be taken off the market in case they are cancer producing. I guess we'll just have to use Certan against wax moth.

**MAIN TOPIC Out apiaries.** One of our members found a nice little spot conveniently close to the road. Sadly it was also conveniently close for the local vandals who enjoyed chucking bricks at the hives. No serious damage but clearly cause for another move. With so many neighbour problems these days most of us have to keep our hives away from home and choosing the right spot requires a bit of thought. Lets look at a site where I had some hives until last year.

This is well fenced off and well away from the road yet I could drive a car right up to the hives. The hives were sheltered from the worst of the sun by the trees and the bees had an uninterrupted flight path. It was, however, surrounded by open fields and the wind whistled across it.

The result was that the hives over-wintered poorly and got going much later in the year. Also there were many fewer occasions when I could work them, as they were very shirty on windy days.



This site looks almost as exposed but the hives are protected from the prevailing wind by the hedge in front of them. The hedge and bushes also prevent them from being seen from a footpath about 20 yards away.



The only disadvantage is, that when working the hives the bees tend to fly out of the entrances, which face the hedge, up and over the beekeeper, which can be a bit disconcerting. A bit of shade would be an advantage but since this is by far the most productive site I have, I don't worry too much.

Now for what I look on as the ideal site: Just across The field from the first picture, this is the view from the road. First point is the good strong locked gate to keep the thieves out. Second is that whilst the hives are only 20yds away vandals can't see them. I put up three old fence panels to hide them in the winter and the nettles do the job in the summer.

The site is in a clearing in the trees but on the edge of an arable field, which means no animals or people, and not too much activity by the farm staff. There is virtually no risk to anyone unless they deliberately go poking around.



There are also the remains of an old field entrance so the hard surface allows me to back the car right up to the hives, a boon when honey removal time comes round.



In the trees and close to the edge of the field is the foundation slab of a long demolished wartime building. This provides a perfect level and clean site for the hives.

It faces south and the tree cover means that they fly straight out through the gap in the trees and harmlessly away over the field. The only slight disadvantage is that the tree cover is a bit thick and the sun gets to them a bit late in the morning. I shall have to do a bit of judicious pruning during the winter.

Garulus

### **The Honey Regulation 2003**

***The new Honey Regulations are now in force in England.*** We have a transitional period, until 1st August 2004, to comply. The regulations are designed to be interpreted by a court. Copies may be obtained from the Food Labelling and Standards Division of the Food Standards Agency, Aviation house, 125 Kingsway, London WC2B 6NH

There is no object in commenting in this newsletter as it is expected that the full details and an interpretation will be included in a BBKA News sheet, but, be warned, it would be unwise to stock up on jars and labels until we have clear guidance.

R.F.Crocker

### **Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -**

Southern Region: - Mr. Ian Homer.

Fax/Telephone number: 01308 482 161

South Eastern Region: - Mr. Alan Byham

Fax/Telephone number: 020 8571 6450



## **Hive Types used in Berkshire.**

I would like to explore the experience and recommendations of local beekeepers on this subject.

The story so far ...

I am a new and enthusiastic beekeeper in Berkshire. I started in 2001 with one WBC hive, bought for me as a birthday present. Later that year I acquired one more WBC hive and one Modified National. As of September 2003 I am running 3 WBCs and 12 Nationals in 2 apiaries. Subject to my wife and children's approval I have 'some' expansion plans for 2004.

The question ...

In contemplating this expansion I am torn between my existing modified Nationals with bottom bee space and a move to either 14 x 12 national brood boxes or commercial brood boxes. On the other hand, maybe even Smiths.

With the bees I'm keeping and the, seemingly warmer, recent climate in South East England, the single standard national brood box is just not large enough. 2 brood boxes gets too heavy in late season when the top one is filled with 50lbs of honey, and 1 and a half seems too messy.

Does anyone have any recommendations as to hive type or, indeed, bee type?

Thanks, Richard Miles

## **At least someone who is not a beekeeper looks at the Federation archive..**

I found your address via Google in your September newsletter.

I used to buy 'Berkshire Honey' at Wyvale Garden Centre near Wokingham, but they stopped stocking it some time ago. I miss it. Can you tell me who bottles it so I can order some?

Incidentally, I remember first buying it at the Guide Dogs for the Blind summer event many years ago when whoever did it was showing honey making.

Thank you. I look forward to your response.

Whoever sold honey to Wyvale, would you please contact the Editor?

## **SLOUGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY**

**Incorporating Windsor, Maidenhead and adjoining communities.**

We would like to thank the Schumann's for their hospitality at the recent Barbecue, also those members who helped to make it such a success. It would be lovely to repeat the event next year if any member would care to host it - the committee would take care of all arrangements and preparations. Should you feel able to, please let Michael or myself know as soon as possible, so that it can be included in the programme for next year that is now being prepared.

The review of the year was well attended again this year and it seems our bees have been working well for all of us this year. There were reports of bumper crops along with a few upsets, so I hope the Honey show benefits from all their activity. The report will be in next month's newsletter.

This month it is the AGM and Supper, as usual at the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor. It will start at 8pm on Tuesday, the 11<sup>th</sup> of November. Nominations for the committee ought to have been with the Secretary by the end of October. However, if you do wish to propose anyone, please first establish that the person is willing to stand and that someone will second him or her. Then let the Secretary, Michael Sheasby, know as soon as possible. After all the formalities have been completed, we shall be enjoying the fare that members have provided, so do please remember to bring something along for the table.

In December, we shall be having the annual video evening, plus the chance to enjoy a glass of wine and mince pie. This will be on Tuesday, the 9<sup>th</sup> December.

The library is now available at all meetings and there are still a number of surplus library books that will be on sale.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

## **WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

### **November AGM**

Our AGM will be held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November at St Paul's Parish Rooms. The formal meeting is usually quite brief and will be followed by an interesting talk and slideshow by Ian Paine of the RSPB entitled 'Birds of Berkshire'. Do come along and support your Committee.

### **Rosemary's Book of the Month**

"About Honey" by P.E Norris and was a publication in the "About" series which came out in the sixties and seventies when people were beginning to want information and guidance about healthy food and nutrients.

Norris extols the virtues of honey citing many examples of ways in which it is good for you - good for rheumatism, asthma, wounds, coughs and so on. He cites many examples of research that was being done at the time into the truth of these beliefs which many scientists rejected as being mere old wives tales. He also gives examples of places where the benefits of honey were taken seriously ("The General Hospital, Reading, impregnates all bandages for cuts, open wounds, etc., in honey... ")

These early researches paved the way for the sort of work into the antibacterial properties of honey, which was so interestingly described at our Honey Show by Dr Rose Cooper of the University of Wales Institute.

The last few pages contain some interesting recipes which are worth trying: Honey Malt Loaf, a honey steamed pudding, Honey and Nut Cold Cake (which you put in the coldest corner of the larder to set...) and a rose petal jam.

The book reminds one of the way things were thirty or forty years ago. It also highlights the areas where more research might make people aware of what we bee- keepers already know: honey is good for you!

Secretary John Edwards 0118 934 0238

The Wokingham and Reading Country Show was held at Spencers Wood on Sunday 7th September, where Reading Beekeepers Association have a portion of the produce section. It was gratifying to see the entries in the eight classes exhibited including honey cake and biscuits, which drew entries from outside the beekeeping fraternity, were well up on last year and the "Beekeeping in Berkshire" pamphlet and enlarged photography provided by Mike Blackburn was the source of considerable interest to visitors. Honey sales that will include a donation for the charities supported by the show were brisk.

Jon Davey gained the highest number of points in the various classes, with Robert Kiff and Peter Bruce a creditable second and third. RBKA members by no means had it all their own way as Mr. R.F. Roberts, who had honey and hive products on sale in a sales tent at the show, won first place for light honey and third for dark honey.

A good day with a number of interested people enquiring about beekeeping which we will follow-up. A point of interest for those who might need a little more motivation to attend next year, the grain hay and roots section next to Reading beekeepers were allowing their exhibits to be auctioned as usual for the show's charities. It was possible to bid for prize winning green hay at a pound a bale and a sack of malting barley. The same applied to wheat and a half sack of mixed field beans, linseed and mustard seed at six pound for the three! If you've a bird feeder in the garden or small, animals to bed and feed that's a lot cheaper than Pets Supermarket!

Our November meeting is our Annual general meeting at 7.30 on Thursday 13th November at Caversham Heights Methodist Church. After the AGM Mr. Harry Peace from Maidenhead will give us a video illustrated talk entitled "One man and his Bees". Hope to see you there!

Our **11th December** meeting at the Caversham Heights Methodist - The speaker will be John Hamer, from Blackhorse Apiaries Woking, John was booked for December last year, but had to cancel at short notice. We are therefore hoping that he will be able to give us his talk on "Other Ways of Keeping Bees". If I can jog your memory when John gave us that superb talk on honey extraction, using a spin dryer and presenting honey for sale - so don't miss this talk (together with the mince pies)

Secretary: Mr. R. Kiff, 114 Silverdale Road, Earley, Reading RG6 7LU Tel. 0118 966 5358

**Newsletter "Deadline": - - Contributions**, this includes **E-mails**, to arrive with the Editor by the **FIRST POST** (Around 10.00am) on the First of the Month for the Following Month

To enable the Advertisement Manager to place adverts with the Editor for the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month deadline; adverts should be sent well before this time.

**ADVERTISEMENT ENTRIES:** - 2 Lines for £1.00. Commercial, £1.00 per line, together with your cheque made payable to FBBKA. To be sent to the Advertisement Manager:-  
Mr. Michael Blackburn, M.B. Photography, 41 Prospect Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JV. Telephone:- (0118) 947 9450/5451

Honey for sale, surplus to requirement in 30lb containers at £1.25 / lb Telephone. 0118 9479450