



FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

August 2004
Number 578

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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

30 th September 2004	Federation Lecture & Honey Show. Charvil (Claire Waring)	
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21st, 22nd and 23rd October 2004 - The National Honey Show,
RAF Museum, Hendon, North London. More details soon from
<http://www.honeyshow.co.uk>

Berkshire Federation Lecture And Honey Show ?

Speaker: Claire Waring

CHARVIL VILLAGE HALL,
CHARVIL
September 30th 2004 at 7.30pm

Admission?

Put it in your diary now! Show schedules and entry forms,
which include special classes for children under 14, From Hazel Blackburn
Tel: 0118 9475451

Basic Beekeeping.

I've been asked to encourage our members to consider taking some of the BBKA exams. That sort of thing is not everybody's cup of tea. We gave up exams the day we left school! But there is one test they do which seems to me worth thinking about and it is exactly what it is called: "The BBKA Basic Assessment".

It covers the elementary facts that every beekeeper should know about Manipulation, Equipment, Natural History of Bees, Practical Beekeeping and Diseases.

To work towards it would be a great refresher course, providing us with a chance of pinning down the points we can be doubtful about even after years of beekeeping. The actual test takes about an hour and costs about ten pounds.

I'm going to ask Ron to include a few points from the syllabus each month so that you can just focus on them to see how clear you are about them. At the end of the series you will know whether you can pass the Basic. Then you might even be prepared to do the assessment just to show you really are a beekeeper!

Rosemary Bayliss

In the Apiary - August

As the normal honey flow is now almost over, once the supers have been removed varroa treatment can begin. At this time many queens will cease laying for a short period. This is an ideal time for treatment. Recently when the "Bailey Shift" was being discussed, I was asked if this was a good time to apply varroa treatments. Any time when there is no sealed brood in the hive will give optimum results. Remember, current advice is that treatments should not be applied during a honey flow. A late flow from the ivy could cause a problem.

This month, start thinking about next season! You will require healthy bees. Thoroughly examine the brood. If you have any doubts regarding disease call for assistance. Although it is possible to over-winter small colonies – even mini-nucs - it is generally recognized that five combs is a minimum. Anything smaller than this is better united to a stronger colony provided that both are healthy. I have nursed small nuclei through winter over strong colonies above double screens but all must have adequate stores

Storage of honeycombs: the use of PCDB is now frowned upon - an alternative is acetic acid. Better to cut out the comb leaving a small strip as a starter for next season or fit new foundation. There is nothing worse than picking up a super only to find that instead of combs you have a mass of webs, cocoons and wriggling moth larvae. Bees seem to be happier and more industrious when building new comb.

Some beekeepers will replace their queens at this time. This is all very well as long as the new queen is accepted but if she is not, the colony will try to raise one of their own. If there are now no drones flying this could be disastrous so make sure that drones are still available before introducing new queens or trying to raise a new one. However, when a colony is headed by a failing queen and they do not replace her, they will often retain drones through the winter. If you take a chance and leave her, pessimistically she will run out of sperm and be a drone-layer in spring, optimistically she will be superseded in the spring. There are mixed views whether or not these queens are any good but in any case the colony headed by a spring-superseded queen will usually be viable so something can be done about it.

Adapted from various sources.

A Message from Wokingham's President.

I was recently informed by one of our members, Mr Smallbone, that he had been able to come to the rescue of a Reading member who urgently needed some bees. I was delighted to hear this. A spirit of friendly co-operation between members and associations is an essential part of good beekeeping. I wish you all a successful and profitable summer.

Albert Spragg

NEW LABELLING REGULATIONS

The June edition of BeeCraft contained some very practical guidance on the new labelling regulations on pages 16 and 17. In addition, the June edition of BBKA News provides brief guidance and refers members to the detailed information on its website.

Compliance with the new regulations starts on 1 August 2004. For most members, the additional information (not previously shown) that they are likely to need to provide on labelling for their own honey, will be the 'best before' date, the country of origin ie UK and the packer's or seller's name and address. Consideration also needs to be given to the description of the honey, as specified in the regulations.

Association members are urged to study these articles carefully. There is not much time to get new labels printed or existing labels modified in an acceptable way, for sales of honey in August onwards.

Michael Sheasby

Letter to the Editor

New ECC member states and their honey: Beekeepers reading this may share a 'frisson' with the writer to learn that Asda stores in Reading are selling a 454 gramme jar of beautiful Hungarian acacia honey, under the 'Lune de Miel' brand (B. Michaud Gan. France) for £1.97 per jar, other speciality honies on the shelf e.g. Asda label 'Orange blossom' no specified origin but probably Spanish, were at £1.88 but for a 400m gramme jar. Hungarian acacia used to be £2.85 for a pound jar under the Petty Wood brand £3.39 if it had a chunk of cut comb in it! And was hard to find in delicatessens. Sellers of English honies at a premium will have to look to their laurels indeed

Jon Davey

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

SLOUGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Incorporating Windsor, Maidenhead and adjoining communities.

The June apiary meeting with Ian Homer, Southern Region Bee Disease Inspector, was highly informative and we are pleased to report was well attended. The meeting took the format of a talk by Ian on the importance of testing for Pyrethroid resistant varroa mites and alternative forms of controlling the mites. No doubt most members are now well aware that resistant mites have not only been found in Kent but also in Devon and several other parts of the country. All beekeepers should already be routinely monitoring their colonies for varroa. In addition, testing for the resistant mites is also a necessity and kits are available for this - although it is possible to improvise with another container.

It seems that the days of relying entirely on Apistan & Bayvarol are now over and as Ian pointed out, these products will probably be withdrawn in the next few seasons. Ian gave us an excellent insight into alternative ways of dealing with the varroa mites when counts showed a high infestation. There was also some very useful literature available on IPM (integrated pest management), should any member who did not attend want details of these, or want to borrow a resistance test kit, please contact the apiary supervisor, Jim Cooper on 01628 783228.

The colonies are progressing well and most of this year's queens are now mated and laying well. A reasonable honey crop is predicted. Only one colony is giving concern with a possible failing queen which will be replaced this autumn. The last official visit to the apiary will be on Sunday, the 8th August and then the winter meetings will commence again in Windsor on Tuesday, the 14th September, when we shall have the usual review of the year in our apiaries.

Before then though, will be the 60th Anniversary Supper, which is to be held on Saturday, 14th August at 7.30pm at Maidenhead Rowing Club, River Road, Taplow (near Maidenhead Bridge). Arrangements are well in hand and all reply slips should have been sent to Michael Sheasby by now to book your place for this. Members of other Associations will be most welcome to join us and you should contact Michael Sheasby urgently on 01753 642656 to check if there is still room available.

There is still an excellent forerunner to our own Honey Show in October when the annual Windsor Allotment and Home Gardens Association show and fete is held at Gardeners Hall, St Leonards Road, Windsor on Saturday, 28th August. There will be nine honey classes here and schedules are available from Mr Grant, telephone 01753 853657. This is an ideal opportunity to try out your entries from this year's crop of honey.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091
Secretary: Michael Sheasby Farnham Common (01753) 642656

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

BBOWT Open day

Wally & Sylvia Smallbone and John Edwards represented the Association at BBOWT's Animal Magic Open Day on Sunday 27th June at Woolley Firs near Maidenhead. Some 250 members of the public were introduced to owls, reptiles, bats and of course our bees. We were kept busy showing interested adults and children our observation frame and various other items. The rain held off apart from a brief downpour at the end. We sold some honey and were able to make a small donation to BBOWT funds.



Apiary visits

Members are invited to inspect Nigel Perkin's hives on Sunday 25th July from 3:00pm. Please call 07775 771079 to confirm attendance and for directions.

Members are also invited to Peter Seagrave's hives on Sunday 8th August from 3.00pm. Please call 01252 877049 to confirm attendance and for directions.

Rosemary's Book of the month

The Bee-book this month is "Swarm Control Survey" by E R Bent. It was published in 1946, but beekeeping doesn't change and swarming is always one of our preoccupations.

Every book you read tells you exactly how to prevent swarming. The trouble is that every writer has different ideas and every colony of bees also has a mind of its own.

This book makes a survey of all the various methods of controlling swarms and compares them. Bent weighs up their pros and cons bearing in mind that every colony, every apiary, every beekeeper and every summer is unpredictable.

He divides the methods into four groups:

"Frustration" - ways of stopping the actual swarm from taking place;

"Removal of Contributory Causes - such as giving space in the hive;

"De-queening" and;

"Simulation of Swarming" - for example Demareeing.

There is a useful chapter on the causes of swarming, another on taking swarms, and a sensible chapter on manipulation in the hive.

It is not a long book and Bent's style is easy and practical. A useful little book.

Secretary John Edwards 0118 934 0238

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

On Sunday 27th June members met at Cyril McComb's apiary at Cross Lanes Fruit Farm at Mapledurham. A shining day in a beautiful location. Cyril has moved two further hives here from his home apiary and these being nationals will probably have to be protected from the attentions of woodpeckers, repaired holes on one of Cyril's tougher WBC hives bearing this out!

Cyril has recently removed a substantial amount of full supers of probable rape honey; there is a nearby field that has now set to seed. New supers from the previous week however have not had much attention from the bees; there has been a cold and wet period since the glorious weather of early/mid June. This may have influenced the queen in one of the colonies to stop laying, plenty of clean shiny cells, and larvae, sealed brood but no eggs seen. A populous colony with good-tempered bees, so hopefully all will be well. All of Cyril's bees are in good heart, other colonies had eggs and a recently swarmed hive, (which had been collected) gave us a number of queen cells to investigate, one queen was allowed to drop down between the frames as she emerged during our inspection, two others were carried-off in triumph by messieurs Kiff and Blinstrub, heading no-doubt for their apiary at Firgrove Manor Eversley.

Refreshments were kindly provided by Hazel Blackburn and also we had a chance to speak to the fruit farmers, man and wife, which is always worthwhile.

Our August meeting is on Sunday 8th at 11.30 at Jon. Davey's apiary at 107 Northcourt Avenue Reading, this is a modest garden operation but the bees benefit from the rich nectar sources of suburban gardens and the chairman has applied 'roundup' to the large naturalised decorative graminaceae during the winter so a machete will not be necessary! Do come you will be most welcome.

Looking ahead to Sunday 5th September. This is the day of the Reading and Wokingham show at Spencers Wood. We have a display and a honey and hive products section in the produce tent. You will receive details and the produce schedule in good time. It really is a popular event with members of the public showing great interest and with a trophy for the winner of the honey section, please support this event with your entries in the various classes and in person on the 5th September for a traditional country show.

(See a letter to the editor)

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 1st 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