



**FEDERATION OF  
BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS**  
President: Miss Margery Cooper

January 2005  
Number 583

Hon. Secretary:  
William Napper  
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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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Hon. Editor  
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## Future Events

16 <sup>th</sup> April 2005	Spring Convention Stoneleigh	<a href="http://www.bbka.org.uk/convention.php">http://www.bbka.org.uk/convention.php</a>
21 <sup>st</sup> – 26 <sup>th</sup> August 2005	Apimondia Dublin	

## From the Federation General Secretary: -

### Welcome back to members of South Chilterns BKA.

South Chilterns have rejoined after a two-year absence, and I am hopeful that they will bring a positive contribution to the Federation.

Those of you who have not yet renewed your Association subscriptions will now be being chased by your Treasurers. Please respond as quickly as possible.

Being a Treasurer is not an easy task, and having to chase late subscriptions only makes the task that much more arduous.

William Napper

## From the Editor

Normally, due to difficulties over the Christmas and New Year period we do not have a January issue of the Newsletter, however, as South Chilterns re-joined us in November it was decided that on this occasion it would be appropriate to issue a January Newsletter.

Many of us have had the good fortune of not experiencing such things as foul brood and therefore are less likely to recognize it. At the moment we have an advisory service by NBU (the Bee Department of DEFRA), this service is limited and is likely to be further limited by funding cuts as indicated in the press release last month. Bees are essential to our agricultural economy and to the environment. Below you will find a letter from Adrian Kyte indicating a method of contacting your MP. If you would like to use this service and do not have access to internet why not get a friend to do it for you or get your secretary to send on your behalf.

For the benefit of those that have Internet web links are hyperlinked as are some e-mail addresses; individual addresses are not hyperlinked to avoid harvesting for spamming.

Ron Crocker

**To Everyone a Prosperous and a super(filled) 2005**

## Letter to the Secretary

The news of potential cuts to NBU funding is indeed alarming and I will be contacting the local MP. You might like to circulate the internet link below to members as it is a very easy and convenient way to contact your MP, all you need to know is what you want to say and your own postcode, the website selects the correct MP. The website sends a query to you after 2 to 3 weeks to see if your MP has responded and whether you were satisfied with any response you get.

In my experience the MP for Wokingham usually acknowledges the message very quickly and then comes back with a reasoned reply within 2 weeks, some other MPs I have contacted fail even to acknowledge the message.

<http://faxyourmp.com/index.php3>

Adrian Kyte

## In the Apiary - January

I am given to understand that this was to be for the last Newsletter published by South Chilterns. I have enjoyed my "In the Apiary" articles and hope that some benefit has been gleaned from them.

January is a month when there is not a lot to be done in the apiary but a quick occasional check to make sure that every thing is secured would be time well spent including a heft of the hives to make sure that the bees have enough food. There is no reason why the roof should not be gently removed from time to time just to check that the inside is still dry, but do not disturb the hive more than that, bees do not like any form of disturbance during the winter months. As the winter progresses I do not give Candy " just to be on the safe side". If you find that the hives definitely are on the light side then the situation is different and you must give candy because this would be preferable to the alternative. I know I am being controversial when I say I do not subscribe to the theory that the bees are running short of stores when you see them clustered at the top of the combs, in my experience the cluster moves up and down and across for reasons best known to themselves!

Always trust hefting the hives to tell you the state of the remaining stores.

Now is the time to sort out your super combs. The bees definitely prefer to store honey in worker comb as opposed to drone cells if given the choice, therefore, if over the years your super combs have developed a predominance of drone comb the should be discarded and melted down.

We have had snow free winters for some time now. If we do get a heavy fall of snow this can be left on and around the hive – it is a good insulator and snow at the entrance could very well deter the bees from flying out on a sunny day and not making it back to the hive. Melted snow on the hive roof about the size of a dinner plate tells me that rising heat from the cluster is responsible for this and all is well within.

I took a walk through the woods recently and at the same time collected half a sack-full of well-rotted wood, which by next season will be thoroughly dry and perfect for smoker fuel. I have found well-rotted wood the best smoker fuel by far. It burns cool, provides minimal tar deposits and actually smells nice to the beekeeper!

## Kept bees for two years or more?

Is your swarm control a bit haphazard?

Do you avoid raising new queens for your colonies?

Given any thought on how to deal with resistant Varroa mites?

These topics and more will be covered by my advanced beginners course at Burchetts Green College of Agriculture starting Monday evenings 14<sup>th</sup> February 2005 at 7.0pm. More details from George Butler (Tutor) on 0118 9832735 To register ring Janet Hausmann at the college on 01628 827513 (direct line)

George Butler

## BBKA Basic Monthly Quiz...

### BBKA Basic Exam:

By now you should be fairly confident about Manipulation and Equipment.

The next part is about the Natural History of the Honeybee.

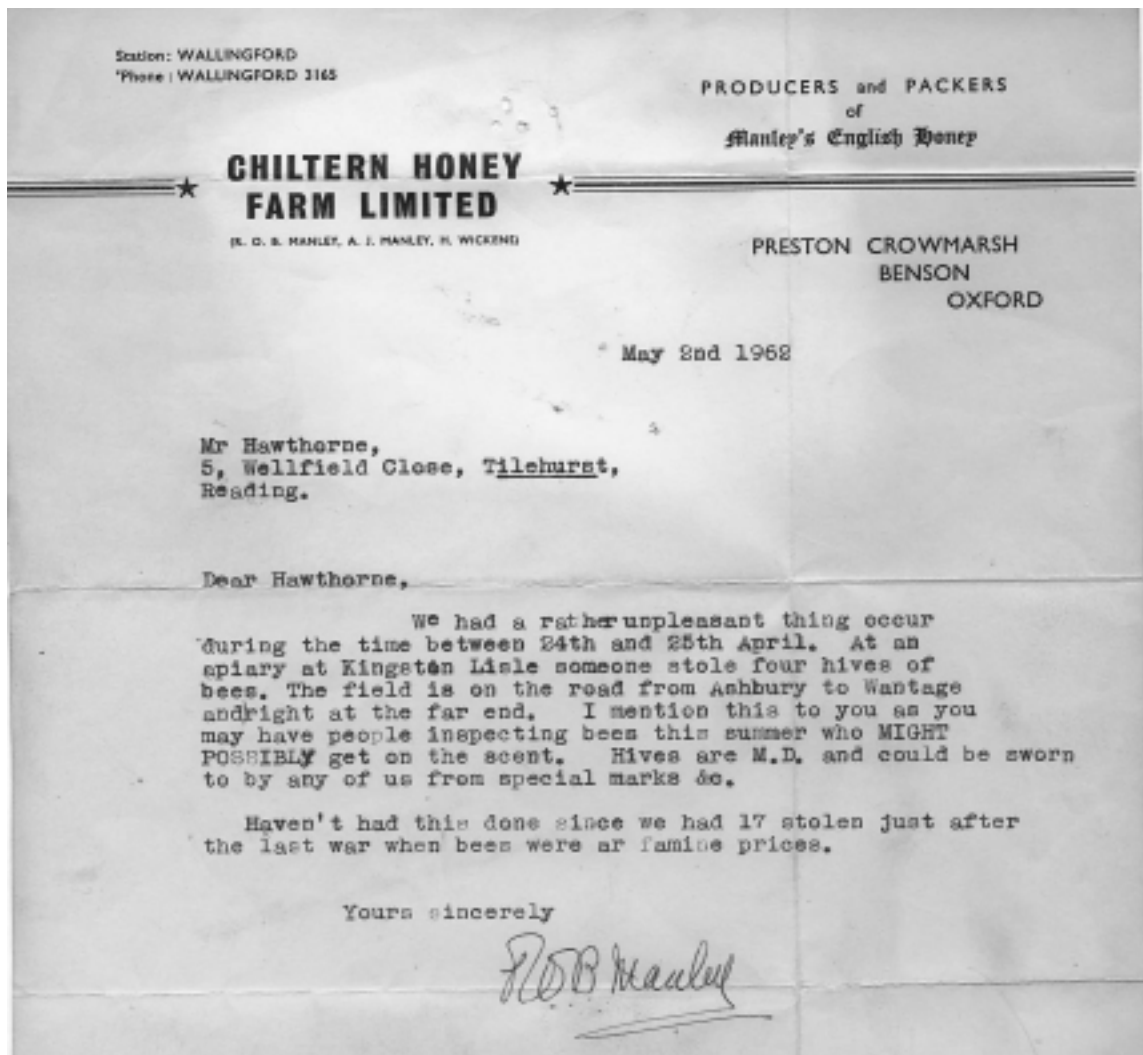
Here are the first five topics:

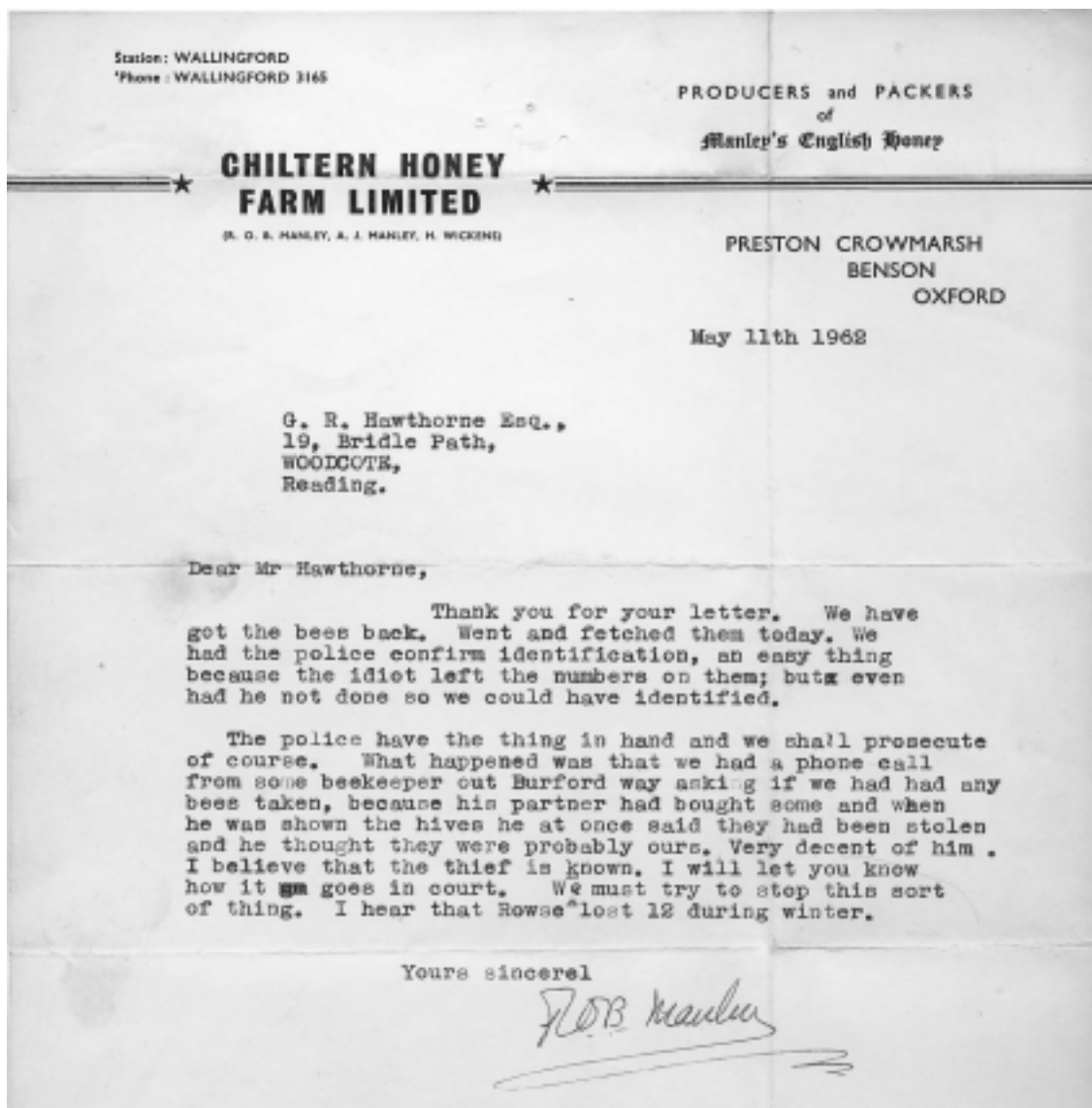
The candidate will be:

1. able to give an elementary account of the development of queens, workers and drones in the honeybee colony,
2. able to state the periods spent by the female castes and the drone in the four stages of their life (egg, larva, pupa and adult)
3. able to give an elementary description of the function of the queen, worker and drone in the life of the colony.
4. 4, able to give a simple description of wax production and comb building by the honeybee.
5. aware of the importance of pollination to flowering plants and consequently to farmers and growers.

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## Letters to the Editor 1962





Courtesy of Mrs Audrey Hawthorne

### 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

### WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

#### Report on November meeting

Ian Paine, an ex-RSPB warden gave a very interesting and illustrated talk on 'Birds of Berkshire'. He covered the many species seen regularly and also a number of the rare visitors spotted over recent years. Ian and his colleagues lead a walk around Dinton Pastures on the first Saturday in each month starting at 9:00am from the main car park. We have recently seen Mandarin duck, Goldeneye duck and Goldcrests.

#### February meeting

The meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> February will feature a talk by one of our members, Dr Pete Kennedy, who works in Ecological Sciences at Syngenta. Pete will tell us about 'Testing the safety of pesticides to honey bees'

## **Book of the month**

I am currently wading through a Christmas gift, 'The Hive and the Honey Bee', a 1324 page epic covering almost every aspect of beekeeping. First published in 1946, the book has been regularly revised and reprinted and now comprises 27 sections all by different noted authors. Some of the sections are quite technical but there is a very good index that can get you to most topics quickly. Chapter 1 by Eva Crane gives a very good history of beekeeping from the Middle East in 5000BC to the establishment of modern beekeeping by Lorenzo Lorraine in 1851.

Secretary John Edwards 0118 934 0238

## **SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

The November meeting was almost "a full house" when we were entertained by Will Messenger. A most interesting illustrated talk on historic hives, bee boles and bee houses. We looked at several hives and Will discussed their history. The long hive in its various forms was discussed but the main subject was the Stewarton hive. Although not the easiest to make, this hive is the one that most closely resembles the natural brood nest. The Stewarton used removable bar frames and in the absence of foundation a thin bead of wax was run along the centre of the frames thus the bees would build their combs on the frames rather than across them, some beekeepers still use this idea.

The subject of our January meeting on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> will be "Apiary and Hive Hygiene" discussed by our Regional Bees Officer, Ian Homer. He will also discuss various points arising from bee health visits to some of the apiary visits earlier this year. Unfortunately our apiary tour was not as comprehensive and complete as had been hoped due to weather conditions. A possible tour for 2005 will be discussed; we already have two enquiries for this.

Secretary: Annette Cleaver (01491) 642021  
[southchilterns.bees@btinternet.com](mailto:southchilterns.bees@btinternet.com)

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

Incorporating Windsor, Maidenhead and adjoining communities.

Our Annual Dinner is being held this month, on Friday the 21<sup>st</sup> January, at the Aurora Garden Hotel, Bolton Avenue, Windsor. The booking form should have been returned to Don Church by now, with your choice of menu and payment. If you have not done so yet, please call Don on 01753 831939 to check if there is still space available before sending off. We meet as usual at 7pm for 7.30, the food is excellent and it is a very enjoyable evening, so we look forward to seeing you all there.

The next meeting is in the usual venue of the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor and will be on Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> February, when Keeper Chris Morris will be talking to us about the Burnham Beeches Wildlife. It will commence at 8pm as normal and we hope that there will be a good turn out to welcome Chris.

Don't forget that our library is available for members' use at all meetings and a few surplus books will be for sale as well. We also have a new labelling machine for members' use, which stamps "Best Before End" dates and "Lot Numbers" onto a separate label for your honey jars, which allows the flexibility of numbering needed for this. As this is now required by law when selling to the general public, please contact me on the number below should you wish to borrow it.

The new 2005 Programme of events is enclosed, please read through it and mark all the dates on your calendar, we have a varied programme again and look forward to meeting everyone at all the events.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

Secretary: Michael Sheasby Farnham Common (01753) 642656

## READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

On 11th November Reading Beekeepers met for their Associations Annual General Meeting. Thanks to those and to who attended and agreed to committee membership and for debating and passing the proposals and schedules for the coming year. Afterward Carl Feltham who is an executive of RNIPB gave us a really excellent sound and vision presentation via his computerised system about the Birds of Berkshire, many species are to be seen in local countryside and in our gardens and the talk gave us the opportunity to familiarise ourselves with the unique songs and calls of each species. Members and friends showed some useful knowledge of garden, farmland and woodland birds and a lively questions and answers session developed with some heart-warming anecdotes. Carl has more than one presentation available on his system and Reading DBKA recommend him highly.

### January Venues and Events:

Our usual venue on the second Thursday in the month: i.e. 13th January at 7.30 sharp when our speaker will be Christine Nakimbugwe, many members will have met Christine who has been a visitor during our summer programme and works on the MUT Project in Uganda which involves 50 apiarist in the Witisio district close to the capital with the objective of improving the beekeeping and co-operation in the region to maximise potential to produce and increase their sales of honey.

Reading Beekeeper's Annual Dinner will be on Friday 28th January 7-30 for 8.00 pm. at The Jekyll and Hyde on the A33 at Turgis Green just passed the Wellington Estate towards Basingstoke, there will be lifts available, don't miss the opportunity for a convivial evening at this well-known 'Gastro-Pub' menu etc giving choices to follow.

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