



# FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

February 2005  
Number 584

Hon. Secretary:  
William Napper  
Flat 27A School Road  
Tilehurst, Reading.  
Berkshire. RG31 5AR.  
Tel: 0790 6903413

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

E-mail:- [berksbees@btopenworld.com](mailto:berksbees@btopenworld.com)

Hon. Editor  
R.F.Crocker  
25 Shiplake Bottom  
Peppard Common,  
Oxon RG9 5HH  
(0118 972 2315)

## 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: -

All of you who have paid your subscription as Full Members of your Association should receive your BBKA Membership card with your BBKA Newsletter in February.

I have passed all Full Members names and addresses on to the BBKA for entry on their database, following information supplied by your individual Association Secretaries.

If, as sometimes happens, mistakes have been made and you do not receive your card, please let your Association Secretary and myself know and we will deal with it straight away.

Thank you.

William Napper

## In the Apiary – February

This month not much to do outside apart from following January's notes and making sure that stores are adequate (by hefting), fondant can be given if the hive is light. It is unwise to expose your brood nest unnecessarily at this time, if you have any doubts, call for assistance.

Now is the time to actively start preparing your beekeeping equipment for the coming season, repair damaged hive parts if you have not already done so. Toward the end of the month prepare a brood chamber with new foundation ready for performing a "Bailey Shift" (or an adaptation) to renew combs for disease and Varroa control. This is nothing new, my grandfather used to do this but the method fell by the wayside being labour intensive apart from the shortage of foundation during the war. Grandfather used natural comb drawn above a queen excluder, this gave worker comb without drone cells. The frames were pre-wired otherwise combs would collapse. A better method suggested on the Irish List, would be to use fishing line instead, just as effective and avoids the rows of unused cells that sometimes occur along the wire.

It has been noted that AMM and some carnica bees will invariably build natural comb with smaller cells than many other strains and bees take ½ to 1 day less to reach maturity from the egg, resulting in fewer mature varroa.

RFC

**Fax your MP** – cuts to NBU funding (See January Newsletter)

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

## **BBKA Basic Monthly Quiz...**

### **BBKA Basic Exam:**

I hope you used the Christmas break to brush up on the questions you weren't sure of. Here are the rest of the headings for Section Three, The Natural History of the Honeybee:

The Candidate will be able to:

6. name the main local flora from which Honeybees gather pollen and nectar;
7. give a simple definition of nectar and a simple description of how it is collected, brought back to the hive and is converted into honey;
8. give a simple description of the collection and use of pollen, water and propolis in the honeybee colony;
9. give an elementary description of swarming in a honeybee colony;
10. give an elementary description of the way in which the honeybee colony passes the winter.



Sailing Wax. Photo: Hazel Blackburn

### **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

## Seasonal Bee Inspectors

Seasonal Bee Inspectors are required to work within Wilts, Berks, Oxon and the southern part of Bucks. Hours can be fairly flexible and contracts are offered for 2 to 3 days per week during the period April to September. If any members are interested or know of others, would they please get in touch with Ian Homer by tel/fax at 01308 482 161 or email at [i.homer@csl.gov.uk](mailto:i.homer@csl.gov.uk)

## Taking the sting out of beekeeping

Chris O'Toole

**Friday 4 March 2005 at 7.30 pm**  
**Upper Bucklebury Memorial Hall, near Thatcham, Berkshire**

Newbury Beekeepers' Association warmly invites you to the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Leaver Memorial Lecture, to be given by Chris O'Toole on research into the lifestyle of red mason bees and development of conservation and pollination systems. Chris is with the Oxford Bee Company whose field includes several sub-species of bees as well as bats and ladybirds.

The lecture is free and all beekeepers in the region are most welcome. We should therefore be very grateful if you would publicise the lecture amongst local beekeepers and colleagues – and through your magazine or newsletter if appropriate.

The lecture will be held at the Memorial Hall in Upper Bucklebury. The postcode is RG7 6QH.

### Directions:-

- Take the A4 to the eastern outskirts of Thatcham
- Follow the signposting to Upper Bucklebury and Cold Ash (turning right at a roundabout if coming from Reading or left at traffic lights if coming from Newbury)
- Follow signs for Upper Bucklebury and after 1½ miles, at the top of Harts Hill Road, the road bends to the right and becomes Broad Lane. Continue through Upper Bucklebury past Peach's garage and a pub.
- The Memorial Hall is the last building on the right within the 30mph zone, before you reach Bucklebury Common.

There is ample space for car parking beside the Hall.

## SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

The December meeting presented our traditional Christmas Fayre of refreshments with a warming glass of mulled wine, which I personally thought was the nicest I have ever tasted. We were also enraptured by a talk from Martin Buckle on Beeswax. This was no ordinary talk as he came armed with baskets (which he made himself) full of gadgets, recycled from household objects, including dog food cans which were very useful pitchers for scooping hot wax out of the melting pot. The delicately made model flowers, farm carts and a beautiful authentic violin were just a few of the crafts he has made.

I hope it spurred our members on to think about saving next years wax as it certainly gave me "food for thought".

Our February meeting on the 16th welcomes Claire Waring with a slide illustrated talk.

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

# WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

## AGM Report

18 members and friends attended the AGM on 10<sup>th</sup> November. The Treasurer reported a financial loss for the current year with a consequent reduction in our reserves. After some discussion the meeting agreed an increase in Member's subscriptions for this year to £23 (Friends remain at £10) and to £25 for next year.

A considerable sum is spent on the postage for Newsletters and savings could be made if members are willing to receive their copy by e-mail. Those prepared to take up this option should e-mail the Secretary at 'ejedwards@btinternet.com' with the subject heading 'WDBKA Newsletter.'

The meeting was followed with an interesting talk by Philip Merrin about his wildlife garden in Woodley. Philip is an expert on reptiles and amphibians and has created an ideal environment for them in an urban garden.

## December meeting report

Ian Homer, our regional inspector gave a very professional and interesting talk on Integrated Pest Management. He explained how resistant varroa is spreading up from the West Country and we need to adopt a multi-pronged approach to its control. He stressed the need to monitor the level of infestation at regular intervals and only use pesticides if the infestation is bad. Ian explained the use of open mesh floors for monitoring, the use of drone brood as a control mechanism and the performance of Apiguard. The meeting concluded with coffee and mince pies.

## February meeting

A scientist from Syngenta will give a talk on "***Testing the safety of pesticides to honeybees***" on 9<sup>th</sup> February.

## Rosemary's thought about Bee Books

Our president, Mr Spragg has just been writing to our local MP's, John Redwood and Andrew MacKay about DEFRA's plans to cut the BDU's budget and I wondered whether these parliamentarians had any preconceived ideas about beekeepers. Would they see us as modern and scientific or as a bunch of quaint rather whimsical loonies?

Looking back at some of the books I have come across in our library, both descriptions seem to be apt. Heavily on the whimsy side is the Rev Tickner Edwardes with his rustic Sussex Bee Master of Warrilow living in his pretty little cottage tucked away in the hills. You find this approach in Maurice Maeterlinck's romantic Life of the Bee, in Hartlib's The Reformed Common Wealth of Bees of 1603 and even in Virgil's Georgics.

On the other hand, outstanding reference books like Root's ABC and XYZ of Bee Culture and the writings of people like R O B Manley and Brother Adam and Ted Hooper are pretty straightforward guides.

However, I think that every writer on the subject manages to convey something of the respect we all feel for these mysterious alien creatures that know so much about survival on a hostile planet

Secretary John Edwards 0118 934 0238

## READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

### Beekeeping in the Middle East:

Julian Johnston gave Reading and District Beekeepers Association a talk on the above subject at our meeting at Caversham Heights Methodist Church on 9th December. As a one time commercial beekeeper and former Ministry of Agriculture bee inspector Julian had the opportunity; being known in the Oman and UAE; being former Foreign Office and fluent in the local Bedouin dialect: to advise beekeepers to upgrade their production of the very expensive local honey. The main forage plants are a spring flowering acacia and a later flowering bush, which produces edible berries. The traditional Bedouin honey production is from 'hives' consisting of piles of hollowed and plugged palm logs, few of which are occupied and the swarming colony tends to occupy other log-hives in the pile. The beekeeper removes outer combs and 'wings' the honey into empty soft drinks bottles, Vimto being the preferred brand, the resultant honey having a ready market at the equivalent of £80.00 per bottle! Julian said that varroa infests most hives and anti varroa measures are ad-hoc and ineffective: largely consisting of trying to jam a strip into the small entrance to the palm log.

Funds were available and the likes of Thornes sent many elements of modern beehives to the region and Julian was in contact with the apiculture improvement stations that were set-up. These however were not particularly successful and given the shortages of suitable firewood for cooking etc. in these desert regions; amongst the Bedouin the handily sawn red cedar elements of the hives provided were just too much of a temptation! As befits a man of his long experience with the F.O. and other spheres with Arabia, Julian is philosophical about the results of his activities amongst the Bedouin beekeepers and confidentially advised us that he considers that trying to change traditional beekeeping methods in many societies is simply with 'off the shelf' Western methods is doomed to failure. A very interesting talk from a very interesting man.

Our February meeting is at our usual venue on Thursday 10th at 7.30 sharp. This is a talk that no beekeeper should miss

The Southern Region Bee Inspector Ian Homer will give us a talk entitled " No bees, no honey. no money!". See you there!

**Book Review:** Cooking with Honey: produced by our near neighbours the High Wycombe and District Beekeepers Association a very professional looking "Starters. Main Courses. Desserts. Marinades. Sauces. Dressings. Cakes. Drinks. Over 100 Recipes".

Hazel Blackburn obtained this copy on her travels and given the care which is needed for successful use of honey in cooking etc. 'foodies' should consider putting this on their book-shelf. J.P. Wiggins who we assume is the editor; writing from Marlow in a short reference at the end of the book credits a wide variety of sources for the recipes printed. Senior readers may recognise the style of 'The Ministry of Food' from the forties in 'Fish Surprise' using honey and cider (flat) to pep-up a 'nice piece of white fish'. A number of useful cake recipes are here which may ring the changes in the 'cake class' in forthcoming honey shows exhibits. All sounding very delicious.

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

## SLOUGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Incorporating Windsor, Maidenhead and adjoining communities.

Our December meeting was a lively and enthusiastic talk and slide-show by bee farmer and Queen-producer Ged Marshall, mainly concentrating on his Queen rearing techniques, but in the process passing on lots of tips for general management of our hives and bees. We all enjoyed the evening and would like to thank him for coming along.

This month's meeting will be on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> February, when Keeper Chris Morris will be talking to us about **Burnham Beeches Wildlife**. It is a quite diverse environment and surely has many native species alongside more recent introductions, so will be a fascinating topic for us all. It will commence at 8pm at the usual venue of the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor and we are sure that you will want to be there to welcome Chris along.

The following month, our Bee Disease Inspector Ian Homer will be with us, on Tuesday the 8<sup>th</sup> March. His subject title is "**No Bees – No Honey; No Honey – No Money**" We are sure that this will be a very important topic, in light of the present situation of spreading resistant varroa mites and the probable withdrawal of treatment strips. It will contain the latest information on how to combat this threat with new ways of managing our bees. We have had some information leaflets available at recent meetings, which were handed out at the apiary visit last June, but new ones may be on offer now and your committee would strongly recommend that you attend this meeting if at all possible.

Don't forget that our library is available for members' use at all meetings and there are still a few surplus books 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. This allows the flexibility of numbering now required by law when selling to the general public; please contact me on the number below should you wish to borrow it.

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

**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