



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

**April 2005
Number 586**

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@btinternet.com

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

Future Events

16 th April 2005	Spring Convention Stoneleigh	http://www.bbka.org.uk/convention.php
21 st – 26 th August 2005	Apimondia Dublin	
29 th September	Federation Autumn Show & Talk	

In the Apiary – April

When bees are flying and the air temperature is at least in the 40's (f) your brood chambers can be examined. If your bees are short of stores they will need feeding, however, first check for disease. If you find dead larvae being thrown out be suspicious, it could be the result of starvation or chilling on the other hand in the early stages of disease dead larvae may be thrown out. It is possible that there is no other visible evidence of disease. Sending a sample to CSL costs nothing, this has happened in Caversham in a case of AFB. If in any doubt call for assistance, there is no point feeding a colony that cannot be rescued. Failing queens should be replaced or the colony united with one that is queen-right. By now your bees will be building up very rapidly. The Queen excluder should now be in place if you haven't done this already and at least one super should be in use

Now is an ideal time to replace combs in order to reduce the incidence of disease, if possible, use something like the "Bailey Shift" I endeavour to change at least one box of combs each year

Try not to squash bees for several reasons, squashed bees will release an alarm scent, which rouses the bees and makes them aggressive, and as they clean up the mess afterwards they will distribute any disease the victims may have.

Test for varroa resistance to pyrethroids, a test kit is available in each association instructions are included – apply to your secretary.

You should be checking for swarming at least every 10 days until the end of the swarming season. When using double brood or brood and a half all that needs to be done to check for the first signs of swarming, is to separate the two boxes, (bring the top box forward a bit, tip it up and look underneath it). Usually the first Swarming cells are built on the bottom or sides of the frames in the upper 'half' but cells could be anywhere where there is brood. If you are going to use them for Queens later and they are on the bottom of the frame, when the upper brood is replaced there is great danger of damaging these cells. To overcome this, place an Eke between to protect the cells. (An Eke is easily made; using four pieces of wood about 2 to 3 inches wide (the width dimensions are not critical), joined together to the dimensions of the boxes). However this is only a temporary measure, so do not leave the eke on more than a couple of days as the bees will extend their combs into the extra space you have given them.

To prevent swarming, you will have to either remove the Queen or remove the Queen Cells before the first one is capped. There are other methods such as the Demaree method, moving colonies, reducing the population etc, but this is too big a subject for this Newsletter. You can of course destroy all the cells, going carefully through all twenty-two frames.

It is not advisable to do this more than once; the bees will build more queen cells and will be likely to include inferior scrub cells, which it is possible to miss. Once the bees have decided to swarm, to repeat this method several times will not make them decide otherwise, they will 'win' in the end, it is nature's way!

To produce comb honey, use frames of thin unwired foundation in the super. If you put this directly above the brood in the first super, you will find a number of cells filled with pollen. Although pollen is edible, it doesn't look very nice, especially if you are selling this product to the public.

BBKA Basic Monthly Quiz...

BBKA Basic Exam:

Part 4 - "Beekeeping" continued:

The candidate will be:

- 4.7 able to give an elementary account of one method of swarm control;
- 4.8 able to describe how to take a honeybee swarm and how to hive it;
- 4.9 able to describe signs of a queenless colony and how to test if a colony is queenless;
- 4.10 able to describe signs of laying workers and of a drone laying queen;
- 4.11 aware of the dangers of robbing and how robbing can be avoided;
- 4.12 able to describe one method of uniting colonies.

Imported bees:

Approval has been given to import bees from New Zealand and Hawaii.

My advice would be **DON'T**.

First, what is meant by packages? Queen bees of the species *Apis mellifera linguistica* have been imported from New Zealand for many years, but packages would be new and are small colonies consisting of a queen and two or three pounds of worker bees. Given that the queen alone could be the carrier of disease, some like Kashmir bee virus apparently not present in the UK, add a few thousand worker bees and the probability of doing so greatly increases.

Have you considered other undesirable problems we may be importing like plant pathogens carried on the bees, or attached to pollen grains clinging to their bodies?

I know that an Import Risk Analysis has recently been carried out by the Central Science Laboratory on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and after every evaluation it states something like, "little risk is considered in importing such packages". I bet we have heard that before from the scientific community, only later to regret their words.

Then there are the exotic pests and diseases that I agree are probably not present in New Zealand or Hawaii, but who can be certain

Why should we wish to import such bees, after all the species are alien to this country?

I suppose the most valued attribute of *Apis mellifera linguistica* is its docility, even being described as "like working flies" (I don't find that very attractive either).

But is it suitable for our climate? I would say a definite NO. This bee's natural habitat is around the Mediterranean area, along a line of 40 degrees latitude in the Northern Hemisphere. This line runs through northern Greece, the southern tip of Italy, Sardinia, and Balearic Islands and divides Spain into a north and south half. Now take 40 degrees latitude in the Southern Hemisphere and sure enough it runs straight through the centre of New Zealand, virtually following the channel that divides the North and South Islands. I know there will be other considerations to the climatic conditions but undoubtedly there is a world of difference between the weather in Italy or New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

The Italian bees, and that is what the New Zealand strains are, are far too prolific for our climate, the additional 25% of colony strength rapidly consuming any stores during an inclement period, possibly leading to starvation. They are wonderful thieves, sneaking into every hive within an apiary as can easily be verified if one colony of New Zealand's is placed in an apiary of six *mellifera* species. This is more than normal drifting between colonies; they are seeking to rob out adjoining hives. The queen continues laying late into the year, which I try to encourage from our local 'mongrels', but they go too far, even hanging onto drones until possibly November. It is also said that this foreign bee is more susceptible to disease such as Acarine - and so the list continues.

Many of the defects I have mentioned above, such as breeding late into the year, will be attributes in their natural environment, but not in the UK.

My advice would be to leave them alone; they are just not suitable for our climate.

And I am not alone in these thoughts, even the letter that accompanies the risk assessment states; "this decision will be disappointing for many of you."

Having stated that the main advantage of the *linguistica* species is its docility, which I could not deny, although others have stated that second crosses from this bee can result in horrific creatures, are ours that bad?

Well they are, but not all of them. And is it that sometimes the beekeeper causes bad temper rather than the bee itself?

Having said that some of our bees are pleasant creatures, well I was examining some of mine in mid January (not a full examination I might add) and they were perfectly comfortable with my intervention. Any that might have displayed an overzealous attitude would be noted, and carefully watched later in the season. But a couple have already been highlighted as potential breeder queens.

And this is what you should be considering, forget your imports and the horrendous problems in introducing those queens into colonies, and raise a colony or two from your most desirable stocks.

Although it will not apply to bee packages I have just mentioned the problems of introducing travelled queens, and yes it is a problem. Much aggravated I believe by the time the queen is separated from a colony and the 24-hour flight from the other side of the world. Something like £15 - £20 paid for a single queen and within seconds the colony you have introduced her into have killed her, not the best way of spending money I would say.

Adapted by permission of The South Shropshire Beekeeper

Tenerife Apiary



This picture was taken on Tenerife in a minor tourist attraction called the Barranco del Infierno (or Hell's Gorge). There are about 30 log hives in this position and another like it around the corner.

Both lots are under rock overhangs, which probably protect them from what little rain this arid part of the island receives.

The hives are about 250ft above the bottom of the gorge and 100ft below the path from which the photograph was taken on a rugged slope of at least 45 degrees. As far as I could see there was no way of

getting up, down or along to them.

A bottle of Tenerife Manzanilla to the person who, in the opinion of the Editor gives the best suggestion on how the hives are managed, with particular reference to taking the honey crop and getting it up the slope and down to the nearest car place which is ¼ mile away.

Bernhard Schumann

Hattie Ellis: Sweetness and Light

Bernard Schumann (of Slough and Maidenhead BKA) lent me this book and asked me what I thought of it.

I couldn't put it down!

It is one of the most readable books about the honeybee that I have read.

There is, by way of introduction, a brief account of the sort of work beekeeping involves, but the book doesn't pretend to be a manual of beekeeping – its sub-title is "The Mysterious History of the Honey Bee". Ms Ellis covers every conceivable aspect of the subject – historical, literary, medicinal, geographical – you name it.

The book could be criticized for being superficial, but that is what it is meant to be – an overview. This is something that has often been tried, usually with a technical, solemn approach which puts the ordinary reader off. This writer has that magic touch of knowing what to include and how to write about it in simple, easy language.

I think this book is useful to us in two ways. The more we beekeepers broaden our knowledge of the beekeeping world, the better we will be at looking after our own colonies. It is also something we can give to our nearest and dearest because it will help them to understand why we like our batty hobby

Rosemary Baylis

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

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Subscriptions:

If you have not paid your subscription you will not have personal liability insurance under the BBKA scheme, further, this newsletter will be your last.

February Meeting

Claire Waring gave a very comprehensive talk on photography, including slides. She uses a single lens camera with a 100mm Macro lens. This enables her to take a 'very' close-up picture of her subjects. Providing light on the subject can either be with keeping the shutter open longer or she actually uses a flashgun attachment to acquire more light. When trying these methods it is advisable to photograph something still to start with, either flowers or a caterpillar and also use a tripod. Check around the perimeter of the picture in the lens for things that you really don't want there and adjust accordingly. We sampled some of her pictures from the depths of Africa with the log hives, to the heights of Nepal with the combs of honey hanging five foot across under cliff edges.

We had a packed evening, either for the cakes to celebrate Reg Hook's birthday, or without doubt for a very interesting and informative talk by Claire.

Educational Apiary Tour:

Regrettably there is insufficient interest to justify a tour; therefore, the idea will be abandoned for this season

The April apiary meeting will be on Saturday April 23rd at Darkwood Farm (The Home of Country Ways) Park Corner, Nettlebed commencing at 2.30pm, "Spring Assessment". Grid Reference: SU6929 8863

Secretary: Annette Cleaver (01491) 642021

southchilterns.bees@btinternet.com

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

February meeting report

Natalie Hargreaves, a scientist from Syngenta at Jealott's Hill, gave us an interesting talk on the extensive work her team undertakes to establish that the various herbicides and pesticides the company develops are safe when released into the environment. Honeybees are one of the insects that undergo strict laboratory and field tests on adults and larvae. Some of these chemicals can take up to ten years to pass through all the tests and trials before they come to market.

Club apiary

Following contacts made by our member Nigel Perkins, we are close to concluding an arrangement to reposition our club hives at a new site in Hurst. We have agreement to use an existing concrete hard standing and to erect a small shed for our equipment. The site is reasonably secure, being some distance from the road and having people in evidence for much of the time. More details will follow once we are operational again.

Secretary John Edwards 0118 934 0238

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

At the February meeting of Reading and District Beekeepers Association we had the very great pleasure of welcoming our Southern region Bee Inspector from Central Science Labs, Mr Ian Homer who gave us an illustrated talk entitled "No Bees, no honey, no honey. No money" this phrase is from a beekeeping friend of Ian's in Zaire where Ian has been engaged on valuable work to help upgrade the beekeeping situation and showed some (Kenya top bar) hives suspended in a series in trees where locally the Zairians had concluded some successful practical research on the best attractant to swarming bees. This was Ian's opening topic to conserve the bee population in the apiary to maximise honey production and the artificial swarm methods Ian illustrated this writer found much easier to understand than what can be gleaned from diagrams in various beekeeping books and manuals and feels more confident about trying this in the coming months instead of simply trying swarm cell removal and hoping any swarms are collectable!

On the theme of healthy colonies Ian illustrated bee diseases and bee pests, recommending integrated pest management; as well as varroa, another mite *Tropilaelaps clareae* that few of us were familiar with and the horrors of small hive beetle that we fervently hope we will never have to deal-with! This was a very excellent talk and contains vital information for the beekeeper.

Our April meeting is the first of our summer programme. On Sunday 17th April 1130 sharp, please assemble at Peter Kimber's address: 25 Conisborough Avenue, Caversham Heights. Tel. 0118 947 1319. We will get together in 2-3 cars and go to one of Michael Blackburn's out-apiaries which is on an estate location in Mapledurham with an ornamental lake close-by but has rather restricted vehicle access. Afterwards we will return to Peters and open some of his hives as time permits. Look forward to seeing you there!

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.

The February meeting was a talk and presentation on the topic of Burnham Beeches, given by Keeper Chris Morris. It was a fascinating insight into how our local woods have been managed over the centuries, to make them what they are today.

We heard how the pollarded trees, which were a source of fuel and/or material, had been cut in twelve year cycles; and how there has been a small scale re-introduction of grazing and foraging animals into some parts of the area at various times of the year. We also heard of the increased incidence of the hornet in this area recently, something local beekeepers have also noticed. I wonder how widespread this is over the country as a whole.

The coming month's meeting will again be a departure from bee matters – the long-awaited talk on bats will at last be given by Julian Mason of the South Bucks and Berks Bat Group. There do not appear to be so many bats around in this area these days, unlike in some parts of the world where, according to a recent wildlife programme on television, there are millions migrating and breeding in unison. I am sure this will also be a fascinating topic, so do come along to find out what Julian has to say. The date is Tuesday, 12th April, commencing at 8pm as normal, at the All Saints Parish Hall on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor. We look forward to welcoming members old and new, along with any surrounding association members who would like to come along.

Don't forget that our library is available for members' use at all meetings and this will be the last opportunity for a while to purchase one of the few surplus books still available.

The apiary visits have now commenced and this year will be a chance for you to see some of the recommended techniques for varroa mite and disease management being put into practice, do please make the effort to attend. There is always a very useful exchange of ideas and experiences, so the learning-curve may well be easier as a result. If you have not been to our apiary yet, Jim Cooper - our apiary supervisor - will be able to give directions. His number is 01628 783228: or call one of the numbers below. The dates for April are the 10th and 24th and for May the 8th and 22nd. , All commencing at 3pm.

The labelling machine for members' use, which stamps the required "Best Before End" date and "Lot Number" onto a separate label for your honey jars, can be obtained from the first number below, if you wish to borrow it.

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

LINDA's HONEY RECIPES

Carrot and parsnip soup

2 cooking apples peeled cored and chopped		
225g onions peeled and chopped	knob of butter	1 bay leaf
1 litre chicken stock	450g carrots peeled and chopped	a squeeze of lemon juice
450g parsnips peeled and chopped	1 tbsp honey	salt, pepper and parsley

Fry the apples and onions in a little butter,
Make up the stock, add the bay leaf and cook carrots for 3-4 minutes before adding the parsnips, apples and onions. Cook for a further 5 minutes. Remove the bay leaf and liquidize the soup. Return to the heat and add honey, seasoning and a squeeze of lemon juice.
Garnish with parsley.

Some interesting facts about Honey

- Honey is composed of Laevulose (approx. 40%) Dextrose (approx. 35%) with smaller proportions of other sugars,, water proteins and minerals.
- One pound of honey contains nearly 1,500 calories-equal to 6 pints of milk or 12 lbs. of apples.
- 14 oz of honey has the same energy value as 20 eggs.
- Recent Investigations, including tests for physical reaction (energy), digestibility, chemical reaction (acidity), general tolerance to the food, calorific content per feed, taste appeal versatility and economy, show the following comparison of popular energy foods (score rating 1 to 10):
- Honey 9, Glucose 7.5, Corn Syrup 7, Brown Sugar 6, White Sugar 4.5
- Honey is imported mainly from the Commonwealth the Colonies and the Americas, smaller quantities coming as available from Greece, Israel, Spain, Hungary and Eire. Each variety has different flavour and colour--but all have the same basic energy producing properties.

All types of honey crystallize, some quicker than others. There is no difference in food value between set and liquid honey. If honey crystallizes it can be liquefied again by heating.

Submitted by Hazel Blackburn

Bees for Development News Release

Bill Turnbull, BBC Breakfast Time presenter, will run the London Marathon on 17 April 2005, on behalf of Bees for Development Trust. The purpose is to raise funds to support the continued work of Bees for Development Trust, providing information and advice to beekeepers in developing countries. We are asking you to support this worthwhile appeal.

Please sponsor Bill's fund-raising marathon effort: 26 miles 385 yards (42.2 kilometres) is a long way to run! All we ask you to do is go to the website: (link: <http://www.justgiving.com/beekeepers>) <http://www.justgiving.com/beekeepers> where you can give a donation, and watch the sponsorship progress.

Sponsoring Bill via the website is fast, secure and simple. All donations - however large or small - will be much appreciated, and used to support bees and beekeepers in developing countries. Thank you. Dr Nicola Bradbear, Bees for Development Trust, Troy, Monmouth, NP25 4AB, UK Tel +44 (0)16007 13648 Fax +44 (0)16007 16167 E-mail trust@beesfordevelopment.org Website (link:<http://www.beesfordevelopment.org>)<http://www.beesfordevelopment.org/>

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

Honey for sale - Berkshire / Oxfordshire honey in 34 lb containers at £1-40 lb - 0118 9479 450

2-----3

BEEKEEPING EQUIPMENT SALE.

Brood boxes, Supers, Floors, Queen excluders, commercial, national & smith. Stainless steel electric extractors. Easy melting tray (thermostat controlled) Stainless steel honey tanks (various sizes) One strain away. Lots of clean frames & foundation wax. One sterilising tank. All boxes and floors have been sterilised and ready for use. Prices 25% list prices (Thornes catalogue) Ring Leavey. 0118 9663795

Beekeeping equipment and supplies

from your Thornes agent in Berkshire
Large stock of most requirements available ex. stock. All other in range available only a phone call away. Deliveries in season at regular intervals. Please phone John Belcher on 01189 842321 for a quotation. Beeswax exchanged.