



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

**June 2005
Number 588**

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

21 st – 26 th August 2005	Apimondia Dublin	
29 th September	Federation Autumn Show & Talk	Dr Keith Lucas-Pollination & alpine flora

In the Apiary - JUNE

So now we find ourselves in ‘flaming’ June, though at the time of writing we are having a cool and wet spring in our region. Every season is capable of being different in respect of the performance of our colonies. Some warmer weather should find healthy hives in June with a population having peaked in population during May, but still very full of brood, nurse bees a large population of very active foragers, drones and a number of full capped frames in our supers that may now require our attention. Before we congratulate ourselves on the weight of our supers however we have work to do in the brood chambers beneath as June is very much a swarming month and there may be a shortage of forage later in the month (the June gap) that could effect the behaviour of the queen and the colony.

Keep up your regular inspections in the brood chamber, this should be within a 9 day cycle, the population in your colony may of course be reduced in April or May via swarming or maybe you have taken a frame with an occupied uncapped queen cell and started a new colony. Take your swarm control measures where you see evidence of queen cups with lava inside surrounded by food. A word of warning however, your colony maybe trying to supersede. A queen cell that is intended for the new queen to peacefully supersede her mother without the colony dividing is traditionally produced on the face of the frame, rather than at the bottom and again later in the season, possibly June. So stay your hand if you find one nicely formed queen cell in the middle of the wax, particularly if it’s already capped, you don’t want to cut that one out! Another thing to look for is an absence of eggs and small larvae. If the queen is short of space, in the ‘June gap’ or faltering or indeed being superseded this may occur. Persistence in a lack of queen activity may mean you have to introduce a frame of brood with eggs from another colony. If queen cells are being produced on this frame within 2/3 days the colony is probably queen-less.

To avoid a depletion of the colony size due to no new brood being produced you can introduce a queen. Use a suitable queen cage to protect the introduced queen while the colony get to know her, these are available commercially produced or can be easily made-up from fine mesh, if you’ve got an old cylinder curler you can use that with the ends sealed-off. The idea is for the bees to respond to the queen substances and feed her through the mesh without getting aggressive and possibly killing her. Incidentally if you have to order a queen via the post she will arrive in a suitable cage with a few attendant workers with the cage plugged with queen feed (honey mixed with icing sugar) and they will be eating their way out.

The queen cage should be placed between the brood frames, widen the spacing to grip the queen cage making sure that the queen cage exit is clear for the queen to eventually exit and replace the excluder on top. Check after 7 days to see if all is well. If you have found a debilitated old queen in the colony: she may appear sluggish and have missing legs you should have removed her before introducing the cage.

There is a lot to look for in June If you see bees crawling in front of the colony and inside the hive with deformed and missing wings and the colony has not built up a good population then you probably have a virus problem, almost certainly spread throughout the colony by the activities of varroa. At this stage apply anti varroa strips, remove what few viable super frames of honey there are from the colony first, don't contemplate uniting a diseased colony with a healthy one! Follow the instructions regarding removal of the strips, for an extended exposure inside the hive will result in the varroa mites establishing immunity to the medicament at a subsequent later treatment.

So now having got our head-out of the brood box we can think more pleasurable with measured thoughts about removing full supers and extracting. The wet frames can be placed back in the hive as promptly as possible to prepare ourselves for the lime tree blossom and the drifts of lavender in suburban gardens, having safely got our wallflower, mahonia and most precious in this writer's area, the horse chestnut, into honey buckets. Our fellow beekeepers outside the suburbs will probably have rape blossom to deal-with and the removal and extraction of this should be done as soon as the honey is viscous enough to stay inside the comb when shaken sharply i.e. without dripping even if the frame is not fully capped.

As our good friend 'Ambrosia' said "Bees don't always read the same books as the bee-keeper" So we will leave you with one of his wishes: " Full supers too you all!"

Letter to the Editor

Re In The Apiary, May

Please can you tell me what the Pagden method of artificial swarming is, I can't find any references?

Adrian Kyte

From The Bee Craftsman by H.J.Wadey (1944)

Commonsense and some ingenuity may occasionally be needed with swarms. It is often possible to cut off the branch on which the swarm is hanging, and carry it to a prepared hive into which it is at once shaken.

As soon as the swarm has settled into the box, gather up the sacking round the sides of the box, pass the rope round it, then make a slip-knot, drawing it very tightly, so that no bees can escape. Hang the box mouth downwards in a cool, shady spot, preferably in the dark, and leave it until evening. This avoids all risk of its absconding if the scouts have already found a " better 'ole."

About sunset, prepare a hive with an empty brood (or shallow) super on the floor. Beside it stand a brood-box containing frames of foundation and the swarm in its box. Untie the rope, let the sacking fall, lift the box gently, and then briskly shake the bees into the empty brood-box standing on the floor. Next, promptly put the box of frames on top of it, with the cover-board in position. The bees will quickly walk up into the new frames. While they are doing so, go to the parent hive, pick it up, and carry it to a new site a few yards away after removing all but one of its supers, complete with bees, and standing them on a roof placed beside the old site. Return to the swarm, which by now should have risen to their frames of foundation, and remove the empty box from below, placing the occupied box on the floor.

Next, lift the hive into position on the site formerly occupied by the parent stock. Lift off the cover-board, put the excluder in its place, and the supers of bees on top. Replace cover-board, add the roof, and go and tell your friends that you have carried out the Pagden Plan.

Next day all flying bees will join the swarm, leaving only youngsters in charge of the brood in the parent stock. The swarm should now give a fair crop of honey, and the parent lot may give some as well. There is no risk of casts with this method. If desired, all but one good queen cell may be removed a week later.

The plan can be carried out as soon as the swarm has settled into the box if more convenient to the beekeeper.

By permission of BeeCraft

Regrettably this is the only reference that I could find, nothing was found on the Internet. Has anyone else got any references?

Editor

BBKA Basic Monthly Quiz...

BBKA Basic Exam:

The last section of the exam is concerned with First Aid in the apiary. It is not the most glamorous side of the craft but it is essential to know what to do when things go wrong so that prompt effective action can be taken. A stitch in time, etc.

So: Section 5, Disease, Poisoning and Pests, part 1

The Candidate will be:

- 5.1 5.1 able to describe the appearance of healthy brood;
- 5.2 5.2 able to describe the signs of the bacterial diseases American Foul Brood (AFB) and European Foul Brood (EFB) and the fungal disease Chalk Brood and describe their effects on the colony;
- 5.3 5.3 Able to describe methods for detecting and monitoring the presence of varroa (a mite) and describe its effect on the colony including awareness of the effect of associated viruses;
- 5.4 5.4 aware of Acarine (a mite) and nosema (a protozoan) and their effect on the colony;
- 5.5 5.5 able to describe ways of controlling Varroosis using one registered product and one recognized biotechnical method plus basic knowledge of the problems arising from pyrethroid resistant mites

From the Editor

Reports of colony losses over the winter are varied, in some cases, complete apiaries, the average over the country seems to be about 50%. The main problem appears to be failing queens or colonies coming through the winter with too few young bees. Colonies that came through in good heart are thriving and many require supering. As far as Varroa is concerned I have only one colony that had deformed bees however, no mites were seen, this colony could have been missed in the autumn so Apistan was administered not really necessary but the strips had reached their 'use by' date.

The first swarm report was at Watlington on 30th April where oil seed rape was coming into bloom. Queen wasps are prevalent this year and reports of queen hornets, this, according to folklore portends an abundance of insects a swarming season and more than average numbers of mosquitoes

Internet News From the Bromley Bee News Update of August 2002.

One of the best beekeeping newsletters produced is by the Federation of Berkshire Beekeepers Association. The August issue gives a lot of general beekeeping advice and beekeeping news which deserves wider readership. These newsletters can be downloaded from the Northern Bee Books website:

<http://www.beedata.com/news/fbba newsletters.htm>

Lately contributions for the Newsletter have declined and are sporadic, but if we could have more input from our members we could get back to somewhere near the standard of yesterday. Surely some of our older members and even some of our newer members could provide little anecdotes or questions that would be of interest

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

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

On Sunday 17th April Reading and District Beekeepers Association enjoyed one of the few fine spring days so far for their first summer programme meeting. Members had the opportunity to carry out a 'first opening' of two of Michael Blackburn's hive on the Mapledurham Estate, reserved for the meeting unopened except for candy feeding above the crown-board. Anti-woodpecker nets were removed and 'hive no.1' revealed a good strong colony, stores coming-in and excellent brood pattern with a vigorous looking queen who we found running around on the underside of the crown board! Essential to always check carefully for the 'royal presence'! Michael as well as placing a super with drawn-out frames used an eke, to have frames added later, it's important that the fast emerging population of bees in the spring don't feel congested in their hive to reduce their 'swarming urge'.

It was obvious that 'hive no 2' had bees entering and exiting high up on the structure and sure enough a hole above the crown board; possible woodpecker damage was being used. We had to clear a number of corpses from here and also chalk brood mummies that the bees had cleared as far as the hole that was probably too small for their convenient ejection. The hive was cleaned-out and the entrance secured, Michael was careful to bury the debris and clean the hive-tool, this colony will be monitored, there was brood and eggs present so with some better weather they may strengthen.

Off then to Peter Kimber's apiary in his Caversham Heights garden, also for the 'first opening' Here we found two very nice looking strong colonies, The excellent forage among Peter's impressive prunus trees have probably stood him in good stead we had the opportunity to see his bees working the blossoms as well as that fast flying little subject (of the previous meeting) 'the red mason bee' which obviously knows where to find good bee forage! Peter's apiary has been consolidated onto two good strong colonies, when there are occupied queen cells present Peter intends to divide and produce 4 for the season. This was a busy and very interesting session and the attendance was very gratifying, as well as established member's we were joined by the new and by interested friends, thanks to the arrangers and for attending.

Reading and District Beekeepers Association has two meetings to invite you to in June. In both cases car sharing would be advisable and lifts can be offered please contact Michael on 0118 947 9450 or Jon on 0118 975 0734.

Sunday 12th June, we will visit Steve Blinbstub and Robert Kiff's apiary at Firgrove Manor Eversley. We will meet outside the orchard gates at 11.30 sharp; there will also be a chance to look around the extensive grounds. It's simple to find, just take the A327 thru Shinfield and Arborfield then turn left after the White Hart to Eversley Cross. As soon as you see the cricket field turn right behind the pub, when the road forks turn left then right (signposted to Kitts Croft) after the Manor Entrance, next lane turn left to the Orchard, it is rather narrow hence the sharing of cars if possible.

Sunday 26th June. We have arranged to visit John Hamer's apiary and bee centre near Woking at 2.30 pm. You will remember John from his talks to us during our winter programmes when he told us about the bee house and innovative alternative hives he has. We will liaise about directions and departure from Reading in good time.

Both these meetings will be important and enjoyable, 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.

Our April meeting in Windsor was the last before the summer apiary visits and was attended by Julian Mason of the South Bucks and Berks Bat Group. We heard how the use of insecticides and the increasing destruction of their natural roosts have caused a decline in these creatures. There are several schemes to provide bat boxes in wooded areas for them, though only a few have been found to be occupied. We were encouraged to try providing some in our gardens; Julian gave several handouts, which included diagrams for these boxes. The huge quantities of insects they consume must make them a great form of biological control! We would like to thank Julian for coming along and giving us such an interesting and informative evening.

Jim Cooper, our apiary supervisor, reports that the Dartington colony was found to be preparing to swarm at the last visit. Action has now been taken with the colony being divided and the second entrance opened up. In 3-4 weeks time we should have a new-mated queen. With the National colonies we have done the Bailey comb change method on all of the colonies, apart from one on which we have done the shook swarm method for comparison. We have 2 strong colonies and 2 very weak colonies. The rest are of average strength. In the locality, cherry & apple orchards are in bloom and the oilseed rape is out. Hopefully the weather will improve enough for the bees to work them.

As always, your committee would like to encourage you all to attend the apiary meetings as often as possible, especially this year when we are putting into practice the newer methods of varroa and disease control. If you have not been to our apiary yet, Jim Cooper will be able to give directions. His number is 01628 783228: Alternatively call one of the numbers below. The dates for June are the 5th and 19th and in July will be on the 3rd, 17th and 31st, all commencing at 3pm.

Details and a form are enclosed for members to book their places at the Summer Supper, which will be on Saturday, 13th August at Maidenhead Rowing Club. Last year's 60th anniversary event was a great success and we hope you will all want to join us for an extremely pleasant evening by the River Thames. Please return your requirements to Michael as soon as possible.

We are also coming up to the Summer shows, so a reminder that your honey can be entered in the five honey classes of the Royal Windsor Rose and Horticultural Society's 101st. annual show on Saturday 16th July 2005, from 11.00am---5pm at St George's School, Windsor Castle. (Entrance in Datchet Road, Windsor.) Schedules from Mrs Colleen Garrett on 01753 852352.

Also, in the nine honey classes of the Windsor Allotments & Home Gardens Association Show and Fete at Gardeners Hall, 213 St Leonards Road, Windsor on Saturday 20th August 2005 from 2.15pm--5.15pm. Schedules from Mrs Trish Weller on 01753 854766

Our own show will be on Tuesday 11th October this year.

If any member wishes to borrow our labelling machine for stamping the "Best Before End" dates and "Lot Numbers" on a separate label for your honey jars, please call me on the first number below,

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

Secretary: Michael Sheasby Farnham Common (01753) 642656

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Club apiary and apiary visits

We have moved the Club apiary to its new site in Hurst at the Diana Brimblecombe Animal Rescue Centre in Nelsons Lane. A series of visits to members' apiaries is arranged for the summer months. All meetings start at 3:00pm and interested attendees should phone the number given to obtain directions and to confirm attendance. The first two meetings are as follows:

Apiary	Date	Venue	Phone
Club Apiary (David Geen)	22 nd May	Diana Brimblecombe, Hurst	0118 978 7979
Peter Seagrave	5 th June	Woodpeckers, Yateley	01252 877049

Programme for 2005/6

The Committee met last week and amongst other items agreed the winter series of talks and demonstrations. The membership card/programme is now at the printers and will be delivered with the next Newsletter.

Re-queening

My current hives are populated by some really nasty bees and I have resolved to requeen this spring. Having visited Peter Seagraves hives last summer and been very impressed with his docile colonies I have just ordered two similar queens. Ted Buckingham also has the same strain and he speaks enthusiastically of them. The queens are the Buckfast x Cecropia strain supplied by Bickerstaffes in Liverpool and flown in especially from a bee breeding station in Greece. The queens are due for delivery on 17th May and I will report on their progress during the summer.

Secretary John Edwards 0118 934 0238

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

The April meeting was our first outdoor meeting of 2005 and was held at Darkwood Farm, Park Corner by courtesy of Mr. Ian Victor-Smith.

Rejected larvae on the floors were looked at for signs of disease, only a small amount of chalk brood was seen, surprisingly, sometimes it is possible to find signs of foul brood before it is apparent in the combs. There was no Varroa found but deformed bees were seen so although Apistan strips had not been in for the full period, they were removed as it was thought that a nectar flow might be on the way. It was stressed that when a heavy flow is expected, in order to reduce swarming, room should be given well ahead of requirement.

In the second hive the bees had died, normally dead colonies are examined last. The consensus of opinion was that the queen had stopped laying and the colony wintered with old bees, common this last winter, no evidence of disease was found. The two other colonies were judged to be normal except that one was low in stores. No Varroa was seen in any hive.

There were no dummy boards in use however; the end space would in all probability be used by the bees for drone comb, which could be removed as a varroa control – fisherman's bait or food for the tits

Some attendees remarked upon the extreme docility of the bees and we learned that they were near native British bees (*Apis mellifera mellifera*) the last replacement queens were obtained from Michael McGiolla Coda

Our June meeting will be at Annette Cleaver's apiary, come to 5, Coates Lane, Cookley Green (OS Ref: 694 904) where you will be directed to the apiary

Apiary Tour

The apiary tour is again on and is scheduled for 23rd July; any member wishing to have his/her bees inspected on the tour or wishes to attend, please contact Guy Simpson (01491 824320) or Ron Crocker. There may be some vacancies so if any member of another association would like to attend, please contact Guy or the South Chilterns Secretary.

Secretary: Annette Cleaver (01491) 642021

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.

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.

4—————8

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

For sale: quantity of Langstroth hives and supers, some with bees. A number of new Langstroth roofs and supers in the flat. Crocker: 01189722315.

LINDA's HONEY RECIPES

Honey Flapjacks

100g margarine 50g light brown sugar 3tbsp set honey 225g porridge oats

Melt margarine, honey and sugar together in a saucepan. Mix in the oats, Press in a greased 27.5 x 17.5cm rectangular tin and cook in oven at gas mark4, 180°C for 20 minutes. Cool in tin and then cut into fingers.

Honey fudge

450g granulated sugar 150ml evaporated milk 65g butter 3 tbsp honey
a pinch of cream of tartar

Put all ingredients into a pan over a low heat, stirring all the time until mixture starts bubbling. Cook for several minutes until a little of the mixture dropped into cold water forms into a ball. Cool pan quickly by standing in cold water. Beat mixture with a wooden spoon until it begins to thicken. Pour into a well-greased tin and allow to set before cutting into squares.

Honeyed apple and lemon surprise pudding

450g cooking apples, cored, peeled and sliced. 65g butter. 2tbsp honey
100g granulated sugar. 2 eggs separated. 1tbsp flour. 120ml milk.
Rind and juice of 1 lemon.

Fry apples in 50g of the butter with the honey to soften the apples. Place in the base of a 20 x 14cm pie tin. Mix the remaining butter into the sugar until well blended. Add the egg yolks and mix in the flour, add lemon juice, rind and milk. Whisk egg whites and fold into mixture. Pour over the apples. Half fill a roasting tin with water and place pie tin in it. Bake in oven at gas mark 4 - 180°C for 25 minutes.

Honey cake

7oz self-raising flour. 5oz butter or margarine. 2 eggs. 6oz clear honey
4oz soft brown sugar. 1 tablespoon water

Put sugar, butter and honey into a large saucepan. Melt these over a low heat. Cool, add the eggs, water, and blend in the flour. Grease or line an 11" x 7" tin. Put in the mixture and bake in the centre of the oven at Mark 4 (370°F or 190°C) for approximately 30 minutes - until firm.