



FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

December 2005

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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

Saturday April 21st 2006	Spring Convention	Stoneleigh
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Remember There will be no Newsletter for January

Anyone with internet access can get a free newsletter from www.beedata.com and click on Apis-uk Newsletter or direct- <http://www.beedata.com/apis-uk/newsletters05/apis-uk0805.htm>

In the Apiary – December

Global Warming or no we are warned of a cold winter this year! As regards our colonies we hope to find ourselves with anti-varroa measures complete and autumn-feeding strategies carried-out with queen excluder removed and ideally not more than one super above our brood boxes. I believe the excluder with its metal surfaces is a condensation risk; excess shallow boxes will do more harm than good even if they are full of stores.

There is conflicting information as to the bees' behaviour during winter, observations have shown that some colonies in winter cluster move-up and down in the boxes and have no problem to break into stored honey. Others (including my own) that a second super above the brood is not going to be utilized and is more likely to give a fine-flush of wax-moth larvae in February or March. Going back to condensation in the hive, this is an enemy to the bees. Entry blocks should be removed and replaced with mouse-guards. Our good friend Ambrosia advised placing a matchstick diagonally under each corner of the crown board to help channel the air up the sides of the hive interior. If, in fact we have a mild period at the start of December and beekeepers have any doubts about the amount of stores in hives I believe that a 4 pint rapid feeder placed over one port in the crown board with some warm strong syrup for 3-4 days would at least ease the conscience of the beekeeper. Don't try this in cold conditions though. Here in the south we should be able to fondant feed in mid February so now the survival of our bees for the next 6-8 weeks or so in respect of the internal arrangements we have made in the hives is largely down to our preparations in the autumn months!

Externally we should make a check of our hives, if we have not completed our November pruning let's prune-back overhanging branches and twigs, apparently dripping of winter or ice-melt onto the hive roof is a chilling- risk to the colony and certainly by tradition the bees don't like-it. According to some literature we can move our hives in the winter without holding to the 'one meter or one mile' rule as bees are alleged to "re-locate" in the winter. Personally I wouldn't be happy to break the rule in December if at all. Flying bees during mild periods and water collecting parties are going to suffer if they can't speedily find their hive again. No I'm going to move one hive from some doubtful metal legs to a brick plinth about 4-5 meters away in 4 stages over a period of a week. The fresh air and exercise will do me good!

Speaking in a sedentary way, one of the passages in Hooper (On Bees and Honey) that I like best is the one about “all heat and passion of summer is past and the honey for tea is your own.” It brings-on warm thoughts about how useful some of your best jars of chunk honey will be as gifts for second cousins at Christmas and how you are going to try to find that ‘out apiary’, perhaps in easy flying distance from where you queue in the car to access the borough waste facility and ponder on the massive ramparts of blackberry beside the road, spiked through with fire-weed in late summer and the thick scrub of hawthorn on the flood plain beyond. Such dreams and plans are also part of the beekeeper’s year.

Triad

From the Editor

When to apply Apiguard: - Accepting that Apiguard requires a temperature of 15°C for optimum sublimation, after talking to Max Watkins I felt that the temperature above a strong cluster of bees in winter could be effective. In December 2004 I applied Apiguard to five colonies and one on an open mesh floor (open to the air). In March 2005 one colony had failed to over-winter (failed queen), the one on the open mesh floor was heavily infested with varroa and Apistan was applied. No Varroa was evident in the remaining four colonies and although no natural mite fall was noted throughout the season, varroa was present in drone brood in August; therefore I have decided to repeat the experiment again this winter.



RFC

Picture: Applying Apiguard – Max Wetton age 4 supervising.

FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATIONS HONEY SHOW 2005

Winners of Trophies

All Trophies are Perpetual

The Federation Cup	Nigel Perkins	To the member gaining most points in this show
The Federation Junior Cup	No Entry	To the Junior exhibitor gaining most points
The Geoffrey Weston Cup	No entry	For the best entry exhibited by a Wokingham Association novice member
The Godfrey Nicholson Cup	Eric Thompson	To the best exhibit in the novice class
The George Hawthorne Skep	Jon Davey	To the Association winning the Inter Association Display
The BBKA Blue Ribbon	Michael Sheasby	For the best exhibit in the show
Entrance Tickets to National		Awarded for most points in the novice class
The Cooper Cake Rose Bowl	Linda Clarke	To the non-beekeeping member gaining most points in the cookery classes
The Maurice Dixon Cup	Jon Davey	To the gentleman member of the Reading Association gaining most points in this show and in the honey section of the Wokingham and Reading Agricultural Show
The William Main Cup	Julia Crosthwait	To the lady member of the Reading Association gaining most points in this show and the Wokingham and Reading Agricultural Show
The Reading Cup	Jon Davey	To the member of the Reading Association gaining most points in this show and in the honey section of the Wokingham and Reading Agricultural Show
The Frank Napper Bowl	Nigel Perkins	To the Wokingham Association member gaining most points in shows in the Federation
The Wokingham Challenge Cup	Nigel Perkins	To the Wokingham Association member gaining most point in this show
The Eric Morris Salver	Reg Hook	To the South Chilterns member gaining most points in this show
The South Chilterns Trophy	Annette Cleaver	To the South Chilterns novice gaining most points in the novice classes
The Slough Trophy	Joy Dodson	To the Slough member gaining most points in the show

Honey Show Results 2005

Class	Description	First	Second	Third	Very H.C	H. Comm	Commended
1	Two 1lb Jars Light Honey	Jon Davey	Robin Roberts	Reg Hook	Dennis Way	Nigel Perkins	-
2	Two 1lb Jars Medium Honey	Joy Dodson	Robin Roberts	Hazel Blackburn	Dennis Way	-	-
3	Two 1lb Jars Dark Honey	Dennis Way	-	-	-	-	-
4	Two 1lb Jars Granulated Honey	Joy Dodson	-	-	Robin Roberts	-	Nigel Perkins
5	Tree Jars Honey Labelled for sale	Reg Hook	Jon Davey	Julia Crosthwait	-	-	-
6	Two 1lb Jars Chunk Honey	Nigel Perkins	-	-	Jon Davey	-	-
7	One Cut Comb in white plastic container	Nigel Perkins	Dennis Way	Julia Crosthwait	Reg Hook	Jon Davey	Robin Roberts
8	One Section Comb Honey Round or Square	Nigel Perkins	Robin Roberts	-	-	-	-
9	A Shallow Frame for Extraction	Michael Sheasby	Robin Roberts	Reg Hook	Nigel Perkins	Joy Dodson	Jon Davey
10	An Exhibit of Beeswax 7-9oz no more no less	-	Nigel Perkins	-	Hazel Blackburn	Robin Roberts	-
11	Three Traditional Wax Mouldings Approx 1oz	Hazel Blackburn	Nigel Perkins	Reg Hook	Robin Roberts	-	-
12	A Pair of Pure Beeswax Candles	Nigel Perkins	Jon Davey	Robin Roberts	-	-	-
13	A Bottle of Mead	Robin Roberts	Nigel Perkins	-	-	-	-
14	A Honey Cake	Linda Clarke	Jackie Willoughby	Mary Drum	-	-	-
15	Six Honey Biscuits	Linda Clarke	Annette Cleaver	Mary Drum	-	-	-
16	A photograph or Print	Reg Hook	Nigel Perkins	Joy Dodson	Linda Clarke	-	-
17	Gift Class 1 Jar Clear Honey	-	Jon Davey	Robin Roberts	-	-	-
18	Gift Class 1 Jar Granulated Honey	Reg Hook	Robin Roberts	-	-	-	-
19	Beginner/Novice one 1lb jar honey	-	-	Eric Thompson	Mary Drum	-	-
20	Children's Class	No Entries					
21	Black Jar Class One 1lb Jar Honey Taste Only	Annette Cleaver	Eric Thompson	Jon Davey	Reg Hook	-	-

From the Show Secretary

I would like to thank everyone for entering (15 in total). We had just over 100 entries so we were able to award a Blue Ribbon. Behind the scenes we were only able to run the show with the help of the W.I.! Two ladies did the teas and one lady worked out and added up the points for me. It is the first time for at least six years it was not done using a computer, but we managed! Any volunteers to help in the future would be much appreciated.

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

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

The Association attended the Ploughing Match at Sonning, it was unfortunate that the Match organizers had put a "Show Committee" notice over the only entrance to the exhibits marquee consequently many visitors did not enter. Those that did come in, particularly the children showed great interest in the observation hive.



Due to circumstances beyond our control the October AGM was deferred to November and it was substituted by an informal discussion that proved to be useful particularly to our inexperienced members. Ideas were exchanged, some of which no doubt will be acted upon

Dates for the diary: - Our December meeting is Wednesday 21st at 7.30. This is an evening with traditional Christmas fayre and refreshments and we welcome back Russell Cherry for entertaining benefit from his camera and observations on the Ridgeway Path.

January 11th is our first meeting of the New Year and we will be joined by Ian Homer who will discuss "Bee Behaviour," a close up of the roles, rituals, and responsibilities within the colony.

As a newcomer to Bee Keeping, I seem to have been thrown in at the deep end. Over the last few weeks due to the fact while on a long weekend break in Swanage, Dorset, I was introduced to Robert Field, many of you will know his father Oliver. I was shown around his workshop and visited one of his 32 sites. Having suffered the tempers of 'Satan's Bees', I was very impressed with his 'Pussy Cat' colonies. He has around 450 hives in different locations from Salisbury down to Dartmoor. The culmination of his year is the contract with Waitrose for his Salisbury Plain Honey, which I thought, was absolutely delicious.

On meeting up again I accompanied him to Essex to the Bee Farmers meeting, of which he is Vice-Chairman, although it was a long journey there was a brilliant attendance and everyone was very welcoming. There was an interesting talk on the experiments of Ragwort and Borage within the honey chain and tasters were passed around. My next meeting, accompanying Robert, was the AGM of the Bee Farmers at the Honey Show where I met again some familiar faces. With renewed enthusiasm I have visited my two hives and actually sorted out their winter needs, all without smoke and very placid, happy bees, thanks to Reg's re-queening regime.

Secretary: Annette Cleaver (01491) 642021

SLOUGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

In October, our annual Honey Show was well attended and attracted 66 entries from 15 contestants, a slight improvement over last year. The competition was stiff and our sincere thanks go to our judge, Nick Grey from Chalfonts Beekeepers, who was very helpful with his comments and advice, both as he carried out the judging and prior to the show - an experiment that he suggested with the numbering system was well received. We hope that everyone learned something to help with their future in showing and that next year will see an even greater number of entries, especially since we have now utilised some additional cups to give an added incentive to the competition. The final results are attached. A big thank you to everyone who took the trouble to enter and to all those who helped out on the night.

If you have aspirations to improve your performance next year, then this month's meeting is a must for you, as we will be welcoming Hazel Blackburn, the well known and very entertaining Honey Judge from Reading, who will be giving us the benefit of her considerable knowledge about the preparation of Honey and other products for showing. This will be on Tuesday, the 13th December at the usual time of 8pm, to be held at the All Saints Parish Hall on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor. Afterwards, mince pies and a glass of wine will be available with the usual refreshments.

Our library will be available this meetings, there may also be some surplus books still for sale, and don't forget, any member who wishes to borrow our labelling machine for stamping the "Best Before End" dates and "Lot Numbers" onto a separate label for honey jars, please call me on the first number below,

As usual, in January the Annual Dinner, held at the Aurora Garden Hotel in Windsor, replaces our normal meeting. This has been booked for Friday the 27th January and is a lovely venue for a winter evening with superb food. The menu and order form is attached, so please return this as soon as possible to reserve your place.

Finally, your committee would like to wish you all a Very Happy Christmas and a Successful 2006 Beekeeping Year.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

Secretary: Michael Sheasby Farnham Common (01753) 642656

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

October meeting

Dr Roland Fox from Reading University stepped in at the last minute to give us an interesting if slightly scary talk on garden pests and diseases. He took us through a long list of rots, mildews, rusts, and fungi that can occur in our gardens. It seems many have been introduced in the last century along with the rapid transportation of plants from abroad.

Evening meetings

Forthcoming meetings at St Paul's Rooms are:

7 th December	A mixed selection of short videos	Harry Peace
11 th January	Keeping woods alive	Michael Hyde
8 th February	Beekeeping past and present	Ian Gourlay
8 th March	Candle making	June Hughes

Web site

BT is offering to host free web sites for non-profit making organisations and charities. I have made a start on a site for WDBKA which can be found at www.wdbka.ik.com.

Any comments or suggestions would be welcome.

Secretary John Edwards 0118 934 0238

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Reading and District had a very successful and well supported first meeting of the winter programme at Caversham Heights Methodist Hall on 13th October. Our speaker was Charles Fryatt who is our seasonal DEFRA bee inspector for Wiltshire and Berkshire.

Charles is young vigorous and as well as having spent since arriving from his native New Zealand five years on a commercial apiary business in North Yorks, has been in commercial beekeeping in N.Z. from his student days: "it was a holiday job that became full-time". N.Z. is a substantial exporter of honeys' the pristine white frame honey that we see in delicatessens is from the Kiwi country. The E.C. particularly Germany buys bulk white and extra light amber honey, mainly clover.

The seasons are virtually in reverse of our own, in beekeeping terms their August seems to be our March (pollen substitute is used) September our April (early queen rearing and 'bush honey') and November the start of intensive Kiwi Fruit pollination contracts.

The Kiwi packhouses produce the fruit is mostly for export: contract on the basis of 8 frames of brood and 12 frames of bees per hive and they need 4 hives per acre! They have to keep the grass mowed well down in the plantations or the bees will be on the clover for they have little enthusiasm for kiwi blossoms.

Meadows full of white clover.... remember them? During this season Charles and his wife would spend up to 18 hours on the road moving hives around and producing 'splits'. You'd best hear it from Charles own lips but in a split the colonies are divided and two deeps are separated after queening with a sealed crown board between and a shallow eke that is notched to give the top brood an entrance, this is the way the hives can meet the contract for the kiwi job. The packhouses inspect the hives regularly! After the pollination season the hives are moved to clover and some heather. The sealed board between the double brood is replaced with an excluder, with entrance, to allow the drones to escape, for there will now be a laying queen in each box and the bees from each box fill supers placed on top of the double colony hive stack: fantastic!

Charles has a very relaxed style and questions and answers flowed during his talk, there are few hobbyists in New Zealand but many commercials. Charles went on to outline activities during his time as a bee inspector in the U.K. and pests and practices were discussed in some detail. You've got to hear this man! -Lookout he says's he "hopes to get around to visiting everyone's apiary!!"

Charles Fryatt. Seasonal DEFRA Bee Officer. Contact nos. mobile 07733023007. e-mail address bees@discover-england.co.uk

Our December meeting in the usual venue on Thursday 8th at 7.30 PM sharp and features a talk by Sylvia Chamberlain from High Wycombe: Subject, mead and mead making, now that will go very nicely with our mince pies! Hope to see you there.

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 **FIRSTPOST** (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

FREE to anyone wishing to experiment with top bar, catenary or long hive formats –a single hive with all three characteristics. Useful for producing small quantities of “wild” comb honey. Phone Bernhard Schumann on 01189 343501

A Happy Christmas and a Productive New Year to all.