



# FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

September 2007  
Number 613

Hon. Secretary:  
Jon. Davey  
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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

18th-20th October 2007	The National Honey Show	<a href="http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/">http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/</a>
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## THE APIARY in SEPTEMBER

After the protracted wet periods this year there may not be much if any, surplus honey, this should be removed before commencing any varroa treatment. Conversely, treatment should be deferred until any necessary feeding is completed, at the time of writing many colonies are light, the more exotic races in particular may require heavy feeding.

If Nosema is suspected give a feed anyway with Fumidil B added. The easy thing to do is to put your sugar in a bucket and shake it level. You need the same depth of water as you've got of sugar, so, make some kind of mark on the side of the bucket to show where the sugar came to, and pour in hot water up to your mark, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Allow the syrup to cool before adding the Fumidil. As always, follow the maker's instructions to the letter. Don't have the syrup too hot or you will destroy the effectiveness of the Fumidil. The timing and quantities of syrup you give your bees are easy to get right if you think about why you are doing it. Do not rely on a late flow from the ivy.

Now that pyrethroid resistant Varroa is in our region, think about using Apiguard®, it may not be possible to strictly adhere to the manufacturer's instructions but if varroa is present, using no treatment is asking for trouble. If a 2" eke is used the temperature above a reasonable cluster will be sufficient for the Apiguard to sublime and as long as the cluster is active the varroa will be controlled.

Triad

## From the Editor:

After a very wet three months the last three days of July saw a welcome change in the weather which is forecast to last much of August, hopefully there will be a flush of clover as there was in 1953, a similar year to 2007, that year after a disastrous period August ended with a bumper crop.

Apart from losses due to floods (the Winterbourne in Berkshire and the Ock in Oxfordshire) there have been many reports of starving or starved colonies, small colonies following repeated queen failures and absconding of newly hived swarms, probably the worst situation for people with only one or perhaps two hives, has been queens failing to mate, quite a learning curve for beginner beekeepers with bees.

**Beekeeping classes** have again been organised for this winter, for beginners commencing January 7<sup>th</sup> 2008 and for intermediate beginners on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2008. Get your prospectus from the College of Agriculture at Burchetts Green or go to <http://www.bca.ac.uk/Parttime/generalinterest.htm>

## **The brownies and the bees.**

I must confess to feeling some trepidation when to oblige a friend I agreed to speak to a Brownie unit about bees and honey recently.

However with the aid of a toy Pooh Bear complete with bee pin on nose with blue balloon tied to wrist, a one fifth scale WBC hive, bee veil, drawn-out and capped frames, some of our associations display photographs and a half pound jar of honey to take home all went well.

Arms were pretty well raised throughout and the questions were highly intelligent and to the point. Laced with many an anecdote however including the inevitable “a girl in our class had a wasp on her back and it stung her and then it went down the back of her dress and stung her again!” We got on the subject of what and why with bees swarming and we had” there were lots of bees in a hedge near our school and some girls were throwing –in pens and screaming!” apparently a beekeeper was summoned to the relief of all particularly the bees. There were some concerns expressed as to the fate of a swarm of bees if a beekeeper didn’t collect them to go into a hive. I described bee colonies setting –up home in hollow trees as in ‘Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree’ and going to live in the chimneys of houses etc. One raised hand asked, “what if you haven’t got a chimney, there’s no chimney at our house?” “Well that’s OK then you probably won’t have any bees making a nest in your house.” An expression of profound relief crossed her seven year-old face as she clasped her hands in front of her. “Oooh good!” she said.

Jon Davey

## **Caversham Festival.**

This bi-annual event is on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> September at the Gosbrook Road recreation ground. Produce tent and numerous stalls and events. Free entry. Visit Reading and District Beekeepers in their marquee. You will be sure of a warm welcome.

**Collapsing Colonies:** Research into the effects of electromagnetism on bees is ongoing at the University of Koblenz-Landau: Also keep up to date at:

<http://beebase.csl.gov.uk/> look under public pages ‘news and vacancies’

We reported in September 1998 that South Germany was almost devoid of bees. Was this CCD? Are the powers that be just waking up to a problem that has been with us for some time? Was the problem pushed under the carpet by closing the research at Rothamsted? Go to <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/bee-unit-funding/> and sign the following

## **Petition:-**

The honeybee is an often overlooked but absolutely vital part of the environment and agriculture. Bees are said to be worth about a billion pounds to agriculture and horticulture but their role in general pollination and the environment is beyond measure. Recent reports from the USA and UK about massive losses in bee colonies indicate that urgent research needs to be done to understand and counter this trend along with combating the rise in antibiotic resistant varroa mites and other threats. However research funding to the National Bee Unit and other institutions by DEFRA has been cut hugely in recent years with the loss of many jobs and the consequent dispersal of knowledge. This petition urges the Government to put significant extra money into the relevant organisations that study bees and work with beekeepers both commercial and amateur to ensure that this essential creature is protected and encouraged.

We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to Increase funding for research into honey bees at the National Bee Unit and other institutions. [More details](#)

Submitted by Pete MacKenzie – **Deadline to sign up by:** 03 November 2007 – **Signatures:** 926

Top of Form

I,  sign up to the petition.

Your email:

Confirm email:

**Your email will not be published**, and is collected only to confirm your account and to keep you informed of response to this petition.

You must be a British citizen or resident to sign the petition.

Your address (will not be published):

UK postcode:

### More details from petition creator

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### ***No e-mail?***

Give your details to your Secretary or a friend to be forwarded.

### **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**

After the disastrous rains of the previous day (nearby Maidenhead had been cut off entirely), it was good to see a strong attendance at this month's meeting; though there was much resigned grumbling about the weather and its consequences for our bees. We gathered in the garden of Lynn Penfold's beautiful thatched cottage in Littlewick Green, a village formerly home to both Sir Christopher Wren and Ivor Novello.

The first part of the day was an examination of two hives - Lynn favours standard brood and a half National hives with 12 frames in each and pitched roofs on top - but the onset of more rain cut meant that this was finished under an umbrella. One frame of young brood was removed from the second hive for Reg's demonstration.

The second part of the day was a demonstration of grafting and queen raising. We all had the opportunity to transfer young larvae from the comb to an artificial queen cup. Reg then demonstrated how the cups were made and talked about other techniques used. Several of us left determined to have a go at this next year.

It was raining heavily by then, but there was still a good crowd under umbrellas around Reg's gas stove in the garden. We gave up at that point though, and retired inside for a great spread of food. Surprisingly, despite the awful weather, it was a very enjoyable and informative day and everyone seemed pleased that they had made the effort to turn up. Thanks again to Reg for his demonstration and to Lynn for the use of her home and garden.

## **Childrens Food Festival**

South Chiltern Beekeepers stand was a very popular attraction at the Children's Food Festival held at Abingdon on the 14-15 July. An estimated 15-20,000 people attended the event despite the unpredictable weather. Reg Hook's five-frame commercial observation hive was like a magnet for fascinated children and parents alike. One of the thousands of visitors to the display included celebrity chef Raymond Blanc, who was pointing out to children the importance of bees for pollination.

## **Open Day**

Despite a heavy thunder storm in mid-afternoon the open day organized by John Hall at his farm was a success. There was a good attendance and a lot of interest in the bees particularly among the children. Over £1600 was raised for charity which, given the weather, was a very good result.

## **Demonstration at Fir Tree Junior School**

We arrived at 9am at the school and set up an observation hive, equipment, and posters in the main hall. The four of us (Linda, Viv, Steve and Reg) split up and the first class came in and was divided into groups of four and each group rotated round each of us, everyone was extremely interested including the teachers. Many intriguing questions were asked, strange as well as intelligent ones.

We ended up with four classes including a group visiting from Belarus complete with interpreter.

The children were very well behaved and they were growing their own vegetables and using them in the school canteen, a very enjoyable morning all told if exhausting. We left at 1 o'clock very satisfied.

**The next meeting will be Apiary Assessment** Saturday September 15<sup>th</sup> at 2.30pm in Ian King's apiary, 26 Elvendon Road, Goring on Thames. Map ref: 610 815

Secretary: Phil Westwood – Tel: 07771 874284

E-mail: >southchilterns.bees@btinternet.com<

## **READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

On Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> July, Reading members, friends and family visited Tim and Hilary Whitaker's garden apiary at Mapledurham Village.

Tim has built-up a nucleus which he obtained from Reading member Julia Crosthwaite into a good vigorous colony which has managed to thrive despite the miserable weather in the preceding weeks. Inspection showed eggs and larvae and a few filled frames were removed from the super for extraction. With better weather there should be more to come by end August. Tim's second inspected colony has over-wintered successfully: Tim's WBC hives have experienced some colony losses in previous seasons, the area is quite intensively farmed, and spraying has been suspected. The colony was certainly full of bees and virtually a full super was removed for extraction. Undoubtedly varroa were on the scene, our demonstrator Michael Blackburn exposed some drone-brood and developing mites were clearly visible. They distinctly move over the surface of the developing bees' body as you look at them. Some drones had two mites on them. We did find a rather grizzly spectacle in the 'half' below the excluder. Tim has had some drone foundation and a shallow of this showed moribund emergent drones-heads, looking rather like the heads of wire-nails sticking-out all over the comb. All had expired, not having the strength to complete emergence owing to varroa mite infestation during development!

However the colony is vigorous with plenty of brood, during a thorough inspection only two de-formed wingless bees were seen on the combs. After removing the frames for extraction, Tim applied Apistan strips and will look into oxalic treatment for the end of the year.

We then had the great pleasure of enjoying the barbeque that is a feature of our visits to the Whitaker's. One and all had a great feast and enjoyment, a short thunderstorm soon passed, and we had adequate shelter in the marquee and under the avenue of limes in the beautiful garden. With many thanks to Hilary and Tim.

### **September meeting.**

Reading member Tim Sheldon has invited us on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> September at 11-30 AM to his house at: 1 New Cottages. Collins End, Goring Heath. RG87 RW. Tel.01491 680945. Take a left turn into Deadmans Lane, on the Wallingford Road, after Cane End, then next left back towards Chazey Heath. Collins End is a lane next on the right. We will proceed from there to visit Tim's hives in nearby locations in the estate. Tim has very kindly proposed that after the inspections he will have his barbeque set-up! So bringing along some comestibles and barbeque items will be very much appreciated! This is an ideal opportunity to see how 'out- apiaries' are set-up. Hope you will all be 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 Summer Supper Evening was another resounding success, we all enjoyed the excellent home-cooked food and our sincere thanks go to everyone for coming along and to those who were responsible for organizing it and helping behind the scenes.

The apiary visits continued in July as scheduled, but holidays took their toll on the numbers attending over previous months, when the weather was much more unpredictable. In fact, Don was by himself at the last one. But all the hives appear to be doing fine, with the new queens laying well, though the Dartington did appear to be queenless again in one end.

In September, the visits are extended this year to share the load and to help our newer beekeepers see the vital end of season work that needs to be done. These are scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, meeting as usual at 2.30pm. We do hope that our more experienced beekeepers will continue with their support, as newer members do find the help and advice invaluable.

If you have not been there before, our Chairman, Don Church, or Vice Chairman, Dennis Way will give directions - their numbers are in the annual Programme. We look forward to welcoming you along.

On Tuesday, the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, we start our winter schedule of meetings at the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor, SL4 1HZ, commencing with the Review of the Year when everyone gets a chance to hear how their fellow beekeepers have fared over the season. A lot of useful information is forthcoming on how the local conditions have been influencing us, so this is one meeting not to be missed. We start at the normal time of 8pm.

The following month's meeting will be our Honey Show, when our produce is inspected and judged in front of us. This is a very informal Show and will give much information about preparation and showing. In addition to the keen competition amongst our more proficient members, we also have a Novice Class for those of you who have never won a prize before, so please do save a jar of your honey to enter in one or other of the classes. There are also classes for comb honey, beeswax, candles and things made with honey. You should have received the schedule with this newsletter, but if you need any further information, please contact me on the number below for newsletters items. You don't need to apply beforehand unless you are entering more than one or two classes, when it would be extremely helpful to have your numbers ready before you arrive.

This meeting will start earlier than normal, as there is always a lot to be done by our judge. Staging therefore starts at 7pm and judging commences at 7.30.

Our library is usually available at these meetings, along with various information leaflets and we look forward to seeing everyone there.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

Secretary: Michael Sheasby Farnham Common (01753) 642656

## WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

No contribution

Secretary: Derek Porter Tel: 0118 979 0326

**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 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: -

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Mr. Michael Blackburn, M.B. Photography, The Studio, 1 Grove Hill, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8PN. Telephone: - (0118) 947 9450/5451