



FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

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June 2009
Number 632

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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

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THE APIARY in JUNE

The end of May saw a number of calls to remove swarms of bees, which turned out to be bumble bees that had taken over bird boxes. It is hoped that this come back of bumblebees is a sign that nature is "paying her debts" and that we will see a corresponding growth in the honeybee population.

Swarming usually follows inclement weather, particularly at the end of May, these resulting swarms must be fed if they are going to build up for the winter, remember, we are in the June gap.

Now is the time to make up nuclei, but they must be fed. Do not denude your colonies of bees so much that they cannot take advantage of any nectar flow. June is also a good time to raise some queens; young queens nearly always do well. If you split the hive by replacing the queen and the comb she is on, back on the original site, together with a frame of sealed brood, a couple of frames of food, and fill up with foundation or empty drawn combs that have never contained brood. Finally, replace the supers and roof on top. Then move the rest of the brood to a new position a few feet behind and fill up with comb or foundation. The foragers will return to the queen and continue to collect nectar, whilst the 'moved hive' should raise queen cells. Check them after three days and destroy any sealed queen cells. A week after the move cut out all but two, having first made sure that they are occupied.

Keep ahead of your bees and provide supers or breeding space, there may not be any nectar coming in, but if there is insufficient room to accommodate the bee population the pressure will be relieved by swarming

Triad.

Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -

Southern Region: - Ian's post is to be advertised in the next BBKA News and other bee periodicals. I would not anticipate an appointment before April or May. I would therefore suggest the contact should be the NBU Office, details at the foot of this message. I would also ask that you include <http://www.beebase.csl.gov.uk> which includes the list of inspectors and will be updated as soon as the new RBI is in place.

PLEASE NOTE CSL IS MERGING AND CHANGING ITS NAME: CSL is merging with Defra's Plant Health Division (including Bee Health and the Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate) and the Plant Variety Rights Office and Seeds Division on 1 April 2009 to form a new Agency called: The Food and Environment Research Agency.

For more information visit <http://services.csl.gov.uk/fera>

National Bee Unit, Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton, York. YO41 1 LZ

00 44 (0)1 904 462 510 nbu@csl.gov.uk

South Eastern Region: - Mr. Alan Byham.

Fax/Telephone number: 020 8571 6450



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The BeeKeepers Quarterly can now be seen on the web at

www.bkq.org.uk

This will be a free, try it and see service to beekeepers for the
March & June 2009 editions.

There will be a small charge to subscribe after this time

Northern Bee Books have developed a new site to view and purchase books for beekeepers

At: www.GroovyCart.co.uk/beebooks

SLOUGH, WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Our fortnightly meetings at the Apiary continue and I thought it might be useful, in this newsletter, to describe what happens there. I have spoken to quite a few new beekeepers who have not yet visited us there and I do think it is a great way to increase both knowledge and confidence – and of course, to pass a very pleasant afternoon! I do apologise to those members who regularly attend, for whom this will be very boring!

We are lucky to have a number of very experienced bee keepers who are willing to give up their Sunday afternoons, so there are always at least two people who are willing to lead a group. We have six hives, including an interesting and unusual Dartington hive, which means we can divide into two groups, allowing everyone to have close access to the hives, handle the bees if they want to and join in the discussions.

It is amazing how different each hive can be – just this Sunday we had one, which was very strong, producing lots of honey, one, which was threatening to swarm, and one, which was very weak. It is really valuable to be part of the debate about the best way to support each colony. It is also reassuring to people like me, a relatively new beekeeper, to know that there is not just one definitive answer to each problem. Although it is possible to read many books on the subject, I'm afraid the bees obviously do not read the same books!

We do have a few beekeeping suits available, so complete novices can be catered for. It is a good way to make sure that you really want to continue with the hobby without having to make any outlay. Also this might be a good time to mention that one of our bee-keepers, Don Church, is an agent for Thornes and brings a limited range of bee keeping equipment to the Sunday meetings, which can be purchased from him at a discount on the full price. He is also willing to be contacted by phone if anyone needs anything urgently. His number is 01753 831939. I would also like to add that he is a wonderful source of advice and information as well as equipment!

On Saturday 9th May we were represented at the Slough in Bloom opening at Wexham Nurseries, and although it was a quiet day, it was very pleasant and we were able to chat to quite a few people who were interested to find out more about bees and beekeeping. Several of our members have also been asked to talk to various community groups, which is a very valuable way to increase public awareness and support.

Our Apiary meetings at the site about 1 mile north of Wexham Park Hospital take place fortnightly at 2.30 on Sunday afternoons and will continue for the spring and summer months (i.e. May 31st, June 14th, June 28th etc.) All are very welcome.

All details of our meetings can also be found on the website
<http://www.wherewecanwego.com>. - [click sl4 + gardens + nature \(boxes\)/](#)

Newsletter items: Liz Juby Windsor (01753) 859382 [mail to](#)

Chairman: Michael Sheasby, Farnham Common (01753) 642656. [mail to](#)

Wokingham & District Beekeepers Association

The apiary meeting held on 10th May attracted 15 beekeepers. This is an excellent attendance and we trust it will continue. However, at the meeting on 17th May there were only four people but the cold and showery weather that day probably put a lot of people off attending. Despite the adverse conditions, the bees were surprisingly good tempered although young Jack and myself managed to get a few bees inside our veils and received some stings. After having united the weak colonies to stronger ones on 3rd May, we now have two very strong colonies on 14" x 12" brood frames with a lot of honey coming in from the nearby oil seed rape that is in full flower. The larger frames certainly help to reduce the swarming instinct and only one small queen cell was found in one of the colonies.

This was removed as the queen in each colony is marked and clipped so we don't want other queens emerging. The opportunity has been taken to remove old frames and their boxes from the apiary so that they can be cleaned of wax and the frames then fitted with new foundation and returned to the apiary ready for the main flow (let's hope there is one this year).

Don't forget the apiary visit to Peter Seagrave's home on 20th June and to Lorna Rivett's apiary on 18th July. If you don't know where their apiaries are, please ring me for directions.

We will be putting the next winter programme together soon so if anyone has ideas for topics they would like to see included, please let me know and I will see if I can find lecturers in the subjects suggested.

I remind members to have a look at the Club's website which is now up and running. The address is www.WDBKA.ik.com

Derek Porter Hon. Sec. 0118 979 0326

READING & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION.

ERRATUM.

Firstly Reading beekeepers apologize for errors in our last communiqué. i.e.

Our web address is in fact www.rbka.org.uk sorry for the additional letter that was wrongly included last month and also Stella and Mike's lodger who produced our site: computer whiz is he: Glen is his name (not Greg)

Also we forgot to thank our Singapore based member Peter Bruce for leaving two healthy and robust colonies of bees in the care of two Reading members, a fine thing in this day and age. Peter, they're the best colonies we've got!

At 10.30 on Sunday 17th May we had an early start at Julia Crosthwaite's out apiary at Hare Hatch. It was a great pleasure to welcome a number of newly interested people as well as our new members. There has been some losses there during the February period, partly due to woodpecker damage, hives being pushed-over and the weaker colonies succumbing to night-frost, whether this was due to badgers or vandals is not certain.

Our demonstrator Michael Blackburn was able to show two good colonies, progressing well. He took great pains to demonstrate and explain to new members the best practices for opening and examining a colony. A queen was seen in one hive. It was necessary to re-arrange the brood boxes to encourage the queen to lay in the deep box as she had habitually been laying in the 'half' brood.

Julia was able to put a second super on the biggest hive and anticipates removing full frames in the next week, the field behind the apiary is not under oil seed rape this year, though rape is in flying distance. Julia's tenant Jon keeps the third hive in the apiary, they were obviously aware of the opening of hives nearby. They had all disappeared inside when we came to them and Jon had to beat a retreat to put on an overall and 'wellies' when a number of guard bee's crawled up his trouser legs.

A good demonstration for the newer beekeeper 'always be adequately protected'! There were plenty of bees inside and the queen was found. Drone brood was raked-out of this, and the other colonies, relatively few varroa were found, just 1 or 2 on say 6-8 drone larvae, this seems encouraging.

Jon has already had a full super off this colony and added an extracted super before closing-up, the bees entered the fresh super with alacrity.

Part of the aggression here may well have been due to the squally weather; though for most of the openings the weather was bright.

Despite the early start it was nearly 1.00 PM by the time we'd finished. Mike Blackburn and others were planning to drive over to Upton for The Vale and Downland Honey Show. Devotion indeed!

June meeting: It will be hosted by Michael Blackburn at Cross Lanes Apple Farm Mapledurham. We start at 11.30. Please note the gates will be open between 11.00 and 12.00 so please don't be late. This is a premier out apiary site and this beautifully managed apple farm is easy to find, turn left for Mapledurham off the A4074 out of Reading, but instead of taking the left turn that signpost Mapledurham House and Mill etc continue on towards Crays Pond and the Apple Farm is on the right after about a mile. See you there.

Jon Davey

Secretary: Mr. R. Kiff, Tel. 0118 966 5358

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Our April meeting was hosted by Simon and Francesca Wetton..

The meeting began with Reg looking through Simon's two colonies. This was followed by a talk and demonstrations on swarm control. Reg simulated an artificial swarm, using boxes

he had brought specially for the purpose. As an alternative control method he explained how to make a nucleus. Those present knowing the swarm season would soon be with us listened intently, said they had learnt a lot and felt inspired to control their bees and not loose them this year!

The tea provided by our hosts was scrumptious!

With over 40 members present some found it difficult to hear Reg, so it was decided to purchase a PA system in time for the next meeting.



Our next meeting is on Saturday June 20th at 2.30pm in Dave Moss's apiary, Wilderness, Caps Lane, Cholsey, Wallingford, OX10 9HF, Map ref. 600 870 Parking is at Roderick Blyth's at Mill Court (map ref 602870) which is best approached from Caps Lane as the A329 is a fast road and the turning is difficult to find.

Secretary: - Catherine Cooksey, Tel: 01491 641467

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