



# FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

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July 2009  
Number 633

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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

29 <sup>th</sup> —31 <sup>st</sup> October	National Honey Show Weybridge	<a href="http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/">http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/</a>
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## THE APIARY in JULY

Progressing well through the beekeeping year, it is now July. As beekeepers we are mostly influenced by the weather, we are dealing with our colonies of bees and their well-being. Apart from the silkworm the only insect that we gather a crop from is the honeybee. In July this to us means their productivity, i.e. our honey harvest.

At the time of writing our beekeeping year is proceeding reasonably well 'weather-wise': at last! We are taking honey off our beehives, the oil-seed rape season is behind us and we can expect not to have to rush to remove full supers and extract promptly, no granulation threats and we can do a big super-removal and intensive extraction at an time to suit ourselves: all well and good! It will also be wise, if you can, to segregate your frames according the nectar source prior to extraction. This will enable you to jar-up honeys with a range of colours. In the world of commercial honey there is a range of various honeys that will not rapidly granulate, (so leaving aside clover, raspberry and of course rape honey for now) mainly liquid honeys are graded ELA, LA, A, DA and D. i.e. in a range extra light amber to dark. Boots used to sell a 1 lb jar of Chinese dark amber honey up to about 1997 for 80 pence. So it would be good practice to grade your honeys in this way, in addition, if you intend to support the local honey shows and enter your honey for judging, you'll need to do so. Darker honeys are supposed to taste stronger although there are wonderfully flavoured ELA and LA honeys such as lime blossom. On the subject of set or granulated honey, some people prefer them; in a rush in the morning they reduce the risk of something sticky dripping from their breakfast toast onto their tie. So despise-not the set honey, even the notorious ivy honey if stored for a year and possibly 'creamed' with some liquid honey tastes nice and is well accepted.

As well as all this harvesting, don't neglect the brood inspections, July is still a 'swarming month' and at the moment there are plenty of new beekeepers who would be interested in nucs you might prepare with a queen cell and some frames from a populous and productive colony. Also, of considerable importance is the 'supersedure queen cell'. These are produced later in the summer after the flush of 'swarm-cells' is over. Often they are singletons and classically on the face of a frame rather than at the bottom or along the top-bar. There have been some writings that suggest supersedure, where the old queen and a mated daughter queen will coexist and provide brood for the colony together. 'Supersedures' occur often and are more desirable than swarming. Therefore don't remove a suspected supersedure queen cell. Better to risk a swarm than to interfere with this excellent arrangement, the bees have to maintain their population going forward into the autumn months.

Triad.

## Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -

**Southern Region:** - Until a permanent appointment is made the Acting Regional officer will be David Packham Tel No: 01392 881253 Go to <https://secure.csl.gov.uk/beebase/> which includes the list of inspectors and will be updated as soon as the new RBI is in place. Also visit <http://services.csl.gov.uk/fera> The main website is: <https://secure.csl.gov.uk/beebase/public/Contacts/contacts.cfm>  
National Bee Unit, Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton, York. YO41 1 LZ  
00 44 (0)1 904 462 510 <mailto:nbu@fera.gsi.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](http://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

[www.GroovyCart.co.uk/beebooks](http://www.GroovyCart.co.uk/beebooks)

## SLOUGH, WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Our fortnightly meetings at the Apiary continue and all seems to be well with our hives there. There is always a debate about what to do for the best with each colony and at the moment we seem to be making the right decisions!

I have personally had an interesting few weeks as 'stand-in' Society secretary, receiving the emails and phone calls from members of the public, and have found the experience both fascinating and rewarding.

The first surprise for me was the absolute panic aroused in most people when a 'swarm' has descended on their property. In each case they had already phoned the police, and/or pest control companies before finding the number to contact the club and all were very relieved when I said I'd come out to visit them and assess the situation.

Interestingly - as I have to say, I did suspect from the phone calls - four of the 'swarms' did turn out to be very peaceful bumblebee nests! One was under a hedge, one had been pulled up on the roots of a dead Hebe, one was happily situated in a very picturesque bird box and the last was in a compost heap. In fact, all of the callers were really friendly and they were all willing to be persuaded that they were very lucky to have a bumblebee nest in their garden. As far as I am aware, all have allowed the bees to stay! If any of our readers are in a similar situation, <http://www.bumblebee.org/> is an excellent web site and the 'foster families' were fascinated by the information included in it. A further useful source of information can be found at <http://www.co-operative.coop/magazinesummer09/co-operative-living/save-the-bee/> I have since learnt that many members have been receiving calls from the public about bumble bee nests and have also been spending time explaining their life-cycle and encouraging the caller to 'live with them' until they die in the winter. Happily, most do.

A number of us have been giving talks about bees at local primary schools, using the virtual hive which fascinates children; hopefully tomorrow's beekeepers. I am sure that everyone agrees that raising the profile of bees and other pollinators can be nothing but good. The wide interest we are all experiencing has much to do with all the work the BBKA and individual beekeepers have been doing in recent years.

As a reward, my fifth journey was to a honeybee swarm, which had thoughtfully taken up temporary residence on a very accessible bush about 3 feet from the ground. It was easily boxed and I returned in the evening, when most of the flying bees had joined the queen, and delivered it to a new member of the Society who had his hive ready and waiting. (In fact he had had his hive ready and waiting for over a year, so was really excited to have inhabitants for it!) We all watched with wonder as the swarm walked in a very orderly manner into their new home. He has since reported that the new colony is thriving, working very busily to draw out the frames in the new brood box and make itself at home.

As someone at the apiary meeting said, his enthusiasm, like that of all the new beekeepers, is very infectious and it is very rewarding to be able to help, in however small a way.

To remind you, 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. July 12<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> etc.) All are very welcome.

Also, some members will be representing the club at Windsor Rose Show on July 18<sup>th</sup>, so if you are visiting the show, please come along to say hello.

. All details of our meetings and the Show can also be found on the website [www.wherecanwego.com](http://www.wherecanwego.com). - click SL4 + gardens + nature ( boxes )

Newsletter items: Liz Juby Windsor (01753) 859382 [mail to](mailto:liz@windsorbeekeepers.org)  
Chairman: Michael Sheasby, Farnham Common (01753) 642656. [mail to](mailto:michael@farnhambeekeepers.org)

## **Wokingham & District Beekeepers Association**

The apiary meetings continue to attract good attendances and several new members. We are gradually removing old frames and their boxes from the hives to make way for new items. I have melted down the old combs and cleaned the brood boxes and supers of wax and propolis. This has generated a useful quantity of wax, which we can either trade for new foundation or sell to raise some money for new equipment. I also took the opportunity to replace the plastic runners with metal runners as these can be safely scorched if ever we need to use a blowtorch on the boxes

## “LOOKING FOR DISEASE”

Mark your Diaries – 2 pm Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July at the Association apiary - a special session hosted by our very own regional seasonal bee inspector, Mr Bob Loades.

We will learn how to recognise varroa damage, look for chalk and sac brood, check for European and American foulbrood, and the consequences thereof.

Be ahead of the game – new and exotic beetles and mites coming soon – learn how to recognise small hive beetle and the tropilaelaps mite.

This is one session you can't afford to miss. The apiary is at the Diana Brimblecombe Animal Rescue Centre on the road between Wokingham & Hurst.

See you there.

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](http://www.WDBKA.ik.com)

Derek Porter Hon. Sec. 0118 979 0326

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## SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

The President's day at John Hall's apiary again attracted an attendance of over 40, mainly beginners and prospective beekeepers, the recent acquisition of a PA system proved its value.

Our President, Ron Crocker first examined the ground around the hives for dead bees and larvae, this can give an idea of what is going on in the hive, sometimes disease can be found this way. Don Thomson confirmed that foul brood had actually been found this way on a demonstration at Brightwell-cum-Sotwell.



Ron judged that the first colony was healthy and that there was no visible evidence of foul brood, but pointed out a diseased larva and after shaking the bees off the frame, handed it to the new bees officer to hand around and comment, it was said to be sac brood.

Ron demonstrated examining drone brood for varroa, stating that it was best done with an uncapping fork, sometimes it is necessary to open 100 cells or more before finding varroa even in a heavily infested colony.

As it was known that the second colony was in the process of replacing its queen it was decided that the colony would be open too long for the purposes of demonstration, questions were invited.

In the setting of a perfect English garden, the Halls provided a cream tea; there were also cakes and sandwiches. Our annual plant sale raised over £80 toward association funds.

Our July meeting is on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> in Stephen Kaseki's apiary Upper Lodge, Coppid Hall, Binfield Heath, RG9 4JR Map ref: 738 792. Varroa treatment and crop removal.

Secretary: - Catherine Cooksey, Tel: 01491 641467

## READING & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION.

On Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June Reading members new and more mature, plus a number of interested people wishing to find-out about the craft of beekeeping, at this critical stage in early summer, met at Cross Lanes Apple Farm Mapledurham. Michael and Hazel Blackburn hosted the meeting. Michael has taken-over as resident 'pollinator' from Mac McCombe who is standing down after 30 plus year of looking after this excellent fruit orchard, which sells direct to the public in the farm shop and includes honey from the beekeeper in residence. Michael has seven hives here and we had a number of excellent examples of how to move older and more ragged brood frames towards the sides of the brood box replacing them with new frames and foundation. Only one colony was seen to have multiple queen cells. Indeed, this one may have swarmed.

A nearby bait hive did seem to have bees, this being very recent, i.e. that morning and was left undisturbed.

Michael removed frames for extraction, demonstrating shake-techniques to evaluate the viscosity of the honey. A number of patches of drone brood were raked-out with a very promising result, only one varroa could be found. Michael uses Apiguard, which he is scrupulous about applying in August, plus oxalic solution in the winter. Michael tends to conclude his honey harvest in July.



One colony at the Apple Farm was a recent swarm and as Michael doesn't intend to take honey from this until next season, he started Apiguard treatment right then.

Another interesting colony was a recently set-up hive where the brood was on two shallows. Michael was able to upgrade this by placing a deep with new foundation above the shallow box at the bottom and re-arranging the frames from the two shallows so one shallow could be placed above the queen excluder. Mac has one colony left at the Apple Farm and this was opened and evaluated for sale to new members. The colony is in fact in good shape; some minor woodpecker damage to the boxes but a reasonable price was bid for the hive and contents.

Hazel Blackburn kindly invited us to refreshments at a table set up in this beautiful location with thanks to her and Michael for an excellent instructive meeting.

## July meeting.

To be hosted by Hilary and Tim Whitaker at their garden apiary in Mapledurham. Please note that we have had to change the date to avoid clashing with The Mapledurham House Game Weekend (on 5<sup>th</sup>) and the Medieval Weekend (12th) the village gets very congested with vehicles at these times. The new date is Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July and we will start at 12.00, to allow possibilities of parking in the church car park. Parking is at a premium in Mapledurham so car sharing would be appreciated. A barbeque will follow. Please bring something along for the feast. Owing to limited space we regret that this meeting is for 'members only'. Further details available from Tim Whitaker, Michael Blackburn or Jon.

[www.rbka.org.uk](http://www.rbka.org.uk)

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

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6-----8