



FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

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August 2009
Number 634

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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 th —31 st October	National Honey Show Weybridge	http://www.honeyshow.co.uk/
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THE APIARY in AUGUST

Well there goes summer... Once the crop is off you can start getting the colonies ready for winter. Varroa treatments can only be applied when the crop has been removed. The pyrethroid-based products such as Apistan or Bayvarol now only yield an efficacy of about 30% knock down against varroa, so you need to move on to other products such as Apiguard. Often at this time of the year the queen will stop laying for a short period. This is considered to be the best time for treatment, as any time when there is no sealed brood in the hive will give best results, and the varroa has fewer places to hide. Better results will also be gained by putting an insert in a mesh floor, placing the Apiguard above the brood nest when the ambient temperature is reasonably high.

This is the time of year to start planning next season! You will need healthy bees, examine the brood toward the end of the month. To do this you need to shake off the bees with a swift jerk, having checked that the Queen is not on the frame. If she is, get her to walk down onto a frame you have already checked, and then shake. If you see any Larvae or sealed brood that give you cause for concern regarding disease call for assistance. In open brood, discoloured slumped and melted Larvae are possibly a sign of EFB (European Foul Brood). In sealed brood, discoloured sunken cappings, perforated with holes and an unpleasant smell are a sign of AFB (American Foul Brood). Examining the brood nest in detail should be done, ideally, 3 times a year. Once in spring, once in mid season to check all is well, and once towards the end of August to ensure the colony is in good order for winter.

It is possible to over winter small colonies – even mini-nucs – but it is generally thought that five combs is a minimum; any colony smaller than this is better being united with a stronger colony, provided that both are healthy. It is possible to nurse small nuclei through winter but all must have adequate stores and is normally be undertaken by experienced beekeepers.

To unite two colonies, place the weaker over the strong one with a sheet of newspaper between the two boxes (no queen excluder). If you favour one queen over the other, assuming both are queen right, you should despatch one before uniting, or you could end up queenless.

If you intend to store drawn foundation, supers or brood combs, you should guard against wax moth. It is illegal to use moth repellents, as they are volatile and get into the wax, and in time the honey. If traces of this are found in your honey you will be prosecuted. The Veterinary Medicines Directive (VMD), sample honey at random throughout the year. The best way to store comb is by first freezing the comb for a couple of days in a freezer (down to -20C) then the now “sterilized” comb can be bagged up in plastic bin bags and taped shut, ready for use next spring. If you bag it up without first killing the eggs of wax moth, the comb when you open it next spring will be a mass of slimy webs, wax moth larvae and chrysalises.

Bees appear happier and more industrious when drawing new comb. So it may be better to melt down all of your old combs, and give them fresh foundation in the spring. This helps reduce disease held in the comb.

Triad.

BEE PLANT ANGELICA. (GARDEN ANGELICA)

I bought a small plant of this in a pot from the Garden centre at Wisley to be a companion for my specimen loveage plant in the garden and was pleasantly surprised by the delicate and subtly aromatic stems and foliage when a young growing plant. There are plenty of recipes for candying the young stems, older-ones tell you to layer them with cabbage-leaves in salt for a few days for the green colour before steeping in syrup, though no-doubt green food colour would suffice. When full sized it is 5 foot and the umbrellific flower head is highly attractive to honey bees both, certainly for pollen, possibly for nectar also.

A small colony of large pink aphids arrived followed by numerous examples of those big carmine ladybirds with yellow spots that seemed to be gorging themselves on the pollen and produced the biggest bristly larvae I've ever seen that soon polished-off the aphids. The flower heads were magnets for beetles not seen since childhood, those long elytra pollen beetles, both red abdomen and yellow abdomen, long antenna flower beetles and the gorgeous rose chafer with its metallic green elytra. It's an annual but seeds profusely so if anyone would like a specimen, contact Jon. Davey.



Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -

Southern Region: - David Packham Tel No: 01392 881253

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

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

SLOUGH, WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Our fortnightly meetings at the Apiary continue and again, all seems to be well with our hives there. It has been rewarding to meet so many new and potentially new beekeepers who have attended these. For some of them it has been an opportunity to handle bees for the first time and to get a first hand view of bees at work in their hive. Even those people who have attended a course have found that the number of classmates has sometimes limited their opportunity to actually handle the bees; whilst at the apiary this is usually possible.

Some of our members continue to visit the public and this has been both rewarding and well received. This year the WI have unanimously supported the resolution that:

"Honeybees play a vital role in the pollination of food crops and in our environment. In view of the accelerating decline in the UK bee population this meeting urges HM Government to increase funding for research into bee health".

They have actively welcomed practising beekeepers to many of their monthly meetings to give a personal account of their fascinating hobby and the challenges facing beekeepers at this time. Our 'virtual hive' (a complete hive with brood frames containing very effective, full size photographs of the colony at work) has been an excellent visual aid to these meetings.

Two members also attended the Windsor Rose Show, which was equally successful – although we did learn an important lesson for others who may attend similar shows. There was considerable interest in our information and, in particular, in the virtual hive. However, the most successful addition to the display was a beautiful full frame of honey, which we had collected from a hive earlier that week. The public was enchanted by seeing it, but were even more impressed when they were given the opportunity to hold an empty super frame and then to be able to compare it with the one filled with honey. Children in particular were absolutely amazed at the experience.

We were unconcerned when two or three wasps found this source of fresh honey tempting and even when the number grew to about six or seven it was not a problem. However, from the moment the first honeybee arrived we thought there might be more of a problem and within minutes we had a very much more active display than we had planned! As dozens more arrived to share in the bounty, we had to very quickly put everything away and wipe down every surface! Luckily the public were not concerned by the sudden arrival of real bees and the show was coming to an end any way, but I don't think any of those present will repeat the experiment – at least, not in the open air!

We will be attending other shows in the area, including the Sunningdale show in September, so if you are planning on going along, please look out for us. Meanwhile, we look forward to seeing some of you at the Apiary on Sunday afternoons. In August we will be there on the 9th and 23rd, at 2.30 as usual.

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

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

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Wokingham & District Beekeepers Association

There is not much to report at present other than that the apiary meetings continue to attract good attendances and prospective beekeepers that will hopefully become new members.

Please take note of the short piece that follows. Our Chairman Peter Seagrave has prepared this and he would like a good attendance on October 14th. Judging by reports from various people, the honey flow this year has been much better than the last two years were so we should all be able to bring along a jar or two.

This year we have decided, for the second year, to again put some fun into the first winter meeting of the year on Wed October 14th with a little competition between the Wokingham members for

a) the best tasting pot of honey on the day

b) a piece of wax

to be judged by every person present at the meeting.

Not only that – but The Albert Spragg Centenary Cup for the honey and a coveted rosette for the wax.

It really doesn't matter what your honey is like, bring it along just for a giggle.

Derek Porter will again be telling us how to prepare your bee produce for showing.

Put the date in your diary. Lets have a big turnout and get the winter meetings off to a good start.

The Albert Spragg Centenary Cup

Albert Spragg is President of the Wokingham Beekeepers' Association and a great advocate of learning through shared experience. Albert was 101 years old on April 1st 2009. For many years Albert presided over Sunday morning meetings at the Association Apiary passing on his valuable experience to new and established beekeepers.

Albert would always make the apiary visits entertaining and educational and in this spirit the Centenary Cup has been donated. The rules are simple - bring along a pot, or pots, of honey to the first winter meeting of the year and let your fellow members' judge which pot of honey deserves to be the best in show.

The honey can be any consistency, colour or flavour and should be presented in a 454 grams jar with no markings. Look through your jars, pick a good one, bring it along and you could be the proud keeper of a magnificent trophy for twelve months.

A "a piece of wax" can be any shape, any size, any colour, any thing.

Beekeeping in Tuscany

Six of our intrepid members recently made an educational visit to a beekeeping co-operative in Pontremoli, northern Tuscany.



Over six days they visited a number of substantial apiaries and toured the co-operative's impressive honey processing and hive manufacturing facility. With 50 members the co-operative produces an average of 100 tonnes of honey/annum. A number of the members have 400 hives to manage and some have sidelines like pollen collection and hive experimentation.

A detailed presentation on the visit will form the subject of one of our monthly talks in the New Year.

www.WDBKA.ik.com

Derek Porter Hon. Sec. 0118 979 0326

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Our June meeting was a combined meeting between neighbours Dave Moss and Roderick Blyth, over 40 members attended; both meetings were in beautiful surroundings.

Roderick's bees were dealt with first, his hive had been artificially swarmed previously and the original colony was found to be Queenless but the artificially stock was Queen right, so a comb of brood was transferred to the original stock. We then went to Dave's whose stock had again been artificially swarmed and both were Queen right but the original stock was producing Queen cells. The Queen was 2 to 3 years old so needed replacing, it was decided to transfer the Queen to Roderick's Queenless stock so was caged and transferred. Sealed cells were removed and unsealed cells left for 7 or 8 days when Dave would leave one good one and destroy the rest.

Reg would like to apologize for being unable to demonstrate queen rearing as advertised in the schedule.

A delicious tea provided by both hosts in Dave and Marcia's fantastic garden followed the demonstration by Reg.

Congratulations and thanks to South Chilterns members who have made it possible for those new members wishing for bees to have them!

So far this season nine nuclei have been installed with new members, one swarm was collected with the assistance of an experienced member getting another new member started. As part of the programme two other members who were without bees now have some.

New members with nucs are invited to an exchange of experiences later this month and to find out the next steps.

Kate

August

Saturday August 29th 10.30am to 3.30pm. Make your own skep, Demonstration with Martin Buckle. The available spaces are fully booked but South Chilterns members are welcome to come and watch and also to view the Victorian beehouse. Tea or coffee will be available. Bring your own packed lunch. There is no scheduled apiary meeting this month.

Secretary: - Catherine Cooksey, Tel: 01491 641467

<http://www.southchilternsbeekeepers.org.uk/>

READING & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION.

On Sunday 19th July we were the guests of Tim and Hilary Whitaker in their Mapledurham gardens for one of our premier beekeeping meetings of the summer, we were not disappointed in our anticipation as Tim had 6 colonies for us to investigate, this included 2 recently hived swarms, one of which Tim is building up for members Mr.& Mrs John Rogerson of Nuney Green who will shortly remove same to their own place.

Both the swarms showed excellent progress with 4 frames each of good brood, eggs and larvae were seen, Tim has applied Apistan as an anti varroa measure in each and the bees looked vigorous and when then the brood all hatches-out will be populous, possible addition of a super to each is in prospect. It was interesting to see the bees reaction to the smoker, there were excellent capped stores at the tops and sides of the brood frames and the classic 'filling their honey stomachs' to be ready for flight from a 'forest fire' could clearly be seen with bees clustered around the peripheral brood/store areas the frames and breaking into stores. It is quite unusual to see this so markedly. We saw this on all but one hive during our inspection. Tim was burning recently dropped lime-petals and seed 'wings' from his own personal lime-tree avenue in his smoker, a good percentage of the nectar source in the hives is hoped to be lime-blossom.

The over wintered hives were opened, with good prospects for hives 1 & 2, good populations, eggs and larvae a-plenty and supers to be removed, one was prepared for removal and Tim will remove it from the apiary in the evening, there were rather a lot of vigorously flying bees investigating everything we did.

Hive no 3 was a bit different, the bees gave us something of a hot reception, a weather front was building-up and gusty winds and eventual showers were to come later. We did see some bees with deformed-wings in this colony though the population was strong and again plenty of brood, also some old queen-cups and broken down queen cells, the bees were either building over them or possibly this hive had swarmed earlier in the summer.

As our thoughts were starting to turn towards the tantalizing prospect of the barbeque Hilary and helpers had prepared for us, we closed this hive up, as a number of us had been stung and proceeded to hive no 4.

Here we found two of the three supers full up with capped honey and the third rapidly filling. In this colony there was a small amount of un-emerged brood and empty cleaned-out cells, a strong population but no current queen activity. Tim will re-inspect in about 2 weeks and if the situation remains the same he will have the option to unite this colony with his hived swarm that has a very good queen from our inspection.

One notable thing in these inspections was the absence of drone brood, we saw two or three drones only and as we opened six colonies this seems an unusual, maybe a good thing, perhaps bees locally are predominantly like-this, perhaps that's why there is rather a shortage of swarms for some of us to collect!

Off then to enjoy our barbeque. We had a number of new members with us who are nursing their first colonies towards autumn, it was good conversation after the beekeeping, obviously our new friends cherish their hard-won bee colonies and are doing their utmost to be prepared for the dangerous months of winter, heart warming thing ... this is what the honey bee needs in this day and age!

With thanks to Tim and Hilary Whitaker and all who attended and all who helped with the food and marquees etc.

August meeting: Sunday 16th August .11.30m sharp at Ronald Blower's garden apiary at The Old House, Shurlock Row, Berks. RG10 0QP. It's close to the cross roads and the church at the village centre, you'd take a turn as though you were going to head up towards Hurst. The Old House is 3 or 4 up on the right hand side. Contact Ronald or Jon for further details. As we are now a more numerous association we would appreciate it people who are going to attend contact either Robert Kiff or Jon to confirm. This will help with car parking arrangements etc. Please kindly comply.

www.rbka.org.uk

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

Contributions, this includes **E-mails**, to arrive with the Editor by the **FIRST POST** (Around 10.00am) on the twentieth of the Month for the Following Month, Contributions received after this will be held over for a later month.

To enable the Advertisement Manager to place adverts with the Editor for the 20th of the month deadline; adverts should be sent well before this time.

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6-----8