



FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

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July 2010
Number 644

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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

28th to 30th October 2010	National Honey Show. Weybridge	www.honeyshow.co.uk
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THE APIARY in JULY

July, is arguably, one of the busiest months for the beekeeper. We have colonies which are reaching the peaks of their populations, we still have the production of swarm cells to monitor, and July is the time for the honey harvest to really get underway.

On the subject of colony population strengths, we have now to decide what we are going to do about weak colonies. If we are intending to get them into a condition where they can usefully survive winter conditions. Have a look at your weaklings, find the queen and assess, check out the brood pattern and the overall housekeeping qualities of these bees. You may have two clean but small colonies which you can unite now, If there is a queen, have a good look, she maybe inactive, thin, missing legs, brood pattern maybe irregular, look-out for the tell-tale signs of the telltale signs of a drone laying queen, with only blocks of drone brood and no worker brood. This would be the queen to remove, prior to uniting. Alternatively, if another colony has swarm cells, two reasonable small colonies, both apparently queenless, can be united using one of these.

Take it slowly when removing queen cells from your colonies, find a cell, note it's location, then go through the remaining frames and look for more, don't remove the singleton queen cell in July, the term 'swarm cell' should perhaps only be used to describe multiple queen cell production by a colony. Late in July, supercedure queen cells become much more common, better to risk "a swarm of bees in July" than to prevent supercedure in the colony by a daughter queen of the 'old lady.'

You are justified now to remove supers of honey, particularly as you'll want to replace with some empties, sticky with remnant honey after extraction, you'll be removing the horse chestnut, may blossom, etc. to make space ready for the lime tree blossom in early July, and the blackberry later in the month. You should have all your oilseed rape off and extracted by now.

Try to extract promptly and replace the supers back to the hive as soon as the honey is extracted. Stored honey in combs or wet extracted frames are going to stimulate robbing, this will probably be inside your 'bee-shed' and soon the wasps will get in on the act! At the end of the month, keep a good super of capped honey in your hive, current advice, published by BBKA, say this is important as winter food for the colony, forget relying on autumn's ivy!

Now a warning, when working with your hives, removing supers etc., clean-off all spilled and exposed honey, from the outside of the boxes. August will bring the wasp onslaught! For your information, we have numerous colonies of the bigger fatter *Vespula Germanicus* and *Norwegicus* wasps in the south of England.

These seriously go for honey bee colonies, initially attracted by open or spilled honey they will take out the brood and eventually bite-off the bees' wings and carry them back to feed their own larvae. Be ready to drown with jam water jar traps, you will have a battle on your hands if they start on your bees. More of this in August's issue.

Triad



National Honey Show - St Georges College, Weybridge, Surrey 28th to 30th October 2010

It's a bit early to be thinking about the National Honey Show isn't it? Well, not really, especially if you are new to beekeeping and joined your local association after 1st August 2009. Is that you? If so, you can get in free! To get your free ticket you need to ask your association secretary to apply on your behalf to the NHS General Secretary. Your secretary will need to supply your name, address and your email address if you have one. The NHS is run entirely by volunteers. Using email helps simplify the administration. The cut off date for applications is 31st July and time rushes by when the season starts so get that application in now.

This year the show will be bigger than ever. The trade stands will all be together in a brighter hall and there will be a proper lecture theatre with tiered seating. A full programme of workshops and lectures with world class speakers will run during the show and there will be a wide selection of equipment and books to buy.

Whilst you wait for the active season to start, why not have a look at the NHS website? You will find lots of information about the show and notes on a wide range of beekeeping subjects; all written by experts in their fields. www.honeyshow.co.uk

1. [Private Eye | Official Site](#)

BEE KEEPERS STUNG INTO ACTION: The British Beekeepers' Association decides to stop taking payments from pesticide companies whose products kill bees. ...

private-eye.co.uk/sections.php?section_link=in_the_back&... - [Cached](#)

Regrettably, this statement **is not true**. Where do they get their information?

Private Eye's agricultural column has reported on studies which seem to show a correlation between disappearing bees and certain pesticides. This is true!



[pollinators-connolly\[1\].pdf](#)



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From the Guardian



[GUARDI~1.PDF](#)



The British Beekeepers' Association

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Tel: 02476 696679; Fax: 024766 690682; e-mail: bbka@britishbeekeepers.com

STATEMENT

22 June 2010

New Projects to address decline of honeybees and other insect pollinators

Nine projects worth a total of up to £10M from the Insect Pollinators Initiative were announced today by the BBSRC during National Insect Week.

The BBKA campaigned long and hard since 2008 to raise public awareness of the plight of honeybees and its efforts were recognised in April 2009 by the creation of the Insect Pollinators Initiative.

The projects will explore the causes and consequences of threats to insect pollinators and ask questions about the decline of honeybees and other pollinating insects over recent years. The aim is to inform the development of mitigation strategies that will ensure that the pollination of agricultural and horticultural crops is protected and biodiversity in natural ecosystems is maintained.

What is clear at present is that there is no one factor causing the problem. The causes of pollinator declines are likely to be complex and involve interactions between pollinators, the environment and the pests and diseases that affect these insects.

Martin Smith, BBKA President, said: "The BBKA is very pleased that the crucial role of bees in everybody's life has been recognised in the awards and that two projects exclusively related to honey bees have secured funding. Honey bees feature in six of the seven other successful research projects.

"Honey bees, which living in colonies that can be managed, are the most economically important group of bees in the UK.

"We will continue to look for further funding for other important projects identified in its Honey Bee Health Research Concepts document which have not been fortunate to be covered under the Insect Pollinator Initiative."

Projects funded under the initiative are:

- * Sustainable pollination services for UK crops Dr Koos Biesmeijer, University of Leeds
- * **Modelling systems for managing bee disease: the epidemiology of European Foulbrood** Dr Giles Budge, Food & Environment Research Agency
- * Investigating the impact of habitat structure on queen and worker bumblebees in the field Dr Claire Carvell, NERC Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- * An investigation into the synergistic impact of sublethal exposure to industrial chemicals on the learning capacity and performance of bees Dr Chris Connolly, University of Dundee
- * Linking agriculture and land use change to pollinator populations Professor Bill Kunin, University of Leeds
- * Urban pollinators: their ecology and conservation Professor Jane Memmott, University of Bristol
- * Impact and mitigation of emergent diseases on major UK insect pollinators Dr Robert Paxton, Queen's University of Belfast
- * **Unravelling the impact of the mite Varroa destructor on the interaction between the honeybee and its viruses** Dr Eugene Ryabov, University of Warwick
- * Can bees meet their nutritional needs in the current UK landscape?
Dr Geraldine Wright, Newcastle University

The Insect Pollinators Initiative is a joint initiative from the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Natural Environment Research Council, The Scottish Government and the Wellcome Trust, and is funded under the auspices of the Living With Environmental Change partnership.

Ends

The Free Apis-UK newsletter is available at:

<http://www.beedata.com/apis-uk/newsletters09/apis-uk0909.pdf>

Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -

Southern Region: Nigel Semmence nigel.semmence@fera.gsi.gov.uk Tel No: 01264 338694

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
01 904 462 510 <mailto:nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk>

South Eastern Region: - Mr Alan Byham. Fax/Telephone number: 020 8571 6450




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Wokingham & District Beekeepers Association

The Sunday afternoon meetings at the Club's apiary continue to be well attended and several new beekeepers have come along after completing their theory course at Burchett's Green College but have not seen bees in action.

We are pleased to give them a warm welcome to the Club and trust that they will all join. With the increase in numbers of new beekeepers, some suppliers of equipment have not been able to keep up with demand. Unfortunately, the supply of bees has also been lacking, hopefully, everybody who wants bees will get some in due course.

The Club used the grant from the Federation to purchase an extractor to replace the old one which broke down and was, in any event, of tin. The new extractor is of stainless steel and motorised. It will take 12 frames up to Langstroth in size. Anyone who does not have an extractor, is welcome to hire the machine to extract their supers. At the moment, the extractor is in my garage, as it is large and very heavy, you will need to bring your supers to my house either during the day or in the evening. I am quite happy to help new beekeepers who have not extracted honey before. We also have a Pratley tray and some settling tanks for hire. Please contact me if you need to hire any of these items.

Neil has carried out an initial extraction of the supers at Brimblecombe's, this has yielded just over 70 lbs. of honey. We should obtain a lot more by the time the season finishes.

The programme for the coming winter meetings is now being put together. If anyone has any particular subjects they would like to have covered, please let me know.

Derek Porter Hon. Sec. 0118 979 0326

www.WDBKA.ik.com

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

The May meeting, courtesy of John Hall, was the explanation of the "Bailey Shift" and demonstration of preparing for it. Reg Hook did the work with Ron Crocker commentating.

Drawn virgin comb can be used when no stores are coming in. The queen is caught and put into the new brood chamber, above a queen excluder and the colony is fed. Ideally, an entrance should be arranged above the queen excluder and the bottom entrance closed, otherwise any incoming stores are likely to be deposited in the bottom chamber.

In this demonstration, new foundation was used, as the bees were storing in the super, the queen was placed in the new combs above the queen excluder. It was evident that a second queen excluder was needed, John set off across the field for it. Ron said that it should be a lesson that everything should be ready, we could well have been in an out apiary far from home.

When all brood in the bottom chamber has emerged, the chamber should be removed and the combs melted down.

There are variations used by different beekeepers but the basic method remains the same. Could this be used where there is European foul brood? Yes, but only after treatment under the direction of an appointed officer.

It was mentioned that using this method, healthy, near native bees can suppress AFB so that it is not evident when other strains go under.

Our thanks go to our hosts, John and Sarah Hall, who had catered very well for us.

Secretary: - Joanne Shanagher. 01189 721067

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

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SLOUGH, WINDSOR, AND MAIDENHEAD BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Our main focus during the last month has been the Apiary in Wexham, which is an incredibly valuable teaching focus. We have had between 10 and 20 members present at each meeting, from the absolute beginner to the very experienced and all levels in between! Our colonies are not currently the strongest but have given us the opportunity to work with all sorts of situations involving re-queening, swarm control and all the excitement of the virgin queen starting to lay!

There is still the opportunity to follow the story of our hives on our web site – after each meeting a short update is placed on the Apiary pages, in case you have been unable to attend. We are also lucky to be able to follow the success of Bernhard Schumann's bees, with his very detailed and informative articles.

The Society had a stand at the Windsor Great Park Open Day for school children and I think all those who heard the talk on bees from Don and Robert thoroughly enjoyed themselves. It was good to see so many children, many from inner London, experiencing the countryside and the activities offered to them.

Many members have also been busy collecting swarms and I am delighted to report that all new members who were bee-less at the start of the year are now fully equipped, functioning beekeepers!

Some members, whose names appear on our website, have been inundated of late with calls from members of the public about swarms and nests on their property. The vast majority can be diagnosed over the phone as bumble bees, but then a lot of time and patience has to be applied to allay fears and encourage people to live with these bees until they die out in the winter. Our Chairman has written to the Bumble Bee Conservation Trust to ask for some support in handling such calls, but they do not have the large membership network that beekeepers have. By the way, the Trust has an excellent website with lots of information about bumblebees, which can be accessed from the Swarm page of our website. The next phase will soon be calls about wasps, as their numbers grow. However, the solution to that problem is much simpler.

BBKA Basic Assessment (BA).

Many members (30 - 40) attended the series of talks last winter, aimed at helping them pass the BA. Since then, there have been opportunities at our Apiary – or perhaps with own bees – to add practical knowledge to the theoretical. The BA takes about an hour and is a one-on-one event – so typically an Assessor can manage 5-6 candidates per day. The majority of assessments are undertaken on a Saturday. A candidate should have a minimum of one year's practical beekeeping experience.

Anyone who wishes to take the BA this season is invited to register their interest by email to Tonywolstenholme@aol.com (preferably) or by phone 01753 864665 – and then a programme of assessments will be drawn up.

Fort Belvedere hives.

As some of you may be aware, the Society accepted an invitation from the current occupants of Fort Belvedere, Windsor Great Park, in early autumn 2009 to set up an apiary in the grounds of the Fort. These 3 Langstroth hives are now 'up and running'. Package bees with caged queens were collected from Brockworth near Gloucester on 24th May and, later that day, installed in the hives. Frames were fitted only with foundation. Conditions have been favourable and, assisted by ample syrup feeding, the Queens have settled in. On 7th June, these nuclei each had 3-4 frames of infant brood. Thousands of "bee-friendly" plants were planted last autumn at the Fort – will the bees find them? How will they influence the flavour of the honey? Tony Wolstenholme and Angela Armstrong are looking after these hives on behalf of the Society and the occupants of Fort Belvedere.

Can I remind you that there are no evening meetings in Windsor until September, but our fortnightly visits to the apiary continue on Sunday afternoons at 2.30pm? For details on how to find the Apiary, please contact our secretary, Maureen Williams on 01753 643604 or swarm.bees@o2.co.uk. The July dates are Sunday 11th and 25th.

All details of our meetings can also be found on our web site, www.britishbee.org.uk/local/slough-windsor-maidenhead and on the website www.wherecanwego.com. - click SL4 + gardens + nature (boxes)

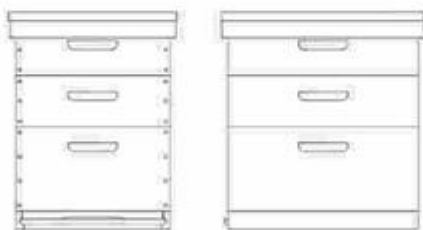
Newsletter items: Liz Juby, Windsor (01753) 859382 lizjuby@hotmail.com

Chairman: Michael Sheasby Farnham Common (01753) 642656

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READING & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION.

Reading & district beekeepers have the pleasure to report on two excellent spring meetings, well hosted by the apiary owners and well attended with a good proportion of newer Reading bee-keeping members.

Sunday 16th May, Cross Lanes Fruit Farm, Mapledurham, our hosts, Michael & Hazel Blackburn, weather fine after a cold spell, the apple trees being still in flower or in first tiny fruit. May trees along the hedges where Michael sites his hives were just breaking into blossom, There is usually oilseed rape in flying distance of the fruit farm. We opened 5 hives and although there was queen activity evident, in the form of sealed brood and larvae. Michael was dissatisfied with the 'building-up' progress made by the fruit farm colonies compared to his other sites in the area.

Of the five colonies, one was looking good, with a strong population and large areas of brood, eggs and tiny larvae, another was small to medium and the other three weakish. We added new frames where the weak colonies were not active on last winter's older looking frames, and in the better colonies, re-organized the brood frames centrally in the box, moving ragged frames to the edge of the brood nest for eventual replacement. Subsequently Michael has united some of the weaker colonies, the fruit farm is an excellent site and the bees are needed for pollination but this is a commercial orchard and spraying is very much part of the programme. Michael suspects that this maybe a factor in the relatively slow build-up of his bees here. Hazel had provided some very welcome refreshments to follow. With thanks to Mike and Hazel and to all who attended.

Sunday 13th June, 'The Rose Garden' Sonning. Our hosts were Caroline & Jeremy Gilmore at their apiary in their splendid acreage off Thames Street. The Gilmores have invested in some new equipment, working with National Hives and using 14-inch brood boxes. There had been a swarm the previous day, which Jeremy had collected and hived on top of the source colony using a Snelgrove board temporarily, so things were buzzing with plenty of interest for us.

We firstly opened a nucleus, which housed a smallish swarm from the previous autumn. Jeremy had seen a queen on an inspection in May, but the population was well down and nothing to suggest there was a queen. Subsequently, we were able to lodge a queen cell in, and the results to be awaited. Next, a colony which has an interesting history, Caroline and Jeremy having rescued it, well established, from behind cladding under a thatched roof of a cottage two years ago before the roofers moved in, many hours, indeed days were spent tying onto frames of a hive that had to be lugged up into the roof and plenty of brushing and manipulating to get the queen and colony installed, then the whole thing had to come down the ladder from the loft! There is a file to download that Jeremy produced if any beekeeper is interested.

After two good years in the Gilmore apiary the colony is giving cause for concern, population looked rather weak, indeed there were vacated queen cells present so swarms and casts may have occurred, however, we did find sealed-brood, tiny larvae and a small patch of eggs, so although we couldn't find a queen we hope things will improve. Hive number three was much better, good population, with eggs, larvae and a robust looking queen. Seven frames of honey were taken off and replaced with new foundation. Now for the 'double-decker'. First, we removed the new swarm from the top and went into the brood below. All in excellent shape in respect of 14 inches of capped worker brood in a good population, with a lot of new stores in the brood box. A small patch of drone brood was raked-out and no varroa were visible, we came upon a fused couple of frames, this contained 3 sealed queen cells and two open cups occupied with queen larvae lying in a pool of queen food.

Attempting to find any queen cells between the two frames, we did try to separate them. Unfortunately one frame was unwired and a part of Jeremy's drone sacrifice scheme, though the bees had drawn out as worker cells, and was heavy with honey and a small patch of worker brood. The subsequent tearing caused a certain amount of comb to descend to terra firma and that included the queen cells. Other chunks were held up manually by beekeepers and certain deprecations were aired! String was sent for and the husband and wife team of Hazel and Mike Blackburn proceeded to show what experienced beekeeping was all about, tying the comb in. A brand new beekeeper, Giles, who has seen rather a lot of beekeeping over two days, being fresh from helping Mike with some early honey harvesting, providing the finger on the knots, another holding the grounded comb up a bit with the tip of his rubber boot. Eight hands are better than two! The queen cells were separated from the comb and along with the cups, were returned to the hive, another sealed queen cell was placed in the nucleus as mentioned above. Jeremy and Caroline provided a large tray with a suitable cover and quite a lot of unexpected comb honey was placed in this for sorting in the near future! Some drones did drown and bees had a fair bit of clearing-up to do! Luckily, Caroline and Jeremy keep a well-mannered and forbearing bee! We would also like to thank the Gilmores for their forbearance!

The new swam was housed on a conventional floor, they were on frames with foundation and they looked fairly well settled, we hear from Jeremy however that after the apiary inspection, i.e. three days before this report they have swarmed-out of their box twice! Jeremy will try a queen excluder on the floor and below the box next time!

Caroline had prepared some home baked biscuits, and chilled homemade elderflower to drink, the beekeepers were able to ruminate on their deeds that day; it just goes to show what can happen! With very many thanks to the Gilmores and to all who attended and lent a helping hand.

Our next meeting is on Sunday 18th July and the venue is Tim and Hilary Whitaker's garden apiary in Mapledurham. Eagerly anticipated with the Whitaker's famous barbeque to follow. Do not forget to bring something along for the feast; we start beekeeping at 11.30AM

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

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Well worth looking at, <http://www.co-operative.coop/planbee>

Watch bees on-line at <http://www.sysonby.com/beecam>

Varroa jacobsoni (Varroa destructor). Early research, updated.

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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