



# THE FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

July 2012  
Number 666

General Secretary:  
Martin Moore  
Tilehurst  
Reading  
01189677386  
07729620286

The Federation, its Council, and its Officers cannot be held responsible for the views expressed in the Newsletter or possible errors.

E-mail:- [berksbees@btinternet.com](mailto:berksbees@btinternet.com)

Web: <http://www.berkshirebeekeepers.btck.co.uk/>

Hon. Editor  
R.F.Crocker  
25 Shiplake Bottom  
Peppard Common,  
Oxon, RG9 5HH  
(01189 72 2315)

## In The Apiary

### Swarm survival.

There has been distressing news of collected swarms arriving dead at their final destination, even an hour or two after collecting. Ready to use hives tend to become scarcer during the swarming season. It is as well to consider what we are doing when we collect a swarm, and how to have a satisfactory outcome, rather than a guilt-ridden one!

Bees require plenty of oxygen, probably more than mammals, their insect bodies absorb this via their spiracles, (openings on the side of the abdomen). In flight, their wings and motion provide a well-oxygenated airflow, as does the draught through the hive provided by the bees fanning. Bees are also sensitive to temperature, and have the ability to control this closely in their colony. We know about clustering in cold weather, but do you know that bees release water or nectar onto the frames of a hive in the hottest weather, evaporation helping with cooling.

Look at your bees on a balmy night, say 18°C and above, many sleep in the open, helping to dissipate heat while reducing fanning at night. Take a look if the daytime or evening temperatures get into the 30's that they are all inside the colony for the temperature-controlled conditions. That is when you should walk the garden hose down to them at night and give the hives a sprinkle, in an out apiary in hot-dry conditions, take water and a can with a rose for this purpose. Hot congested conditions trigger swarming. Bees can die of heat and lack of oxygen, and the queen will die first!

Now let us re-examine with what we are collecting our swarms! The June issue of BBKA news strongly recommends using straw skeps. If you look at the photograph, you will also see a hessian sack, a potato sack, available at good garden centres, usually by the seed potatoes. Skeps used to be hard to find for anything less than about £35 but it seems that more people are taking up the craft of skep making, check the web; you will find plenty at reasonable prices. Skeps with hessian sacks as a cover allow the bees to fan air through the loose weave; in fact, the bees seem to settle quickly, a smear of honey inside is a good idea. Leave an aperture to put-in those bees that stay on the twigs, shake or brush them into say a 1 litre plastic jug cover quickly with the bee brush and pop them in. Do this several times with interval of say 5 minutes, if you have the queen inside, they will soon be fanning at the aperture, and if you stroll around for 15 minutes, admiring the forage, you will have a neat collection. Take them away when they have finished flying for the day.

You may not have a hive immediately available, in which case it is all right to keep them for a short while in the skep with a twig under an edge to allow bees to fly. They will make a little comb, that is a good sign; you can scoop this off and place in a container.

If you really want to keep them in a skep, push a couple of straight sticks through the skep just below the 'roof' to give them a start for hanging comb. This is not to be recommended because the combs or bees cannot be inspected.

Referring back to June's issue of BBKA news, a 'box' is mentioned as a substitute, and in the June issue of Bee Craft, this is illustrated. Note, she has 'Beekeeping' written large on her box. It is a large box. Never use anything smaller than a wine case, even for the smallest swarm, double that size is recommended. Your 'beekeeping' box must have at least 100 ventilation holes near the top, made with say a kitchen skewer. With your Stanley knife, cut a suitable flap as an aperture, or learn to 'butterfly' box flaps so you do not need any duct tape, but leave one flap un-butterflied for our purpose. With such a box, you can even keep them for a day or two, allowing flight as above. Give them protection against rain while not obstructing the ventilation holes. I believe the late lamented 'dead swarm' arrived in a shoebox! For heaven's sake, NEVER use a shoebox, far too small, ventilated or otherwise. Leather and canvas footwear is often coloured with toxic dyes and as the boxes have to be stored in a red-hot gowdown for months in Madras, Kelang or Qingdao goodness knows with what they are impregnated!

Beekeeping tip:- If you are troubled by bees entering your bee shed (few are bee-proof) and getting stuck behind the widow glass, try blacking out the window with some card during the 'robbing season' you will find they exit where they entered and even that few bother to go in!

Triad

## **NBU ADVICE for OBTAINING BEES:**

### **JOIN BEEBASE**

By joining BeeBase you can access beekeeping information and ask for advice or help from the Bee Unit: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase>.

### **Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -**

**Southern Region:** Nigel Semmence at: [nigel.semmence@fera.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.semmence@fera.gsi.gov.uk),

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

**South Eastern Region:** Mr Alan Byham, fax/tel: 01306 611 016

## **Reading and District Beekeepers' Association**

We would like to start by expressing our appreciation of Messer's Maisemore Apiaries who, for the second time have sent us a bottom bearing for Reading association's extractor, following the loss of said bearing by careless users during cleaning. This arrived next day, free of charge. Please be careful. It is possible using hot water, a long handled nylon brush, (cheap in most multiples) and plenty of rinsing to clean without disassembling!

17<sup>th</sup> June found us in very good numbers at Nicholas Matenga's out apiary at South Hill Sonning. Nick had kept his bees successfully in his cottage garden in Sonning village, but eventually found a more spacious site thanks to the owner Andy Barker. He met us, and introduced a young friend, ready dressed in a bee suit, to observe. Andy has more than a passing interest in bees, and Nick has provided him with a suitable bee veil to wear when he rides on his mower at that end of his splendid, large garden. Four hives to open, beautifully located, and looking a picture; south facing, behind a sizeable pond inhabited by great crested newts, hopefully this will keep the bees away from Andy's swimming pool!

Hive one. A recent swarm, but making very good progress, with brood and eggs in the desirable circular pattern, with stores at the top corners of the brood frames, and stores going in at a good rate in the shallows.

Hive two has been the source of bees for two of the hives in this apiary (1 &3), After about twenty swarm cells, Nick more or less lost count of how many he has had to deal with, there did appear to be some queen activity on last inspection about ten days before, but only mature emergent brood today. There were rather a lot of swarm cells, all open, some appearing to have been broken into by the bees after queen emergence. There were plenty of flying bees and stores in deeps and supers, but some new brood is obviously desirable. A deep frame with eggs and tiny larvae from hive number three was inserted.

Hive three. An excellent colony, with a good circular brood pattern, and with stores in the top corners, characteristic of this apiary. A nearly full super above the excluder, Nick has already taken 16lbs of honey from this hive and number four. It was from this hive a frame was donated to hive number two. Hive four had been configured without a queen excluder; build-up has been fast in this apiary. The bottom deep has brood, eggs in quantity with a good population of bees. An unnecessary super was removed and an excluder added. An interesting, uncapped queen cell was found on the bottom of a shallow frame, the larvae lying in a pool of queen food about five days old. This frame was marked; this is a singleton, a couple of un-occupied cups being seen in the deep. Nick will consider this cell, it maybe a supercedure, and it is also a possibility for hive number two. Nick marks his queens, but in the bright sunshine they were hiding today, though activity was excellent in three of the four hives.

Nick being an expert carpenter, has well-constructed stands for his hives, which are well assembled. He rubs teak oil onto the exteriors, and they look very smart. Since the move to South Hill built-up has been fast. Michael Blackburn advised allowing the bees to draw out more frames within the boxes before adding new foundation, indeed a number of undrawn frames and 3 supers were removed for the time-being, Nick is not far from oilseed rape, about 4 miles at Playhatch, in large quantities. His first extraction granulated quickly, he has some monitoring to do in his fast filling supers, though capped stores lower down in the hives looked completely fluid

A really excellent beekeeping meeting. New beekeepers were allowed to assist with handling again, and all were very happy with the beekeeping. Nick had home baked cakes for us afterwards.

With very many thanks to Nicholas and all who attended and participated.

The July Meeting is on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>, starting at 11-30AM . Our host is Giles Mc Loughlin at Flint House Drive, Crays Pond RG8 0LL. For full directions look out for our secretary's message when you receive your newsletter, Giles contact number is 0149187199. See you there!

Jon Davey

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

Main agent in Berkshire keeping large stocks of frames, foundation and hive parts for your needs. All accessories including summer, autumn and winter varroa treatment in stock. Jars etc. Ambrosia syrup and fondant available during the season. Wax taken or exchanged and some new cedar second quality equipment available while stock lasts. Speak to John or Joan on 0118 842321 , 0792 9586037 or e-mail [john.r.belcher@talktalk.com](mailto:john.r.belcher@talktalk.com)

## "THE BEE SHOP"

TOP QUALITY CLOTHING AT AFFORDABLE PRICES

See our web site [www.thebeeshop.co.uk](http://www.thebeeshop.co.uk)

Beekeeper clothing available includes:-

Full Suits (Fencing and Round Hat Styles)

Smocks (Fencing and Round Hat Styles)

### **Wokingham and District Beekeepers' Association**

The awful weather continues to disrupt our visits to the apiary. Since our last newsletter, we have not been able to check the hives on a regular basis due to the cold and rain. We made a full inspection on the 10<sup>th</sup> June, to discover that five out of our six remaining hives (was seven but one was very weak so needed to be combined with a stronger hive) appeared to be queenless without eggs, larvae or queen cells. The queenright hive was not strong enough to donate a frame of eggs at that time, so we left any decision until the following week. We checked again on the 17<sup>th</sup>, and as the queen appeared to be laying reasonably well, we removed a frame of eggs and put it into one of the queenless hives, in the hope that they will make a queen. The other queenless hives will need to be amalgamated back with the queenright hive/hives once we are in a more stable position. On a more cheerful note, it looks as though we will have an early honey crop we can sell on behalf of club funds.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> June, we held the inaugural meeting of our Microscopy Group, which Neil and Sue Marshall kindly agreed to host. There were approximately 15 members attending which is very encouraging. Alex Atherton has offered to provide some basic tuition and source some speakers for future meetings. Before we started the hands-on session, Alex asked us all for our wish list of areas we would like to cover. As expected, pollen analysis and disease identification was very popular, along with bee anatomy. We had a quick question, answer session, and then spent the rest of the evening getting familiar with the various types of microscopes, as well as viewing slides of pollen and bee parts using the compound microscope and wonderful views of whole bees through the dissecting microscope. The magnification was so good we could see the individual hairs on their bodies and legs. There was so much to see and do that the time flew by, and reluctantly we finished up at 10.00 pm. It was felt that longer sessions would be of great value, if Alex can spare the time.

Our thanks go to Neil and Sue for their kind hospitality, and Alex for the huge amount of work she has put into getting this group up and running, and agreeing to be our in-house tutor. We are all looking forward to our next meeting, date to be announced, once we can confirm a location.

On a more personal note, we managed to have a quick look into our hives following our swarming/bailey change saga and we found brood in both hives. Weather permitting, we plan to take a proper look later this week, and see if we can spot the queens. Considering the limited number of warm flying days we have had recently, we were very fortunate.

Lynn Janes. Hon. Sec. Mobile: 07721 338833

<http://wokinghambeekeepers.moonfruit.com>



**BEE BASIC LTD**

**www.beebasic.co.uk**  
*All the protection you need, and more*

Jackets from only **£32**

Bee suits from only **£42**

Leather gloves **£10.50**

Smokers **£16**

+ bee vests, smocks, hat & veils, tools and more....

Free delivery on orders over £100

Call us for a free brochure, or visit our web site

5 Hillcrest Avenue, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 1AJ      E-mail: sales@beebasic.co.uk      ☎ 020 8866 3864  
9am to 5 pm except Sundays

### Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead Beekeepers' Society

No input this month.

Neil Coxhead    Secretary SWM BKS

**C WYNNE JONES**

Ty Brith Pentrecelyn Ruthin Denbighshire LL 15 2SR  
Tel. 01978 790279. Fax. 01978 790265  
[wynnejones@btconnect.com](mailto:wynnejones@btconnect.com)

[www.bottlesandjars.co.uk](http://www.bottlesandjars.co.uk)    <http://www.beesupplies.co.uk/>

PLEASED TO QUOTE FOR YOUR 2012 NEEDS

SPECIAL PRICES ON APIGUARD - 30 HIVE TUBS A SPECIALITY  
VARROA TREATMENT - WAX FOUNDATION - AND MUCH MORE  
OUR PRICES WILL BENEFIT YOUR POCKET!!  
PLEASE ASK FOR OUR PRICE LISTS FULL OF SPECIAL OFFERS

### South Chilterns Beekeepers' Association

.There was no apiary meeting in June; instead, we met at the Cookley Green Cricket pavilion for a picnic and social gathering. The weather was kind, the rain holding off until the evening.

Members brought a plate of food which could be shared, tea, coffee and cakes were provided by the Association. (Thanks to those who organized this event).

The children, along with the more active members, enjoyed a game of cricket, whilst all ages took advantage of archery, coached by Reg Hook.

It was good to have the opportunity to chat and meet new people. Conversation was varied and often came back to bees.



Several members commented that queens were not laying; others thought that their colonies were queenless. A queenless colony will usually roar, conditions at the time were not conducive to brood rearing, it was suggested that feeding would induce egg laying, even if the colony had stores.

One lady beekeeper suggested that as bees had little chance of gathering from farm crops, that losses from insecticides would be less this year, we hope she is right.

We were informed that one of our members had purchased a nucleus from a well-known supplier, it was subsequently found to have EFB, and it is not known if it arrived with the disease or if the disease it is from a local source

European Foul brood has been confirmed in the Ipsden (Wallingford) area SU68  
and American Foul brood in Berkshire SU78

As people left, they commented on how much they had enjoyed the afternoon relaxing, and meeting people that they had not previously met.

Joanne Shanagher, Secretary. Tel: 01189 721067

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

Samples from <http://www.facebook.com/aricilikbilgileri>



**Contributions**, including emails, to arrive with the Editor by the last day of the month for the following month. Contributions received after this will be held over for a later month.

**Advertisement entries**, to be received by the Advertisement Manager in advance of the 20th of every month. Rates: 2 Lines for £1.00; Commercial rates: £1.00 per line. Please make cheques payable to FBBKA. To be sent to the Advertisement Manager: Mr Jon Davey, 107 Northcourt Avenue, Reading RG2 7HG. Tel: 0118 975 0734.

