



**FEDERATION OF
BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS**

President: Miss Margery Cooper

April 2002
Number 552

NEWS

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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

11 th May	West Sussex Bee Market	Dave Staples. 01903 539205
27 th April 2002	Stoneleigh 2002	See Attachment

From the Federation Secretary

At the AGM on February 19th an item on the agenda was "Proposition to amalgamate existing member Associations under one Berkshire Association".

The options were: -

1. To amalgamate existing Associations under one Berkshire Association run by a central committee.
2. To amalgamate existing Associations under one Berkshire Association with locally controlled branches.

Although this proposition had already been discussed by the various Association Committees to decide how each Association should vote, no overall decision was made on the night. What was decided was that the opinion of all paid-up members should be sought. To this end a letter is to be sent to each of you for you to indicate your preference in the matter. On receipt of the returned "tear-off slips" an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Berkshire Federation will take place at which the result will be announced and the way forward hopefully become clearer.

If you have no particular opinion or preference either way, still please return the "tear-off slip" as we still want to hear from you. Also if you have an alternative suggestion for the future organisation of Beekeeping in Berkshire let us know. We are listening!

Please, when you receive the letter do not ignore it.

Your opinion counts, and could make a difference in shaping the way beekeeping in Berkshire is run.

Thank you in anticipation.

Sandra Napper

FROM THE EDITOR

At the time of writing, most brood chambers are still heavy; only one colony (an over-wintered nucleus) will need feeding. The woodpecker has despatched one unprotected colony and a friend has reported a damaged hive, fortunately the colony inside was still doing well and still had ample stores it appears that woody had a good fill from the two outside combs which had been full of stores.

I have noticed abnormal number of floorboards and one brood-chamber rotting, these are deal, all about 15 years old, and some of cedar coming apart, no problem with newer open-mesh floors.

Pollen is coming in fast when the bees are able to fly, and indications are that colonies will build up rapidly and could catch us out as a lot of us were in 1993, that year I had a bumper crop from apple blossom, indeed combs collapsed on the return journey home from the orchards resulting in two colonies drowning in their own honey.

RFC

THE APIARY IN APRIL

-Make ten-day inspections and take action according to how each hive develops and how the rape is coming on.

-Continue to give fresh foundationed frames on the edge of the brood nest to hives that have old comb that needs replacing.

-If you have a hive that is coming on much too fast, simply swap its position with a weak one, provided that the weak one is not diseased. The flying bees will add strength to the weak one and take the pressure off the strong.

-Give supers as soon as the rape starts flowering, rather too many than too few.

Divide hives by the artificial swarming method if you don't want too much rape honey and need to increase your stocks, as I am doing this year as a method of dealing with Varroa.

-Keep the Varroa trays in and check on the level of infestation.

-Make sure that your swarming gear is ready to go and that you have sufficient hive space to accommodate swarms. Help out your Association by collecting swarms in your area.

Someone asked me to recommend an easy way of cleaning out a smoker -I wish I knew an easy way! The black deposit is largely tar and therefore very sticky. This is a job for the dead of winter. Leave the smoker out on a cold day to get as cold as possible. This, like propolis, makes the deposit more brittle than sticky and a little easier to chip out. I use a large old curved ended chisel that I bought at a car boot sale.

Rank beginners need George Butler's excellent courses at Burchetts Green and the hands-on experience at Association apiary meetings. Old stagers are welcome to advance the latest bee in their bonnets by letters to the Editor (he's a good man with a blue pencil!). Garrulus would rather be tarred and feathered for her own lunacies, Thank you!

Garrulus revisited

Future Events: - West Sussex Bee Market and Auction. Venue - Brinsbury College, Pulborough.
Date - 11th May 2002. Further information available from Dave Staples; Telephone No 01903 539205.

Limited number of Schedules & Entry Forms for Auction Items available from your General Secretary.

Sandra Napper.

Our friend, the Woodpecker.

At the last Open Forum the BBKA were telling us how they had approached the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) with a view to joint ventures. I suggested that they might think well of us if we pointed out the amount of conservation work we do with woodpeckers!

Seriously though, we all know that while woodpeckers are not particularly dangerous to bees, they can make a hell of a mess of a hive when the mood takes them.

Strangely enough in 32 years with up to 20 hives on 12 different sites I have never had more than superficial damage done to my hives -only three attacks, only a single hole getting through into the hive, and then only ½ inch in diameter. I haven't actively taken preventive measures, but would suggest one practise, which might have helped -I gave up creosoting or Cuprinoling my hives very soon after starting. These were the only ones attacked in those early years.

For a number of years I could only afford homemade pine or plywood hives and these I painted (principally to disguise my lousy carpentry). No, not with gloss paint but with ordinary indoor emulsion (dirt cheap if you use what was left over from the last time you decorated). It doesn't bubble or flake off if you wash the hive with Caustic soda before application and No, I don't suffer with condensation. In truth I only use it because I change my brood boxes every spring and they always look smart and colourful. Similarly, I give my supers a couple of coats during the winter and believe that the unusual colour schemes help to deter thieves. The result of this is that my hive walls all have smooth surfaces, which don't look like wood. Perhaps this is why the woodpeckers appear to leave them alone.



The WORST damage to an obviously wooden brood box



Brood boxes painted with emulsion paint

Over the last few years I have made enough money from the craft to be able to give my bees better homes than my jerry building and have started giving them some best quality Thornes cedar brood boxes. These I treated with cedar preservative and the woodpeckers started again, but still only in a minor way. I filled in the pits with wood filler and tried Sadolin as a preservative (very expensive but only the best for my bees). This makes them look magnificent, and glossy and the woodpeckers have stopped again. So I am going on with emulsion paint for the tat and Sadolin for the quality boxes (see photos).

Post Script! I wrote the above at the end of January and did a quick trip round three apiaries on the following day. Not a mark on any of the brood chambers! But the roofs, Oh Dear!

I have a few metal covered roofs, which were intact. The majority are covered with roofing felt and I had a good go last winter and recovered them all with top quality stone chip covered felt. Every one had been attacked. Something had poked through the chips and the felt and just into the wood underneath –small holes, mostly single ones on a joint in the underlying wood, but some with up to six holes in them. Fortunately there had been no serious water penetration, but that will come soon enough.



Brood boxes treated with Sadolin



Damage to stone-chipped felt roof

I would be grateful for some suggestions as to what has done it, in three apiaries about three miles apart. If it was a woodpecker, it can't have done its beak any good hammering through those granite chips.

In the meantime I've asked the local branch of the RSPB to keep an eye open for a starving woodpecker with a blunt beak.

Bernhard Schumann.

Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -

Dr. Beulah Cullen. Hillingdon, Middlesex.

Fax/Telephone number 01895 810469

South Eastern Region:- Mr. James Morton

Fax/Telephone number 020 8571 6450

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

George Hawthorne took us back in beekeeping matters to the beginning of the last century. He was too young to remember his grandfather, but he brought along a number of photographs, which we were privileged to see.

George wanted to become a beekeeper at the tender age of eleven. He originally had ideas of becoming a bee farmer, but as he got older and became proficient in the craft, he obtained a job as lecturer at the Agriculture College at Burchetts Green in Berkshire, where he stayed until he retired. He brought back memories of those halcyon days when many of us older members remembered the popular Field days at the College. There usually was a swarm with a caged Queen surrounded by several thousand bees installed on a handy tree branch by Ron Crocker.

We had various contests such as Finding the Queen, or lighting a smoker, the winner of a prize being he or she who could carry out the operation in the shortest time. Bee handling demonstrations, drumming, driving bees, hiving a wild bee colony which had made their home in a tree trunk, and much much more. Thank you George for an interesting evenings entertainment.

On the 14th of April there is a visit to Rouse's Honey packing station. Only a limited number of places are available, there maybe one or two left, give the secretary a bell if you would like to join.

Secretary: Mr. R. Kiff, 114 Silverdale Road, Earley, Reading RG6 7LU Tel. 0118 966 5358

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

James Morton, the regional Bee Officer for the South East region gave a talk at the February meeting on "Simple Queen Rearing". After outlining the essential external conditions he described two methods in detail. The first involved forcing the colony to produce queen cells and then dividing it into four or five nuclei which were then positioned around the original colony to catch the returning bees. The second method relied on separating a double brood chamber with a queen excluder and after seven days interchanging the upper and lower chambers to finish with the queen and young brood in the upper chamber. Larvae from a second colony can then be added to the queenless chamber and the resultant queen cells distributed as before to several nuclei.

James made it clear that he preferred breeding queens to extracting sticky honey and the talk was based on his own practical experiences. He refrained from mentioning diseases all evening except to say that passing on or receiving new queens carried some risk. There was a lively discussion resulting from the question and answer session and it was generally agreed that male drones were not genetically responsible for aggressive behaviour despite lady members' objections! The meeting was well attended with well over half the membership present.

The first summer apiary meeting will be held at:

Marcella Skinner's Apiary in Wyfold on Saturday 20th April at 2.30pm

As normal for the first meeting, the demonstrator will be our president George Hawthorne

Secretary: Brian Carter. 01491 680226

SLOUGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY **Incorporating Windsor, Maidenhead and adjoining communities.**

In February, Roger Hoskyn from Wokingham visited us to talk on his subject of 'Bee-keeping in Antiquity'. Roger had done quite a lot of research on the subject and some interesting facts emerged. The forerunners of our modern day hives were many and varied and as with some of the previous month's Quiz items, there were some puzzling shapes. They have evolved into what we have today. A surprising find was that in ancient times it appears that bee filled skeps were used as a weapon, being flung into the enemy compound – ouch!!

The first summer meeting at the Society's apiary will actually precede the last winter meeting. So mark the dates in your diary if you have not already done so - Sunday the 7th April at 3pm, call any of the committee for directions if you have not been there before. Also, Sunday the 21st April, same time, same venue. The May dates are the 5th and 19th.

The last winter meeting at the All Saints Parish Hall on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor will be on Tuesday the 9th April, at 8 o'clock. Terry Langden will be talking to us about "Bee keeping, but not by the book". We shall look forward to seeing all of you there for this last meeting the season.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

Wokingham & District Beekeepers Association

Our February meeting was a talk on bee diseases by Dr. Beulah Cullen. She reminded members of the warning signs for the various complaints and explained the methods of treatment and control.

Our first visit to member's apiaries is planned for 3.00pm on Sunday, 14th April and will be at Peter Seagrave's house in Yateley. The address is Woodpeckers, Cricket Hill and members should phone Peter on 01252 877049 to declare an interest in attending.

Last year's tour of Jealott's Hill Farm, in Warfield was cancelled because of the foot and mouth restrictions. This has now been rescheduled as a mid-summer, evening tour for **Wednesday 19th June 2002**. The farm's objective is to raise awareness of environmentally responsible farming practices and the ways in which farmers are addressing current concerns. Their mission is to run a profitable commercial farm whilst minimising risks to wildlife and the environment and with the long-term aim of increasing the total number and frequency of plant and animal species on the farm. It promises to be a very interesting and educational visit. Reservations should be made with John Edwards on 0118 934 0238, before 1st June. Numbers will be limited to 20 people.

Rosemary's Book of the Month - *A Colour Guide to Pollen Loads of the Honey Bee* by William Kirk

Has anyone ever asked you what's in your honey? Most of us pause for a moment look back to when we last did some extracting, try to remember what plants were in flower a few weeks before that and give a guess for answer.

Kirks's interesting little book will help you to be a bit more accurate.

In 1952, the Bee Research Association published a book by Dorothy Hodges called *The Pollen Loads of the Honey Bee*. It is an amazing publication. Over five seasons Hodges took samples of pollen from the bees and identified the plants they came from. Using water paint, she recorded the colours of the pollens and when the book was published, it was possible to include water-colour samples of pollen from all the forage plants in this country. The copy in our library has all the little samples neatly glued in place in groups according to the time of year they are available to the bees.

Mrs Hodges' book is lovely but it is not designed for a handy reference book. Kirk's is. The Bee Research Association has taken the idea of a colour chart for pollen and using "CMYK screen tint percentages, as used by printers for the four-colour printing process" they have produced a little book that is specifically designed for use in the apiary. The colours match Hodge's perfectly but they are printed and put in a sturdy, spiral-bound booklet that will stay open where you want it in the wind. The pollens are arranged according to colour rather than seasons and there is a list of botanical and common names. For good measure the concise text is not only in English but it's in French and German as well.

Secretary John Edwards. ejedwards@btinternet.com 0118 934 0238

Newsletter "Deadline": - Contributions to arrive with the Editor by the **FIRST POST** on the First of the Month for the Following Month.

To enable the Advertisement Manager to place adverts with the Editor for the 1st of the month deadline; adverts should be sent well before this time.

ADVERTISEMENT ENTRIES: - 2 Lines for £1.00. Commercial, £1.00 per line, together with your cheque made payable to FBBKA. To be sent to the Advertisement Manager:-
Mr. Michael Blackburn, M.B. Photography, 41 Prospect Street, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8JV. Telephone:- (0118) 947 9450/5451

GET THE BEST DEALS LOCALLY by ringing John Belcher on 0118 984 2321 for the full range of Thorne equipment. Most items are in stock and the rest just a phone call away. Apistan, together with other approved treatments at very competitive prices including the recently released Thymol based products, Apiguard, and Thymovar. Rendered beeswax in exchange for foundation.

Honey for sale, surplus to requirement in 30lb containers at £1.15 / lb.
Telephone. 0118 9479450 (3-4)

25th YEAR.
BRITISH BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION.

SPRING CONVENTION and EXHIBITION
SILVER JUBILEE PROGRAMME OF EVENTS.

Saturday 27th April, 2002, 9am to 5pm: at the

NAC
STONELEIGH
PARK

COVENTRY

NB: The Convention is NO SMOKING throughout all halls and in the Restaurant. All lectures, demonstrations, and Computer Event are free.

FREE PARKING. Entrance for under-seventeens is free.

TRADE & EDUCATIONAL STANDS in WARWICK, STARETON and GRANARY HALLS.

Bee Microscopy (£2.00 a sample) 30 dead bees in a matchbox.

BEES FOR CHILDREN IN AND OUT OF THE CURRICULUM (GRANARY HALL).

"CREATING & DESIGNING A NEWSLETTER for BEGINNERS." This will be a special event for editors of BBKA Association's Newsletter only, & they will need to have keyboard & mouse manipulation skills. Essential to bring some TYPED or PRINTED text of local interest, because the aim is to make a complete collective newsletter at the end of the session. Free ticket, Reception desk. 9.30am-12noon. And 2pm-4.30pm. (Essential to arrive on time).

CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT HALL: Birds; Bees; Butterflies

LECTURES IN THE WOLFSON THEATRE.

THE FRIDAY NIGHT 'SPECIAL' 6.30 - 7.30pm.

Open to all advance ticket holders; trade exhibitors and event stewards (BADGES ESSENTIAL).
Dennis Bright, Wildlife Photographer; "Wildlife in the British Isles."

SATURDAY, CONVENTION DAY.

10.00am. -11.00am. The George Knights' Memorial Lecture: Brenda Ball, (I.A.C.R. Rothamsted).
"Microbial Control of Varroa".

11.15am. -12.15pm. Dennis Bright, Wildlife Photographer, "Wildlife in the British Isles."

2.00pm. -3.00pm. Michael Badger, BBKA President, "Ramblings Through Beekeeping."

3.15pm. -4.15pm. Paul Metcalfe, Easton College, Norfolk: "Queen Rearing, Principles and Practice" This talk Will look at the underlying principles in raising good queens, and the practical ways of achieving this.

NATIONAL BEEKEEPING CENTRE.

9.45am. -10.45am. Jos Hillen, Belgian beekeeper. "Pure Strains of Bees; Can We Achieve This?"

11.00am-12.00. Peter Tomkins, Hertfordshire beekeeper: "Beekeeping on a Budget."

12.15pm-1.15pm. Juliet Osborne, IACR Rothamsted: "Investigating How Far Honey Bees Fly to Oil Seed Rape Fields, and Consequences for Pollination".

1.30pm- 3.00pm. Michael Collier, Shropshire beekeeper: "Instrumental Beekeeping."

3.15pm-4.15pm. Jos Hillen, "Queen Rearing; the Quickest Way to Improve Your Bees."

All the above are on the ground floor.

The Computer Event, Tutor David Friel and colleagues, is upstairs.

THE SEMINAR ROOMS (formerly the Video Hall).

9.45am-10.45am. Michael Badger, "Back to Basics".

11.00am-12.00. Paul Metcalfe,

"Education and the Beekeeper". This talk will aim to look at the ways beekeepers may acquire knowledge, and the points to consider when training beekeepers. A look at the problems which may arise.

1.45pm- 2.45pm. Peter Hewitt, Yorkshire beekeeper. "Bees, Boards and Bright Ideas."

A humorous look at some beekeeping equipment.

3.00pm- 4.00pm. Peter Tomkins, "Living With Swarming."

Demonstrations in the Arthur Rank Centre (upstairs, lift available).

11.00am-12.00. Mrs Anne Reney-Smith, Home Economist. "High-Tech Traditional Honey Cookery."

12.15. -1.15pm. Martin Buckle, Bedfordshire beekeeper. "Working with Beeswax: Model Making".

2.00pm-3.00pm. Anne Reney-Smith, repeat of honey cookery.

3.15pm. -4.15pm Martin Buckle, Repeat of model making.

NB New this year: A hearing loop in the Wolfson Theatre.

A BABY-CHANGING ROOM in the cloakrooms at the new entrance.

FIVE EXTRA LECTURE SESSIONS. One extra added to the usual 4 sessions at the National Beekeeping Centre and four in the Seminar Rooms to replace the Video Hall.

The Conservation and Environment Hall, which is replacing the non-bee craft hall.

The entrance to the Warwick and Stareton Halls is the new, large area at the top of 10th Street, (go up the side of Warwick Hall, ignoring the 'old' entrance). This is larger, more attractive and will give improved access to both Stareton & Warwick Halls.

HOT LUNCHES from **12noon to 2.30.** A good selection of sandwiches, drinks and snacks will be available until closing.

ADVANCE TICKETS, up to **13th April, 9.00** (save £2.00 on the door entrance of £11.00). From: the Tickets Officer, Mrs Betty Showler, "Riverside" Newport Street, Hay-on-Wye Hereford. HR3 5BG.

NB: Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to make refunds on tickets once purchased, or to replace lost tickets.