



**FEDERATION OF
BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS**
President: Miss Margery Cooper

August 2001

Number. 545

Hon. Secretary
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NEWS

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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The Federation Family Event And Honey Show

Will be held at:-

Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall
Highmoor Road (Off Woodcote Rd) Caversham
Ample Street Parking
Saturday October 20th 2001

Refreshments and Raffle

Children will be especially welcome.

Put it in your diary now! Details from the General Secretary

THE APIARY IN AUGUST

To those of you who are troubled during the winter by the beautiful woodpecker, I learnt of a nifty idea during a summer meeting. The beekeeper had made a couple of light frames hinged together and covered by chicken wire. He would stand them on the ground so that they surrounded the hive completely, up to the roof level. When not on use they would lay flat. The winter would be a good time to make these if needed. This very experienced beekeeper has found that woodpeckers tend to leave alone well-painted WBCs. He has abandoned the use of the single walled hive due to this problem with these birds.

At the beginning of this month, you may have a crop of honey. It is permissible to extract uncapped cells providing that having given the comb a good shake, no liquid honey is ejected.

At the end of this month, our bees are preparing for the coming winter. If they are Queenright, (they have a fertile Queen), they will deny the drones food and will throw them out of the hive. If you do find drones after August the colony do not have a suitable queen, and will probably not survive the winter. Some may develop into drone layers, causing you more problems next spring. Your best course would be to unite them on the top of a viable colony by the newspaper method. First go through the faulty stock and find the queen if you can, and destroy her. If you can't find her it will probably be OK, as the bees in the viable stock will most likely kill her. Next, go to the 'good' stock, remove the roof and crown board and place a sheet of newspaper on top of it. Cut a few slashes in the paper with your hive tool and place the faulty colony on top, finishing off with the crown board and roof. After a week or so, you should see bits of chewed up paper being thrown out of the entrance. You can now consolidate the two brood boxes, by removing empty combs and placing the combs of food if any, in the lower box.

Your next task is to give all your hives enough food to see them through the winter. They will need at least 35 lbs. A BS brood comb filled both sides will hold approximately 5lbs of stores and a super comb will hold 3lbs. Go through them and make up the difference with sugar syrup at the solution of 1kg (2.2lbs) sugar to 1 pint of water. If you are able to give them this sugar syrup while it is warm; they will take it down more readily. I have made Ashcroft type feeders, which hold a gallon of syrup to facilitate feeding and speeds up the feeding process. Non-carpenters can easily make these! Their only drawback is that they cannot be used when it is really cold, as the bees would be reluctant to go up into them.

Close down the entrances to help the bees to defend their home against marauding wasps or robber bees. If any fighting is occurring, even go down to a couple of bee spaces at the entrance. My entrance blocks are solid and are hinged at one end; this makes it very convenient to have the entrance wide or down to one bee space as required. Adequate feeding now will reap its reward next spring.

Ambrosia

FROM THE EDITOR

It is almost the end of the June gap, however, the last couple of days has seen a reversal and honey has commenced pouring in, this will mean that until hives are choked with honey, swarms will be less in evidence. While discussing the 1947 outbreak of foot and mouth disease in East Berkshire with a local farmer and his wife, it was pointed out that much of the pasture has disappeared together with clover in particular, and most of the herbage including willow herb. The honey flow in that year continued well into August. This could upset my prediction, but I will stick with it.

oOo

I have recently heard of a beekeeper who, on sight, destroyed two queen cells that were in the middle of a comb. These were most likely supersedure cells, not swarm cells. The result was a queen-less colony with no young brood therefore no hope of raising another queen. There is always a chance of supersedure in August or September; this is often indicated by the retention of drones, observe your entrances.

oOo

There are several fields of spring-sown rape in the Whitchurch Hill area but there are hardly any bees working it, not even bumble bees. It has only been in flower a short while; maybe the picture will be different in a few more days. Honey in general seems to be very good so we can expect that entries and standards for the various shows will be up on last year.

Ambrosia has come to the end of the current "In The Apiary" term and has expressed a wish to be replaced. We must now look for a replacement, preferably a volunteer, this is a column mainly for beginners and amateurs, by amateurs. You do not need to be "expert" or vastly experienced, all that is required is a common sense approach

RFC

Future Events

20 October	Federation Event and Honey Show	Gen. Secretary:- 0118 945 5094
November 15,16,17	National Honey Show	

DISEASE

BERKSHIRE FEDERATION FOULBROOD June 2001

Number of infected apiaries in 10km squares
 [Number in brackets () = Number of infected colonies]

SU29 Buscot	SU39 Stanford in the Vale	SU49 West Abingdon	SU59 Dorchester	SU89 Benson	SU79 Stokenchurch	SU89 High Wycombe EFB 3(6)	SU99 Amersham	TQ09 Rickmansworth EFB 3(3)
SU28 Bishopstone	SU38 Letcombe Regis	SU48 East Wantage	SU58 Blewbury	SU68 East Wallingford	SU78 Henley on Thames	SU88 Marlow EFB 2(4)	SU98 North Slough EFB 1(1)	TQ08 Uxbridge
SU27 Aldbourne	SU37 Lambourne	SU47 Cheveley	SU57 Yattendon	SU67 Pangbourne EFB 1(1)	SU77 Reading EFB 1(1)	SU87 White Waltham EFB 1(1)	SU97 Windsor EFB 3(17)	TQ07 Staines
SU26 Great Bedwyn EFB 1(1)	SU36 Inkpen	SU46 Newbury	SU56 Thatcham	SU66 Burghfield Common	SU76 Shinfield	SU86 Crowthorne EFB 1(1)	SU96 Ascot	TQ06 Weybridge EFB 1(2)
SU25 Ludgershall	SU35 Hurstbourne Tarrant	SU45 Litchfield	SU55 Kingsclere EFB 1(1)	SU65 Easingstoke EFB 2(2)	SU75 Hock	SU85 Farnborough	SU95 West Guildford EFB 1(4)	TQ05

06/07/2001

The Editor has cartons and pre-paid labels for sending complete combs to the National Bee Unit. He and your secretary can also provide plastic containers to send suspect larvae for examination or, on application; one of the inspectors will send a box or plastic container

Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -

Dr. Beulah Cullen. Hillingdon, Middlesex.
 South Eastern Region:- Mr. James Morton

Fax/Telephone number 01895 810469
 Fax/Telephone number 020 8571 6450

Appointed Bee Inspectors:-

Mr. Julian Johnston. Oxfordshire & North West Berks: Telephone number 01993 850432
 Mr. David Purchase. Hampshire & South West Berkshire: Telephone number 01256 781288

From JAMES MORTON

I am writing to let you know about some research trials that the NBU is running this year for which we are asking for help from beekeepers.

Firstly, we are looking at the incidence of 'Hygienic Behaviour' in bees. This is the tendency of adult bees to uncap and remove dead larvae from brood cells, and has been shown to have a role to play in resistance to some brood diseases, including AFB. It is known that individual colonies differ greatly in the amount of hygienic behaviour they exhibit, and that this is likely to influence whether they can resist disease, or succumb to it.

Following a pilot study last year, we are now looking at the incidence of hygienic behaviour in colonies throughout England and Wales. This involves individual beekeepers testing their own bees by freezing a small portion of sealed brood, returning it to the colony and then recording how much brood is removed by bees after a set period. We have produced a 'hygienic behaviour test pack' which gives full instructions along with all the materials required. All those taking part will be sent a report giving the results of the trial. For further details or to obtain one or more test packs, please contact Dr. Ruth Spinks at the NBU (Telephone 01904 462510 / Email r.spinks@csl.gov.uk).

We are also continuing our work measuring the effectiveness of 'shook swarms' as a new method to control EFB. Adult bees are separated from their infected combs, treated as an artificial swarm in a new hive at the same time as being given antibiotic. The old infected combs are then destroyed by burning. Results so far indicate that this method has a very low rate of reoccurrence of disease compared with conventional treatment. (See our website at <http://www.csl.gov.uk/prodserv/cons/bee/> for details.) If you should have EFB confirmed in your colonies during the next month or so and would like to take part in the trial please discuss it with your bee inspector.

Finally, we are also looking for beekeepers with EFB infected colonies to take part in a trial of a biological control agent which is under development as a LINK project with Cardiff University and Vita (Europe) Ltd. For this trial, we need apiaries containing at least two newly diagnosed EFB infected colonies. One of these will be treated with a biological agent (the bacterium *Paenibacillus larvae pulvifaciens*) and then monitored and managed by us until next season. There will be a payment for the use of the colony in this way, and financial compensation if it fails to survive the treatment. Please contact either me, or Ruth Spinks at the NBU, York for further details.

James

From THE IRISH BEEKEEPER

Hiya all,

I just spent an interesting few hours with some older beekeepers. They've kept bees for 20 years. I've kept bees for 3. Oh, I'm ahead in book lore and hive years, in basic hands on, and willingness to fool where angels fear to tread, I'm ahead. I'm so young and clever... The lady of the house showed me her smoker. A six inch wide nine inch tall ex dried infant milk tin that had been fitted with a smoke funnel and a pair of home made bellows. Perfect in every way. I am ashamed I never built my own, but am suddenly proud of my first straw hat and hand sewn veil too...The one 'the law' made me ashamed to wear. Her hive tool didn't fit the regular pattern, and had that old butterknife, 'i'd rust if I could', look. It looks like the prototype J tool. She'd made that too. With a hacksaw and a file. How many of us have ever filed a lump of 3/16" steel to the shape we desire? Try it guys...Twice, she reluctantly admitted. The first one was disastrous. All in the beekeeping winter that preceded her first active season in the same BKA I'm now in(sured). Hive too was handmade...I doubt many with those skills are left. Or that determination. No certificate for that, she smiled. Just part of learning to keep bees.

I sure hope they find the guy who'll show me how to turn my oat straw into skeps...

I learnt a lot from those 2 beekeepers, that so many would deride as 'beehavers', who 'know' so much 'less' about bees than I. Their reverence for the gold crowned insect and our traditional partnership is sublime. I hope and pray that if I live to their age I will inspire others as they have me. And I hope we can ditch the certificates and return to reality soon, before we forget that not only does money not grow on trees, it doesn't really grow at all.

Next time you complain about farmers, Don't speak with your mouth full.

John Sewell

Anyone else interested in a "Skep making day"? If so, please notify the Editor and provided that George Hawthorne is available, we will endeavour to twist someone's arm to organize a day.

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

About 15 members and spouses, enjoyed the hospitality of Cyril and Marjory McCombe on Sunday 10th June. First, we went to Cyril's bees distributed around the extensive orchard at Cross Lanes Apple Farm. Cyril explained that his original idea was to have all National single walled hives, but he abandoned this notion when he learnt from painful experiences, (having spent many hours filling in holes and replacing panels), that the area was well populated with Green Woodpeckers. He refurbished and painted his old WBCs topping them with flat metal roofs as an added protection. He now has 30 or more scattered around this site completely replacing the Nationals he once had here. In his experience, he finds the woodpecker tends to leave a well-painted WBC alone.

Despite the cold wind, the demonstrator, Mike Blackburn, opened a few hives, so it wasn't surprising when he found the bees were a bit stropy in one or two due to the weather. Nevertheless, the hives were found to be in good heart and promised to return a good harvest later. Following our visit to the bees we had a barbecue in Cyril's lovely garden, and enjoyed the company of our fellow beekeepers and their spouses. Thank you Cyril and all those involved for a very enjoyable afternoon.

Enjoy, and may your supers be full.

Hon. Sec. Mr. R. Kiff, 114 Silverdale Rd, Earley, Reading RG6 7LU Tel. 0118 966 5358

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

Our programmed June meeting had to be re-organized due to foot and mouth restrictions but a hastily re-arranged alternative went off very well looking at Anne Arlidge's bees at Lower Assendon. Five colonies were inspected by three different experienced beekeepers and most people present benefited and learned something

We do not have a meeting in August so our last outdoor meeting will take place at the College of Agriculture, Burchetts Green, Maidenhead on Sunday 2nd September among the hives that I use for teaching purposes on the courses run by the College. All South Chilterns members will be welcome. Because there is a limit on the number of beekeepers permitted at the College, if anyone who is not a South Chilterns member and would like to come, would you please telephone me at home and if we are not over the limit you will be most welcome.

Hon. Secretary: - George Butler 0118 983 2735

SLOUGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Attendance at the first June apiary meeting was pleasantly high and a young lady fresh from the Burchetts Green College course on bee-keeping impressed everyone with her expertise when examining one of the hives. They all appeared to be doing well and the honey crop so far was subsequently extracted.

However, this first Sunday of July, when Bee Disease Inspector Beulah Cullen was with us, saw a very different story. She was making her return call to examine the hives following last year's outbreak of EFB and all was pronounced clear on that score, thankfully. However, the bees had decided to confound everyone with their antics for swarming and one or two hives that had been rather weak seem to have come alive and burst at the seams. There were Queen cells in various stages of development in the hives and several methods of control were carried out. They were well under way producing honey and all were given extra supers and will now have an interim visit to check on their progress before the next scheduled one.

The last apiary meetings of the year will be on the Sundays of 29th July and 12th August at 3pm and your support at these would still be much appreciated. You can call our Secretary, Michael Sheasby on 01753 642656 to find out more details.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Unfortunately our planned trip to Jealott's Hill Farm on 13th June to see how farmers are taking up a more environmentally responsible approach, had to be cancelled because of the ongoing foot and mouth restrictions. It is expected that this will be re-arranged for next summer.

On the farming theme, we are seeing a much extended rape flowering season this year. It seems that the wet autumn of 2000 prevented many fields being sown and they had to wait for a spring sowing. This late crop is now flowering in June/July, extending considerably the rape foraging time for our bees.

Remember our autumn meeting season starts on 10th October at St Paul's Parish Rooms with a talk on Candle and Polish making.

Hon. Joint Secretaries: Sylvia Smallbone & John Edwards 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

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