



FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

August 2002
Number 556

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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October 26th	Federation Event and Honey Show	Gen. Secretary:- 0118 945 5094
November 14,15 and 16th	National Honey Show	

From The General Secretaries Office -

Thanks to all those of you who have returned the "tear-off" slip supplied with last month's newsletter giving your opinions on how you would like Beekeeping in Berkshire to be organised in the future. Those of you who haven't yet sent them back, I am patiently waiting.

Each, and every one is important.

Planning for this year's Autumn Event is now underway with a date set for Saturday 26th October, so keep that day free in your diaries.

Another date for your diaries is September 1st, for Wokingham & Reading Agricultural Show at Spencers Wood Nr. Reading. This is a good traditional family day out, a taste of the countryside, with lots to see including honey (if you enter that is!) Schedules available from Jane Kelly, 11, Laburnum Road, Winnersh. RG41 5XL. Tel - 0118 977 1035.

The National Honey Show (November 14th, 15th & 16th) is again offering free admission tickets to all new members who joined in 2002. Your Association Secretaries will forward new member's names to the organisers and you should receive your free ticket, worth £10.00.

Although £10.00 for admission does sound a lot, it does cover all three days.

In addition first time exhibitors and "old hands" who have not exhibited there in the last ten years will not be required to pay any entry fees for the first four classes entered.

This could be your year.

Support your show

Give it a go.

Sandra Napper

THE APIARY IN AUGUST

THIS MONTH. – You may not have seen much Varroa this year. This will be because you treated properly last year. If not, try to get it right this time.

-Get all of your honey extracted and the Varroa treatment in the hives by the second week of this month AT THE LATEST.

-Put wet supers back on the hives so that the bees can clean them out. This leaves nice dry supers on which you can do maintenance during the off-season.

- While extracting, select the best comb and section for showing. Put up a few jars of chunk honey for show and to try out on your customers.
- While filling honey jars make sure that you fill them to at or above the line of the bottom of the lid. You should not be able to see light between lid and the top of the honey. Put the best on one side for the Show.
- Start preparing other exhibits for the Show; most people leave it far too late.
- Re-queen spiteful, under performing and chalk/sac brood infected colonies with stock from a reputable supplier. Not all those who advertise in the magazines can be relied upon, ask your colleagues!
- Now that most of the supers are off make a thorough inspection looking for signs of disease, wax moth, and decide which hives will require special attention during the autumn.

MAIN TOPIC. – Varroa control. After at least five years of experience, most of us now have the measure of Varroa. We now know that it isn't going to go away and will even become resistant to the treatments available to us. Nevertheless, whatever we think and whatever we have done up to now, NOW is the time to treat the hives.

Personally, I treat my hives early in the spring as well as at this time and then do counts a couple of times before the August treatment. I've seen too much wax moth arising from the use of Varroa floors, so I use the tray inserts, which can be easily and thoroughly cleaned. Make sure you have removed burr comb from the bottom of the brood chamber frames before inserting the trays. Drill a hole at either end of one side of the tray and loop a length of garden wire through them.

The loop can then be left to dangle out of the front of the hive and used to withdraw the tray with minimal disturbance to the bees.

If placed centrally on the hive floor the tray covers about half of a strong brood nest (so you have to double the count) and all of a moderate to weak one.

Treating at this time of the year means that the honey flow may not have quite finished and may even resume in September and October, as it did last year.



I like to leave a super on during the whole of this period, if only to discourage my bees from putting too much down in my deep, single brood chambers. It can bring in a small crop, even a little of that illusive dark honey, so that you have a fresh jar to show, rather than that one jar which you have shown for the last ten years. It has been determined that there is no risk to health from honey gathered during Bayvarol or Apistan treatment but we should not eat the wax. Therefore, don't produce sections, chunk honey, or cappings at this time.

Garulus.

FROM THE EDITOR

The weather throughout June with a few exceptions was unfavourable to beekeeping, so much so that any early honey was used up leaving many colonies close to starvation.

It was frustrating having to burn a hive of bees with a super full of honey because of AFB.

The gentleman that dug the hole for me had only seen advanced foul brood at a lecture and wanted to see mine which was in an early stage and difficult to detect. He rang me the next day to say that he thought he had found foul brood in one of his colonies; from his description, in my opinion there was no doubt that this would be confirmed.

A novel treatment for Varroa: Late one evening in early May I saw a beekeeper opening hives and tipping something in from a container, after the first hive, he promptly thumped the container on the ground, closed it and then closed the hive. He did this for the first five hives and then used another container for five more; he was in a terrific hurry and completed this part of the exercise in about 20 minutes. At this stage there were still more hives to go, but as the bees were pouring out of the hives and the air was roaring with angry bees and smelling of formic acid, even at a distance, being unprotected I beat a hasty retreat. It would not have been wise to get stung after being dared to go near bees while on holiday

In the Hotel bar later that evening, I discovered that the beekeeper had driven out to the forest and collected several containers of wood ants; this is what he had been tipping into the hives. He reckoned that most of the Varroa was killed and even some in the cells. I do not know of any wood ants in my area but in any case, I would be reluctant to try it out for myself

RFC

Letter to the Editor

Thank you very much for allowing me to help destroy your hive with AFB, particularly for showing me the comb with the evidence. I shall continue to pay attention to perforated cappings, particularly those with several holes or those that are sunken to boot, and I will always scan empty brood cells for that shiny residual scale marring their symmetry. It is a bit like that 'Old Woman Young Woman' picture, or that cube that swaps faces...you have to teach your eyes to recognise what they're seeing. Now you have taught me that the ropiness is not necessarily always there, I will send those small samples off to York if I'm unsure. Who knows, if we don't use that resource we may well lose it. Unbelievable that such healthy looking bees could have destroyed the entire apiary if not caught then. One cell. If it weren't for the scale, (and the lab) I would think you insane. Such lovely bees too, and that super would have been fully drawn by now, if not half full. I was warned to check solitary capped cells as well...if all the rest have emerged what is holding up that one?

As I told you I have healthy colonies in worse heart than yours was. Their problem; 'causative organism' being a mammalian biped with more hair than brains...But enough on the perils of natural beekeeping... (Let me whisper to other beeginners out there that granulated oilseed rape honey is not stores, and that bees may subsist on it, but will hardly survive and certainly won't burst at the seams...feed them in a poor June or pay the price) I'll be mixing syrup in autumn this year too.

Believe it or not, I have EFB. Only one hive, in a walled garden on it's own, far too close to my 8 home hives and another apiary for comfort. A friend was looking the hive over with me, a non-beekeeper seeing inside for the first time. I suppose I looked quite clever, lifting the roof and announcing something was up and then announcing a 'dread disease'. I'd last checked them 3 weeks ago, nicked their oilseed rape, made sure they had space, stores, and eggs and left them to it. There was no foul smell, and they appeared to have swarmed, but hadn't. I got quieter when I saw the creamy puddles in the bottom of cells. They had obviously been larvae almost ready for capping. Starvation...it must be starvation or chill I prayed, non-Sense! Against the evidence of my eyes and the memory of blackened chilled brood. They had little creamy yellowish yolks where the *Melissococcus plutonius* had accumulated in the baby bee mid-gut. Shamefully, my first case of EFB was not nipped in the bud at all, half the combs are affected, and the colony is barely treatable with a shakedown and antibiotics. 3 weeks goes by fast at this time of year, and it is too long between inspections. Far too long.

It is that swarm you warned me was from an area with EFB last year. No sign of trouble until now. The bee disease inspector (disease inspector? More like health and wealth consultants actually) emphasised the need to let several brood cycles pass before granting a clean bill of health. It's all numbers, 5 carriers make 50 make 2500 makes...a fire if you are lax. My problem now is - would I have spotted it earlier if I had checked them thoroughly? To date their brood has been no more 'pepper pot' than most, and a fair percentage of open brood still appear fine. Healthy pearlescent grubs comfortable in their hexagonal wombs, not convoluted and 'lying uneasy in their cells'. Perhaps they do not feel pain, but I suffer on their behalf. In a way, I'm relieved I was right, if relief is the word. It is an ugly disease, and I'd rather not see it too often. I had to agree with the official word, organic dead bees are no good at all, so destroy or treat.

Ironical that just as I'd booked for an NBU training day, I get to see both my foulbrood horrors in the flesh...but I think I'll keep the appointment. Forewarned is forearmed, and my knowledge is still woefully inadequate. Who knows, one of these lifetimes I may manage to be a beekeeper.

John Sewell

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

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

BERKSHIRE FEDERATION FOULBROOD June 2002

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 AFB 1(1)	SU69 Benson	SU79 Stokenchurch	SU89 High Wycombe	SU99 Amersham	TQ09 Rickmansworth EFB 3(4)
SU28 Bishopstone	SU38 Letcombe Regis	SU48 East Wantage	SU58 Blewbury	SU68 East Wallingford	SU78 Henley on Thames	SU88 Marlow	SU98 North Slough	TQ08 Uxbridge
SU27 Aldbourne	SU37 Lambourn	SU47 Chieveley	SU57 Yattendon	SU67 Pangbourne	SU77 Reading EFB 2(2)	SU87 White Waltham EFB 2(2)	SU97 Windsor	TQ07 Staines
SU26 Great Bedwyn	SU36 Inkpen	SU46 Newbury	SU56 Thatcham	SU66 Burghfield Common	SU76 Shinfield	SU86 Crowthorne EFB 2(4)	SU96 Ascot EFB 1(1)	TQ06 Weybridge
SU25 Ludgershall	SU35 Hurstbourne Tarrant	SU45 Litchfield	SU55 Kingsclere EFB 1(2)	SU65 Basingstoke	SU75 Hook EFB 1(1)	SU85 Farnborough	SU95 West Guildford EFB 3(9)	TQ05

30.06.02

Too late for inclusion in the diagram: AFB was found at Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and EFB at Ipsden.

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

The June meeting was held at Eddie Lock's out apiary at Stonor and proved very popular with 20 members attending. The apiary is ideally situated in a secluded copse, on open rolling farmland, conveniently adjacent to a farm track. The apiary has been used by several South Chiltern members over the last twenty years or so. Eddie runs his bees on Langstroth and Jumbo Langstroth frames and all five hives were full of very active bees.

Reg. Hook and George Butler shared the demonstration with additional comments and observations by Eddie. During the demonstration, one hive was found to have a queen and three queen cells but close inspection of the queen indicated that she had not slimmed down in preparation for swarming and the queen cells were therefore removed. George Butler demonstrated his so far unpublished method for retaining the queen in an accessible position without resorting to physically confining her. The frame containing the queen was laid flat on top of the queen excluder on the ground. The queen then ran to the underside of the frame and remained there whilst the rest of the frames were inspected. A second demonstration was carried out to prove that the first was not a fluke. George claims he has so far not lost a single queen using this technique.

There is no meeting in August and the September meeting will be held on Saturday the 7th of September at Alan Armstrong's apiary at Pheasant Ridge Vineyard, Bottom Hill, Hambleden. This meeting is not listed on the Summer Programme so please enter it in your diary NOW.

Secretary: Brian Carter. 01491 680226

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

The last of the summer meetings will be on Sunday, August 11th. By then, it is hoped that the apiary will have recovered enough from its earlier setbacks to have produced a reasonable crop of honey this year. The June meetings saw the two nukes that had been brought in building up and going from strength to strength. The hives that were previously united are not thriving though, the queen is suspected of being at fault, and so she will probably be replaced. Come along to the apiary at 3pm to see what has been decided. If you need directions, call any of the committee as shown on your programme for the year, or the number below.

Don't forget there is to be the Windsor Allotments and Home Gardens Association Show and Fete at Gardeners Hall, 213 St Leonards Road, Windsor on Saturday the 31st August 2002 from 2.15pm to 5.15pm. Any of you that might have entries for any of the nine classes available in the honey section, can get a schedule from Mr Bill Birch, Tel: 01753 861714.

The meeting next month will be the first of the winter meetings when we shall be reviewing the year. Join us at the All Saints Parish Hall on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor for an 8 o'clock start on Tuesday, 10th September.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

A few of us assembled at Tim and Hilary's lovely garden on Sunday 16th June to have a look at Tim's bees and enjoy a BBQ afterwards. The hives were ably inspected by Mike Blackburn.

It was thought the first hive had a drone layer queen or worker. It would have been useless inserting a test frame of eggs or queen cells, as the bees would probably consider that they already had a laying queen, and would have destroyed the queen cell or would not have attempted to raise another queen from the eggs. What should we do? I would suggest that all the brood frames together with the attached bees be taken a few feet from the hive (ideally behind the hive), all the bees shaken of on to the ground and the frames returned to the hive and the colony re-assembled. What will happen now is that the laying workers or barren queen would remain where they fell, whilst the rest of the population would return to the hive from whence they came. After a couple of days it should be safe then to introduce a queen, queen cell or eggs.

The second hive had two brood boxes below the queen excluder, and was found to have swarmed and had left a number of queen cells. It may have possessed a queen, but she wasn't found. Mike set up another colony with one of the brood boxes making sure that there were two occupied queen cells in each.

The BBQ was great, members came with their wives, (one for each member!), the rain held off and we enjoyed good fellowship, food and chat. Thank you Mike for your demonstration, Hilary and Hazel for organizing the BBQ and Tim and Hilary for a wonderful afternoon.

Our next meeting will be at the home of our Chairman, Mr. Jon Davey, 107 Northcourt Avenue. 975 0734. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

Enjoy your hobby and may your supers be full.

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

Wokingham & District Beekeepers Association

Visit to Jealott's Hill Farm

Some 15 people attended a talk and tour of Jealott's Hill Farm given by the manager, Mark Osman on 19th June. We were treated to a most interesting evening and given an insight into the very difficult commercial situation facing farmers at present, compounded by the balancing act of trying to remain profitable whilst minimising the risks to wildlife and the environment.

The farm has been particularly successful in creating an ideal habitat for skylarks with over 150 pairs on the farm. Interestingly, this has generated a corresponding increase in the numbers of sparrow hawks. A two metre wide uncultivated strip of headland in arable fields has benefited wild plants along with the associated insects and small mammals.

Rosemary's books of the month

I thought it might be interesting to see what we have on the subject of re-queening which is one of the most useful skills a beekeeper can learn. The topic takes some careful explanation, so it is not surprising that De Bruyn doesn't cover it in his general handbook, "Practical Beekeeping". Wedmore devotes a whole chapter to the subject in her concise style. In our library, we have C P Abbott's excellent little book, "Queen Breeding for Amateurs". It was published in 1951, but bees haven't moved with the times, and the book is full of good sense and is pleasant to read. It explains the underlying impulses that make bees re-queen naturally, which helps one to see the reasoning behind the various methods of queen rearing.

We also have a copy of L E Snelgrove's "The Introduction of Queen Bees" which, incidentally was given to us by Mrs. Aileen Beale, the founder of the Wokingham Beekeepers' Association. It is a more serious book — as you might expect from a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society. As the title suggests, this book is concerned with the process of introducing a new queen into a colony, when and how to do it. If you've never had to introduce a queen and you find you need to, read this book first because it covers the ground really well.

Snelgrove refers to an earlier expert, F W L Sladen whose business was breeding bees such as Sladen's "Hardy and Prolific" strain and his "Extra Golden". We have a 1905 copy of his little book on "Queen-rearing in England". His advice is sound and easily understood and his instructions are clear — as I said, bees don't change.

PS. — I don't usually put Bob Loades' phone number because you all have it on your membership card. However, it is, 0118 961 9631 and he won't mind when you ring him.

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

New comb building brings new vitality! Old combs harbour disease!

Recipes from Mary Dartnall's collection

CUSTARD CREAM AND PEACH FLAN.

Prepare short crust from 6 oz of the flour, butter and 1 oz of the almonds. Bake blind

Ingredients: 7 oz plain flour, 3 oz butter, 2 oz ground almonds, 1 large egg, 1½ oz honey
1 level teaspoon corn flour, ½ pint milk, ½ teaspoon. almond essence
¾ pint double cream, 4 ripe peaches, skinned and stoned
flaked almonds and icing sugar to decorate.

Method:

In a 7½" flan ring. Beat the egg, honey, corn flour and the remaining flour together, pour on the heated milk, bring to the boil stirring all the time. Cook gently for 5 minutes. Add the remaining ground almonds and the essence. Cool in a covered bowl. Whip the cream to the same consistency as the custard, and fold through the cool custard. Layer up the custard and sliced peaches in the flan case, starting with the custard. Cover the peaches to prevent discoloration. Chill well and decorate with a scattering of toasted almonds and sifted icing sugar.

GATEAUX ST HONORE.

Ingredients: (for rich pastry):

4 oz flour, pinch of salt, 2 oz (generous) of butter or margarine. 1 teaspoon of sugar, 1 egg yolk

For Choux pastry:

½ pint of water, 2 oz butter or margarine, 5 oz SR flour, pinch of salt, 3 large eggs

For syrup:

4 tablespoon of honey and 1 tablespoon of water

For filling:

½ pint of whipping cream, or custard enriched with a little cream and fruit. If liked, ice cream beaten at the last minute can be used instead of cream.

Method:

Make short crust with stated ingredients, roll out to ¼" thick. Cut out an 8" round. Prick all over and bake at gas mark 5 - 6 or 400 - 425F, 25 minutes.

Choux pastry:

Boil the water and butter together until butter is melted. Add the sifted flour and salt all at once, then stir and beat briskly until the mixture is smooth. When it leaves the sides of the pan, remove, cool slightly, then beat in the eggs, one at a time. Place hazel nut sized pieces of the paste well apart on a greased baking sheet, and bake for 20 - 25 minutes until well risen and golden, temperature, Gas 6 - 7, Electric 425 -450F. Split to allow steam to escape, and when completely cold, fill with a little sweetened whipped cream or custard.

Make syrup with the honey and water; put into small pan, heat slowly until the honey is dissolved. Boil rapidly until hard-ball stage, 250F. Remove from the heat, and dip the bottom of each profiterole in the syrup, then stick them close to each other around the edge of the pastry base. Any remaining syrup can be spooned over the top of the profiteroles. Fill the centre with cream or custard and decorate with fresh fruit.

Newsletter "Deadline": - Contributions, this includes **E-mails**, to arrive with the Editor by the **FIRST POST** (Around 10.00am) 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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FOR SALE:- 12 Frame electric radial S/S extractor and lid with speed control plus spare controller £100; 150lb-food grade polyvinyl tank, honey tap and additional double strainer that sits on top £10; 90lb Honey tank with nylon internal strainer £6; Electric Uncapping knife 240v - £5
Also, free to callers, Honey buckets and s/s double sink unit. R.A. Harper 0118 947 3811