

FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

And

SOUTH CHILTERN

NEWS

December
2002
Number 560



Hon. Secretary
S. Napper
56 Lamorna Crescent
Tilehurst Reading
RG31 5WF
(0118 945 5094)

The Federation, its Council and its Officers cannot be held responsible for the views expressed in the Newsletter or possible errors.
(E-mail: berksbees@lineone.net)

Hon. Editor
R.F.Crocker
25 Shiplake Bottom
Peppard Common Oxon
RG9 5HH
(0118 972 2315)

From the Federation Chairman

It is with regret that I have to announce that South Chilterns B.K.A. has decided to terminate its contribution, via the capitation fee, to the British Beekeepers Association and consequently, under the constitution, its membership of the Federation of Berkshire Beekeepers Associations will also cease.

This will reduce the strength of the Federation still further following the demise of Maidenhead B.K.A. about three years ago. I would therefore urge all remaining members to continue to support not only their own Association, but also the Federation. The attendance at the Show on October 26th was less than last year but perhaps the change of venue was a contributory factor. Nevertheless, the number of entries was quite high and the judges were kept busy.

Derek Porter

The Committee of the South Chilterns Beekeepers Association wish to extend an open invitation to all Federation Associations members to attend any South Chilterns functions to which they will be most welcome.

Ed

From the Federation General Secretary: -

The Autumn Event and Honey Show took place on 26th October and was I am glad to say, a success. At least that seemed to be the general opinion of those in attendance.

I am told that some of you did not realise that there had been a change of venue for this year, despite the fact that it had been published on more than one occasion in this very newsletter. I apologise if it was not made obvious enough.

There is a part of me, which wonders though if there are still a few die-hards turning up at Burchetts Green each year, muttering and walking away.

The number of entries for the show managed to top the one hundred mark with a BBKA Blue Ribbon being awarded to Reg Hook of the South Chilterns Association for best honey in show.

Our speaker for the day, Oliver Field, started with slides of his work in Cameroon advising and assisting with local beekeeping projects. He then went on to a question and answer session, which covered everything from the danger of sunbathing crocodiles while trying to harvest your honey, to socialising with Chinese diplomats.

Now I'm going to spoil it all by moaning.

Despite the level of entry numbers, it was, as seems usual, a small number of people putting in a large number of entries each. Even smaller was the number of volunteer helpers on the day, especially for clearing up afterwards. Possibly more important, the number of people who had the good manners to stay until the trophies were awarded was also very disappointing and indeed insulting to those who had won.

Sandra Napper.

THE APIARY IN NOVEMBER

THESE MONTHS. –Do as little as possible on the hives beyond the occasional look under the roof. There really is nothing practical that you can do that won't cause more trouble than it is worth. You can, however spend practical time clearing undergrowth and overhanging branches. Consider the access to the hives and improve things underfoot so that you can lug those full supers in and out without going base over apex. A bit of gravel or a slab or two can make all the difference.

-There is, however, plenty to do in the shed. Empty supers, scrape off all propolis, and scrub out with hot caustic soda solution (1 tablespoon per gallon –rubber gloves and goggles, please). Rinse well, dry, and treat with your favourite protective.

-Scrape off surplus wax and propolis from super frames. Tidy up the comb surface so that all combs are of approximately the same thickness. This will make for even thickness, and easier extraction next year. Cull all unevenly drawn and, particularly, old and darkened comb this is where the wax moth starts.

-Scrape spare crown boards and queen excluders to remove all propolis and extraneous wax.

-Boil up metal ends and porter escapes in a solution of washing soda to clean and remove propolis.

-Get your Association subscription paid up as soon as you get the demand, late payers are a pain in the *** to the poor devil who has to send out the newsletter.

MAIN TOPIC –**How was it for you, dear?** I don't know about you, but 2002 was the most demanding and the most rewarding year I can remember. First, despite the lousy spring I had the first swarm on the 25th of March, despite spring cleaning and replacement of a couple of combs a fortnight before. By the first week in April most of my hives were booming and I made six nuclei just to keep them quiet. I put this early activity down to over-wintering on single, deep brood chambers as well as the mild winters now common. On the other hand, one apiary, in a small copse of tall trees, a very windy site, got off to a poor start and never fully recovered. Proving once again that siting is all-important to beekeeping. Making the nuclei allowed me the respite to go on holiday just after Easter and also to restart a colleague who had lost all of his colonies during the winter.

Despite the early start the spring crop was very poor. Despite the fact that rape was grown well within flying distance there was virtually none in the hives and I was unable to supply creamed honey, which is very popular in our area. At least I didn't have to feed during the wet periods.

I still like to keep my bees good tempered by keeping a strong Italian strain I do this by introducing six queens from New Zealand each spring. This year they weren't available so I used Australian ones. Just as good. This year I made up proper three comb introduction nuclei and got 100% acceptance. We'll argue the rights and wrongs of importing Queens from the colonies at some other time.

Then came summer and a regular cycle of a days rain followed by five or six days of muggy cloudy weather which got the nectar flowing and kept it that way. The result was that I averaged 92lbs per hive, the best I have ever done.

Then came the late summer, after the main crop was off. I tried leaving a single super on, which they partially filled. Because the Apistan strips were in I got it off as fast as they capped it. Then they brought in some dark treacly stuff, which, at least, gave me my first entry in the dark honey class. Finally they filled six supers with what can only be rape honey, it candied before I even noticed what it was. So that gives me something to seed the creamed honey with, when I need it again.

All in all a wonderful year's beekeeping, but not one for taking an eye off the ball, at any time..

Garulus.

FROM THE EDITOR

American Foul Brood has again graced us with its unwelcome presence in the Wallingford area (not yet confirmed). It is hoped that a field trial of CSL's new testing kit can be arranged for the confirmation. I will report on this in due course.

Information has been received that the small hive beetle has recently been found in Australia, this is an extremely damaging pest. My source of information is usually reliable so I have no doubt that it will be officially confirmed. This will again raise questions as to the wisdom of importing bees from the antipodes.

Following the demonstration by Dr. Beulah Cullen, several members of South Chilterns have now used the CSL Varroa Resistance Test Kits. The results have been satisfactory, no resistant mites have so far been identified.

The Future:-

Due to South Chilterns Beekeepers Association having ceased their contributions to the B.B.K.A new arrangements have to be considered. In the meantime I have agreed to remain as editor of the Newsletter, which will continue as at present until the future strategy has been finalized.

RFC

From the Examinations Secretary

During the winter months, why not give some consideration to entering one of the B.B.K.A. examinations in 2003. The Basic Examination is very easy to pass if you have kept bees for a year or two. There are many publications available to guide you through the requirements of the various examinations. I will be pleased to hear from anyone who is interested in taking the Basic as I can supply a syllabus and other details.

Derek Porter 0118 979 0326

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

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

At the 21st Annual General meeting held on 16th October the Chairman, George Butler, reported on another sound year with attendances at both winter and summer meetings usually exceeding 20 members. The Treasurer, Linda Scurr noted that the finances continued to be satisfactory. Members reluctantly accepted the resignation of our long serving President, George Hawthorne and expressed their appreciation for all the work and effort he has put in over the years. Ian Wootton agreed to become our new President.

The meeting discussed at considerable length whether the Association should continue within the BBKA or become independent. After a full discussion, the meeting voted to become independent and disaffiliate from the BBKA. Full details of the discussion can be found under a separate heading in a report by the Chairman.

The Christmas meeting will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 18th December at the Woodcote Community Centre. It will be a relaxed evening starting with an illustrated talk by Russell Cherry, entitled 'On the Thames-a journey along the Thames Path from Source to Barrier. Part 2-Dorchester on Thames to the Barrier'. Traditional Christmas Fare will follow the talk.

Secretary: Brian Carter. 01491 680226

Message from The South Chilterns Chairman

Our AGM was held on 16th October when a very important decision was made concerning the future of our Association. An attendance in excess of 50 per cent of our membership was present which not only was gratifying but also ensured that the vote was representative.

The decision taken was that the association leave the B.B.K.A. following the footsteps of both Newbury and Wantage Associations who left the B.B.K.A some 10 years ago. It was not a snap decision, the matter had been on the agenda at our last two AGMs and on each occasion the issue was deferred mainly due to the problem of getting insurance cover for our members.

The insurance problem has now been resolved enabling a decision one-way or the other to be made at our AGM. The terms of our new insurance cover are on a par with the level of cover provided by the B.B.K.A at a cost of just less than £3.50 per member per annum.

The pros and cons of B.B.K.A membership were discussed at our AGM but basically it was felt that we were just not getting value for money, and some members expressed concern at the lack of response from B.B.K.A when they had been approached on various matters. The vote at our AGM was substantially in favour of leaving the B.B.K.A.

George Butler

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Possibly because this was the first winter meeting and also that the scribe omitted to inform you of its date and time, only a few of us attended and were privileged to hear the excellent talk by George Butler about Beekeeping in Australia. Don't worry folks; the said scribe is giving up his ramblings after this missive, so things should improve.

Australia is a vast island; it takes an aeroplane over five hours to fly over it! George has visited South Australia over a period of nine years and has worked with a farmer beekeeper in the area of the Eyre Peninsula. This is about 200 miles (as the crow flies) NNE of Adelaide. They enjoy a busy period of eleven months honey flow, mainly from Eucalyptus trees of many varieties, which flower at various times of the year. Truly beekeeping on a grand scale! George says the bees are quite docile, this may be due to the vast amount of forage available. I know I am happier when I have been well fed.

Our next meeting is a Christmas special and will include Mince pies etc. We have decided to include a non-beekeeping item and have picked a real winner. Most of us are interested in nature so our speaker will be Carl Feltham, RSPB Chairman, who will show us pictures of the Birds of Berkshire complete with their song. This is a special program, which I am sure you will enjoy. All are welcome, so please turn up in force on **Thursday, December 12th at 7.30pm. Methodist Church, The Wesley Room, Highmoor Road, Caversham Heights.**

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

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Our Christmas meeting will be held on the **Wednesday 11th December** at St Paul's Parish Rooms. Robin Dartington will give what promises to be a very interesting talk and demonstration of his Dartington Deep Hives; a seasonal drink and nibbles will follow this.

Rosemary's books of the month -Beekeeping Hasn't Changed Much - some early books.

Some of the earliest books in our Library catalogue came out in about 1900. Maurice Maeterlinck's famous *The Life of the Bee* is a classic of European literature. In his opening sentence Maeterlinck says, "It is not my intention to write a treatise on apiculture or on practical beekeeping." He goes on to say his book is not a scientific treatise either, he says "I wish to speak of the bees very simply, as one speaks of a subject one knows and loves to those who know it not." And this is exactly what he does. A beekeeper himself for over twenty years, he writes about bees with authority and knowledge. However, the beauty of the book lies in his constant wonder and fascination with bees and their complex society. The style, at first, seems to be a bit too lyrical for our modern taste, but you soon get used to it and you are riveted as he takes you through the way a hive works throughout the year. His happy enthusiasm rubs off and gives great pleasure.

The Beemaster of Warrilow by Tickner Edwardes is in some ways a bit like Maeterlinck's book in that it is a description of a year in an apiary - this time it is in the company of a charming experienced old Sussex bee master. Tickner Edwardes also wrote *The Lore of the Honey Bee*, which focuses on what goes on in a hive. Both books are well-informed and interesting and they capture the romantic attitude to beekeeping of the public of a hundred years ago.

The Beekeeper's Companion by S S Abbott (price one shilling and sixpence, published by Mills and Boon in 1911) is quite a different thing — it is intended to be manual for the beginner and for the amateur beekeeper. Like so many popular manuals, it is accurate enough as far as it goes and gives a general idea of what beekeeping is about, but there is not enough detail for it to be of real use to a beginner in a crisis. However, it is enjoyable to read as it does give a glimpse into the world of Edwardian amateur beekeeping.

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

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

The Slough 2002 Honey Show was well attended and was judged with enthusiasm and humour by Vivian Brown. Entries at 63 were a little down on last year, but our visitor, Robin Roberts, helped swell the ranks, as well as pinching many of the prizes. Two aspects were encouraging - the way the 'firsts' were much better distributed across many of the exhibitors, rather than just the 'usual experts', and the new class for Heather honey had three excellent entries, all from Windsor Great Park. Thanks to everyone who attended and assisted. A result sheet is included with this newsletter.

The committee has asked me to pass on their sincere thanks to Bernhard for putting so much effort into organising our Honey Show again this year. I would like to add mine for providing the above report as I was away - it seems that I missed another really good one.

The next meeting in December has changed from that shown in the program. It will now be a video evening by Harry Peace, who has made some new videos to show us, so we shall look forward to an entertaining and informative evening. As usual, we shall be at the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor, for an 8pm start.

The annual dinner has been brought forward from March to January and will replace the usual second Tuesday meeting. It will be on Friday the 24th at the usual venue of the Aurora Garden Hotel, Bolton Road, Windsor, meeting at 7 for 7.30pm. Menus were distributed last month, if you have not yet returned the tear off slip with your cheque to book your place, please do so well before the 14th January deadline. This year, your selection from the menu is to be made on the night.

Season's greetings and successful bee keeping for next year to everyone.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

Site:-

There is a possibility of a site in the South Oxfordshire area for two hives of **docile** bees from spring of 2003. For details, contact the Editor by phone or by e-mail.

As last year, there will not be a Newsletter for January.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR TO ALL

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

HONEY SHOW RESULTS 2002

Class	Description	First	Second	Third	Very H.C.	H. Comm.	Commended	First	Second	Third	Very H.C.
1	Inter Association		Jon Davey					9	4	2	7
2	1lb jar Clear honey Novice					Jackie Willoughby					
3	1lb jar Granulated honey Novice		Jackie Willoughby		Bob Booth						
4	2 Jars honey for sale	Hazel Blackburn	Reg Hook	Jon Davey		Robin Roberts					
5	2 Jars light honey	Reg Hook	Robin Roberts	Jon Davey							
6	2 Jars medium honey	Robin Roberts	Bernard Schuman	Robert Kiff		Reg Hook					
7	2 Jars Dark honey	Reg Hook	Robin Roberts	Dereck Porter	Bernard Schuman						
8	2 Jars granulated honey	Bernard Schuman	Reg Hook	Hazel Blackburn	Robert Kiff						
9	1 Section of Comb	Dereck Porter	Robin Roberts	Hazel Blackburn							
10	1 frame for extraction	Reg Hook	Robin Roberts	Jon Davey	Dereck Porter	Robert Kiff					
11	Cut comb		Robin Roberts								
12	Composite class	Robin Roberts	Reg Hook								
13	1 cake beeswax	Hazel Blackburn	Reg Hook	Bernard Schuman	Robin Roberts	Dereck Porter					
14	4 - 1oz Hocks beeswax	Robin Roberts	Reg Hook	Hazel Blackburn	Dereck Porter						
15	1 pair moulded candles	Dereck Porter	Marcella Skinner	Robin Roberts	Jon Davey						
16	1 Pair other candles	Robin Roberts			Dereck Porter						
17	Decorative beeswax item	Hazel Blackburn	Robin Roberts								
18	1 bottle sweet mead	no award									
19	1 bottle dry mead	Robin Roberts									
20	Honey or beeswax product	Robin Roberts	Bernard Schuman	Dereck Porter							
21	Photograph	Robin Roberts	Reg Hook								
22	Honey cake	Sandra Napper	Robin Roberts	Marcella Skinner	Hazel Blackburn	Jon Davey					
23	Honey shortbread biscuits	Robin Roberts	Jon Davey	Hazel Blackburn							
24	Honey confectionery	Robin Roberts	Jon Davey								
22A	Honey cake, family member	Suzanne Roberts									
23A	Honey shortbread biscuits, family member	Suzanne Roberts									
24A	Honey confectionery, family member	Suzanne Roberts									
25	1lb clear honey, gift class	Reg Hook	Hazel Blackburn	Robin Roberts							
26	1lb granulated honey, gift class	Reg Hook	Hazel Blackburn			Robin Roberts					
27	Honey cake	Gabriel Napper age 8									
28	Honey shortbread biscuits	Gabriel Napper age 8									
29	Photograph										
30	Freehand drawing or cartoon		Gabriel Napper age 8								
31	Poem about bees	Gabriel Napper age 8									

FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATIONS HONEY SHOW 2002

Winners of Trophies

TROPHIES: All Trophies are Perpetual except the Guests Trophy

The Federation Cup	Robin Roberts	To the member gaining points in this show.
The Federation Junior Cup	Gabriel Napper	To the Junior exhibitor gaining most points in classes 27-32
The Maurice Dixon Cup	Jon Davey	To the gentleman member of the Reading Association gaining most points in this show and in the honey section of the Wokingham and Reading Agricultural Show.
The William Main Cup	Hazel Blackburn	To the lady member of the Reading Association gaining most points in this show and the Wokingham and Reading Agricultural Show.
The Reading Cup	Hazel Blackburn	To the member of the Reading Association gaining most points in this show and in the honey section of the Wokingham and Reading Agricultural Show.
The Godfrey Nicholson Cup	Jackie Willoughby	To the best exhibit in the novice classes.
The Frank Napper Bowl	Robin Roberts	To the Wokingham Association member gaining most points in shows in the Federation.
The Beale Challenge Tankard	Robin Roberts	To the Wokingham Association Member gaining most points in classes 5,6,7,8 and 11
The Arthur Everest Cup	Suzanne Roberts	To the Wokingham Association Member gaining most points in classes 20,21,22, 20a,21a & 22a
The Nonsuch Goblet	Robin Roberts	To the Wokingham Association Member gaining most points in classes 11,12,,13 and 14
The Wokingham Challenge Cup	Robin Roberts	To the Wokingham Association Member gaining most points in this show
The Geoffrey Weston Cup	None	For the best entry exhibited by a Wokingham Association Novice Member
The Eric Morris Salver	Reg. Hook	To the South Chilterns member gaining most points in this show.
The South Chilterns Trophy	Jackie Willoughby	To the South Chilterns novice gaining most points in Classes 2 and 3.
The Slough Trophy	Bernhard Schumann	To the Slough member gaining most points in the show.
The FBBKA Guests Trophy	No Entry	To the guest exhibitor scoring most points at this show.
The Cooper Cake Rose Bowl	Suzanne Roberts	To the non beekeeping member gaining most points in the cookery classes
The George Hawthorne Skep	Reading	To the association winning Class 1.
The BBKA Blue Ribbon	Reg. Hook	For the best exhibit in the show.
The BBKA Medal	Robin Roberts	To the winner of most points in the honey classes (4 -9 inclusive).
Entrance Tickets to the National Honey Show	Jackie Willoughby	Awarded for most points in novice classes