



# FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

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## 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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Hon. Editor  
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### Future Events

1st March	Bucks C.B.K.A Annual Seminar	See below
Saturday 26th April	The B.B.K.A Spring Convention Stoneleigh	

### From the Federation General Secretary:-

Happy New Year everyone!

As we are now heading towards Spring and a new and exciting season, I hope you are all well prepared with plans and new/clean equipment at the ready.

Did you realise that you can now do B.B.K.A Correspondence Courses to study for the B.B.K.A examinations in your own time and at your own pace?

Study in the comfort of your own home!

Although the dark (quiet!) days of winter are an ideal time for this, you can start at any time.

For further information and an application form, contact:

Chris Utting,  
B.B.K.A Correspondence Course Secretary,  
Codden,  
Golf Links Road,  
Westward Ho,  
Bideford,  
Devon.  
EX39 1HH.  
or telephone: 01237 474 500.  
Alternatively e-mail: [chris@seejayyou.demon.co.uk](mailto:chris@seejayyou.demon.co.uk)

whatever other resolutions you may have made and already broken, give this one a try.

Make this the year to improve your knowledge of bees and beekeeping.

Sandra Napper

## THE APIARY IN FEBRUARY

THIS MONTH. – Writing these notes on Christmas Eve it seems difficult to recommend actions for February. If it remains cold and the bees aren't flying, leave them alone and get on with maintenance work in the shed. On the other hand towards the end of the month if they are bringing in plenty of pollen, there is no reason why a careful bit of hive work can't be done.

-Make sure you have cleaned up and repaired ALL of your spare equipment. The first things you will need are floors, crown boards, and brood boxes. Nothing beats getting the bees into a clean hive as a cracking start to the new season.

-Make enough dummy boards to provide one for each hive. They only need to be a piece of hardboard nailed to a top batten.

-If warm enough, open hives, remove outer frames if empty or full of hard candied stores. Leave one frame of feed next to each side of the brood and carefully move the brood over to the front (if you work warm ways) of the hive, without lifting it out of the brood box and risk chilling it. Put a dummy board against the back of the frames to keep the brood as warm as possible.

-Cut out all the old feed, melt it down, and keep for feed in the spring or next autumn. Recycle the wax!

-With the mild winters we are getting bees don't need quilts in the winter –they only harbour the damp. They do, however need to be as warm as possible from now onwards –to encourage breeding. Put on quilts, or better still, slabs of 1" polystyrene.

MAIN TOPIC. –**Foundation.** Ye Gods, I've seen some tatty comb this year. Do you people ever buy any foundation? Some years ago I bought a foundation press for my 14 x 12 frames and never did get on with it. I couldn't get the rhythm going well enough to produce more than about one in ten complete sheets, and then they were mostly too thick to fit into the frames. This year I finally answered an appeal in BeeCraft for a press for some poor beekeepers in Africa. By now, perhaps, it's on its way to them and out of my life forever. I did, however, get a Herring plastic press for shallow foundation, and this has served me well for 20 years now, making super foundation, which does not need to be of such high quality as brood.

If you've followed the advice above you will have a yawning gap at the back of each of your hives. This needs slowly filling, one frame at a time, with sterilised frames and fresh foundation, between the brood and the feed, adding a new frame each time the previous one is drawn out and being laid.

-Beulah Cullen strongly advises moving bees onto fresh foundation every year, and this certainly works wonders on the disease front. This is done, only when conditions are favourable, by putting on a part box of new brood foundation to coincide with the brood below. The queen will then go up into the new foundation when things get a bit crowded below. Take out the outer feed frames when some food starts coming in from outside and put a queen excluder under the new comb as soon as the queen is laying upstairs.

In my experience this procedure works well with standard National and WBC brood boxes but not at all with deep brood such as 14 x 12 where the food and pollen arch over the brood is too thick for the queen to willingly bridge.

-Anyway, make sure that you've enough foundation to replace your entire brood comb at least every three years and you super comb every five. It makes manipulation so much easier. Run down all your old wax and swap it for fresh foundation at Thorne's or with John Belcher. Recycle it all and you will have enough to pay for all your new foundation and buy a couple of new queens as well.

Garulus.

## FROM THE EDITOR

My beekeeping in the past season was not as it should have been, I had to get help for every thing and even being stuck when the farmer said access was O.K. fortunately Bernhard Schumann was feeling strong that day.

Once able to drive again the weather had been against me, consequently my bees were further neglected, however, I did make the effort to look at my bees at Brightwell cum Sotwell several times because I had removed nearly a hundredweight of honey that turned out to be unusable. It seems that the bees had been foraging at the not too distant packing station; I am awaiting the result of the statutory analysis of the sample taken by the Bee Inspector.

On one occasion I found dead larvae thrown out of the remaining hive, unfortunately while examining the hive I had trodden on them while I was manipulating the bees. For the next manipulation Julian Johnston was due for a follow-up visit and although a thorough examination was made nothing untoward was found.

In late October I again went to the hive, this time I was wearing new hearing aids and I thought that things did not sound right. I opened up the hive and all I could find was one cell that roped very slightly, I marked the cell with a small stick and notified Beulah Cullen. When she arrived at the beginning of November the bees had cleaned out the cell and my marker was at the bottom of the hive, we had great difficulty in finding something to test, even an experienced operator could easily have overlooked it. The result of the Bee Unit's new testing kit, (the first time that Beulah had used it), was a very impressive and quick, of course the bees had to be moved under licence and destroyed, I was grateful for the assistance of a fellow beekeeper for digging the hole.

RFC

## BUCKS COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL SEMINAR

**Saturday March 1<sup>st</sup> 2003**  
**Wendover Memorial Hall, Wharf Road, Bucks..**

**10.00** Meet for coffee, registration etc.

**10.30** Welcome

**10.40 'The bees knees'**

Glyn Davies Chairman of the BBKA will explain how the bees legs are better designed than any swiss army knife

**11.40 Short Break**

**11.50 Gardening for Bees**

Celia Davies, well known for her lucid articles in BeeCraft on honeybee biology is also a keen gardener and will show us how to make our gardens fit for bees.

**1.00 Ploughmans lunch** and time to view exhibits

**2.15. "Never trust an expert"**

Andy Johnstone from Bedfordshire will share some thoughts on queen rearing

**3.15 Forum**

A time for questions and discussion with our experts

**4.00. Closing remarks.**

We extend a welcome to all beekeepers and others interested in beekeeping

**Cost:-** £10 for B.B.K.A members, £11 for non-members

Ploughman's lunch and coffee etc. included

To book please telephone Sylvia Chamberlin on 01494 522082 or Email [sylvia.chamberlin@zen.co.uk](mailto:sylvia.chamberlin@zen.co.uk)

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**

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of November our association held its 56<sup>th</sup> Annual General meeting, with existing officers agreeing to continue for another 12 months and welcoming two new committee members. We were also pleased to report our association has 4 new members in the year which given the tendency for disappointing attendance to winter and summer meetings this ten percent increase in membership can only be welcomed! The AGM also discussed further our continuing thoughts on amalgamation with a like minded nearby association. Continuing affiliation with the B.B.K.A was confirmed.

This season has seen Reg. Harper scale down his activities in his own apiary and as our regular writer, in the three seasons that this scribe has known Reg. I have certainly seen no diminution of his powers! Most people reading this will have known him a good deal longer and we certainly owe Reg. a tremendous vote of thanks for his work in our association. As usual Reg. knows his own mind and feels, octogenarian as he is, he intends to reduce his load. We are sure that he will give us his wise council and continue to be a cerebral influence on us for many seasons to come.

Also at the November meeting our Chairman Mr. Jon. Davey gave a talk entitled "Chemical Sprays in Agriculture; beekeeping and the food-chain" Which gave a good insight into the food business.

Our December meeting was well attended with a merry mood despite the regrettable cancellation of our speaker Mr. Carl Feltham because of unfortunate family bereavement, we hope to welcome Carl at a later date. The meeting enjoyed Mrs Sandra Napper's Christmas Cooking demonstration, a quiz and held a picture slide review, many from Geoff Fowler showing hives in heavy snow with Green Woodpecker damage, and the culprit eventually frozen to death after being (accidentally) tangled in Geoff's protective netting. The comparison with the abysmally muggy and wet winters of recent years was most striking from these 30 year old slides.

Our February meeting is on Thursday 13th. when we will once again visit Rowse Honey at Wallingford, numbers will be restricted but up to 8 people who missed the actual packing-plant tour last time will have the opportunity, and we will all be able to bring ourselves up to date with the international honey trading and packing scene. Attendance forms and health declarations will be sent to members shortly for prompt return to determine numbers.

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

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

Those who managed to get along to the December meeting were fortunate to see some videos from the B.B.K.A library, made by beekeepers on the continent. Since the climate there can be much harsher than ours can, it was extremely interesting to see how one beekeeper had prepared his hives for the winter. This one dealt with opening a hive for the first time after the winter, but the various layers of protection that were there had ensured they had come through safe and sound.

Another, which had been made by a commercial beekeeper, gave an intriguing insight into the honey-house that he had constructed, to deal with the vast volumes of honey that he extracts. It contained some very innovative machinery, based around a steam production plant to be found in (nearly) every household – a pressure cooker! Our thanks go to Bernhard Schumann for providing the kit and for searching out the videos to entertain us.

We will be meeting in February on Tuesday, the 11<sup>th</sup>. Your programme stated that the speaker was 'To be announced'. At the time of writing this, the arrangements have still not been confirmed, but it is expected to be able to announce the speaker and topic at the Annual Dinner taking place on the 24<sup>th</sup> January. If you were unable to attend the dinner, then please call our Secretary, Michael Sheasby on 01753 642656 for the details. As usual, we shall start at 8pm at the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor.

March sees the return of the Braywick Park Ranger to talk on his fascinating topic of entomology, in particular bumblebees and wasps. If you missed his last visit, it is well worth marking your diary now so that you don't this time. The date will be March the 11<sup>th</sup> at the same venue and the same time as above.

"Like most organisations S.B.K.S has a small number of members who don't get round to paying their subs until after the deadline. We then incur additional expense in reminders and sending on material that has been withheld. If there is a red line under this note your sub is overdue and this is the last communication you will receive" Bernhard Schumann, Newsletter distributor.

**Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091**

## **WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

### **Talk on Dartington Long Deep Hives**

Some 20 members and friends turned out to hear Robin Dartington give a fascinating talk and demonstration of his cleverly designed long deep hives. He claims these hives offer number of benefits including improved swarm control, easier management, less disruption to the colony and all at a lower initial cost. There were a number of very interested members and no doubt they will be watching to see how Bob Loades gets on in his second season with one of these hives. For members who missed this interesting talk Robin will be with Oxford beekeepers in the afternoon of 21 February (contact Merylyn Rees on 01865 764295 for details). Alternatively you can visit Robin in Letchworth next season where 16 long-deep hives are in use. Call 01 462 450 707 for details.

### **February Meeting**

The February meeting will be held on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February at 8.00pm and includes a talk by Prof. Keith-Lucas from Reading University on Pollen.

### **Rosemary's Bee-book of the Month**

Here's a book that is good to consider at this time of the year when all is quiet on the apiary front. It is a classic: "Beekeeping at Buckfast Abbey" by Brother Adam. The author became an assistant in the Abbey's apiary when he came to England from Germany before WW I, and in 1919 he was given sole charge of it. His whole career (apart from being a monk) until he died in the early '90's was in beekeeping.

A man with a scientific mind and an eye to business, he understood the importance of efficient organisation in a big apiary, and he realised that the best way to achieve it was to go with the way the bees work. A happy colony will be a productive colony.

In this brief account he says what problems he and his team confronted — disease, temperament, swarming, fecundity and so on. He tells us what they did about it and more importantly why. All their operations were carefully controlled and recorded and they persisted in trying new ideas out until they were satisfied that what they were doing was the wisest and most successful. Success meant successful honey production.

He explains their systematic approach to the years' work, to re-queening, feeding, and comb rotation. He gives clear reasons for using Modified Dadant hives and he describes their own modifications to them.

The section on queen rearing (they produce the famous Buckfast strain) is very interesting. He discusses the differences between paternal and maternal traits, and he describes how, in the days before instrumental insemination they organised an isolated mating station on Dartmoor to insure the purity of their hybrids.

It is a fascinating book and it throws light on the way we do things in our own apiaries. A good read for a cold idle January day.

Secretary John Edwards. [ejedwards@btinternet.com](mailto:ejedwards@btinternet.com) 0118 934 0238

**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 1<sup>st</sup> 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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[Apiservices - Beekeeping Virtual Gallery - All information, products and services for beekeeping, bees, honey and pollen](#)

<http://www.apiservices.com/>

In the Editor's opinion this CD, although informative and worthwhile, navigation is not very intuitive.