



**FEDERATION OF
BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS**
President: Mr. George Hawthorne

January 2001
Number 538

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

Friday 16 th March	Leaver Memorial Lecture	Details Later
Saturday 28 th April	Spring Convention Stoneleigh	Tickets in advance From Mrs B. Showler

BEEKEEPING COLLECTABLES

GEORGE HAWTHORNE ON T.V. – Channel 4 Collectors Lot. Scheduled for 3pm on January 25th.

THE APIARY IN JANUARY

Although this maybe the coldest month of the year, it never ceases to amaze me that our little friends have to raise the temperature in their brood nest area to about 95F 35C. The Queen begins laying again, and this temperature is required for the survival of the new brood. They obtain this marvelous feat by consuming enormous amounts of stores, (whether honey or sugar solution, it can be either, or a mixture of both,) and sort of shiver, thereby converting it into heat. Now is the testing time to see if you fed adequately in the autumn. I don't use candy or patties myself, but if you are worried that they may not have enough food, you will have to give them some candy.

This can be made as follows. For each you will need, 1Kg sugar, ½ pint water, and ½ level teaspoon of, either citric acid or cream of tartar.

Method: Bring the water to the boil, add either cream of tartar or citric acid and stir thoroughly. Remove pan from the heat, add the sugar and stir until dissolved. Replace on heat and simmer for 3 minutes. Place pan in cold water and stir until liquid becomes cloudy. Pour into containers and allow to set. When cool, place on the crown board over the Porter bee escape' hole, and make a note in your hive record to feed adequately next season.

Make sure that there are no tree branches extending over the hive. Bees hate the constant drip on the roof caused by these after rain. There is not much more to be done in the Apiary at this time of the year, so you can be getting on with cleaning your spare frames and spare hive bodies, or get in your shed and make more equipment. The dreadful floods back in November maybe a distant memory for most of us now, but one of our colleagues will remember it for many years to come I think. He unfortunately lost three hives with bees and all his equipment, plus garden chairs and ornaments which all went floating off down the river Loddon at that time Roll on summer! It can't be long now before we get some lovely spring sunshine. Be ready for it when it comes.

Ambrosia

FROM THE EDITOR

Let us consign year 2000 as the 2000th year of the last millennium, for many of us best forgotten, and look forward to year one of the new century. Year 2000 was probably my worst since I took up beekeeping as a schoolboy. One of my first recollections (when about 6 or 7 years old) was going round an apiary of 25 to 30 colonies with my grandfather, we did not wear veils although there were some in the trug, the smoker (a little Bingham) was not even lit, Grandfather smoked Anstees Black Beauty tobacco and puffed smoke from this at the bees when necessary, I cannot imagine this being done today.

The end of November and still wasps around, there has even been a call from Abingdon to the Radio phone-in programme for assistance in removing a nest of active bumble bees. Our bees are just as active, I am getting reports that many colonies of bees are very short of stores, with the mild weather that we have been having this is not surprising, see Ambrosia. Instead of making your own candy, get some white fondant from your baker, it comes in 12½-kilo blocks and is not messy as is making your own and in the long run, is no more expensive.

RFC

Tetracycline resistant bee diseases: Two geographically isolated countries have developed tetracycline resistance simultaneously. This coincides with the widespread and recent cultivation of GM crops containing tetracycline resistant genes in USA, Canada and Argentina, it is speculated that there is a possible GMO/antibiotic resistant disease connection. Those with Internet facility should look at http://www.biotech-info.net/bee_j_editorial.html and http://www.biotech-info.net/JR_testimony.html

I suggest that members without such facility should get in touch with someone that has.

Hermes

BERKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE - INTERMEDIATE COURSE.

- Having trouble with excessive, unexplained, swarming?
- What do you do with a colony that has suddenly turned very bad tempered?
- You have never tried to breed your own queens.
- Recognising disease.
- How to choose the strain of bee that suits your method of beekeeping.

These topics are just a few that will be covered on the intermediate beekeeping course at Burchetts Green College of Agriculture. Commences Monday evening, 7.30 - 9.30 19th of February 2001 for a total of 6 evenings. Ring the college and request a brochure 01628 824444 or contact the Tutor, George Butler, on 01189 83 2735.

From the Examinations Secretary.

The BBKA has issued a new framework for gaining their certificates in beekeeping. This will make it easier for people to progress from the Basic Certificate right through to the Advanced Theory Certificate as well as providing a route to becoming a Honey Judge if you want to go in that direction. Our Federation does not rate highly as regards the number of beekeepers who enter for the various Certificates. This is probably due to several factors but one of them seems to be that even the basic test is perceived as being difficult. Nothing could be further from the truth. If you have kept bees for a year or two you will have no difficulty in passing. I will be pleased to hear from anyone who is interested in taking the Basic test as I can supply a syllabus and other details.

Derek Porter 0118 979 0326.

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

There was a reasonable attendance at the AGM on November 8th and we were able to fill the vacant posts thanks to William Napper who volunteered to be the Treasurer and John Edwards who volunteered to be the Secretary. Needless to say they were voted into office. We are grateful for their willingness to help in the running of the Club and I am sure you will give them all the support they need in their work. All other positions are as before. So the Club can continue to serve its members and take part in Federation affairs. I would ask all those members who we do not see very often, and some not at all, to get more involved as the Club exists for everyone's benefit.

Please note that the January 2001 meeting is on the 10th and not the 9th as shown in the programme. This meeting will be about encaustic art by June Hughes. If you have not seen how it is done, come along and find out. It is very easy to produce results with the correct materials and techniques.

This is the last time I will be writing the notes as John Edwards will now take over but Sylvia Smallbone who kindly agreed to help out from time to time will assist him.

Derek Porter

Hon. Secretary: John Edwards

SLOUGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Our AGM this year was quite well attended and the vacant posts were filled with new occupants as was hoped. We also recruited two new members onto the committee in the process and will welcome their input to the running of the Slough and District Beekeepers' affairs. We all enjoyed the variety of fare on offer afterwards and thank everyone for their efforts in providing it.

The committee officers and telephone numbers will be shown on the new annual programme as usual. It is hoped that it will accompany this newsletter, where you will see that the programme of 2001 starts on Tuesday the 9th of January with our now traditional video evening. This time we expect to be able to show one about beekeeping in Nepal, amongst others. So join us at 8 o'clock, as usual at the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor.

Our February meeting will be on Tuesday the 13th and will be a talk by Beulah Cullen, our local Bee Inspector, and is entitled "Help - my bees have died!" This promises to be a very interesting and helpful subject for all of us, so mark the date in your diary now as one not to be missed.

Newsletter items to: Joy Dodson. Burnham (01628) 664091

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

A quick re-arrangement of our speaker was necessary for our November meeting. John Cossburn had been booked to speak but had to withdraw at short notice owing to the death of his father. I was out of the country at this time so it was left to Anne, our temporary chairman to spend lots of time and effort trying to arrange another speaker. Ian Gourlay, chairman of Oxford BKA, agreed to come and gave a very well received talk on trees, mostly in central Africa, surrounding a research programme he is engaged on in connection with his work at Oxford University. Ian is a keen organic gardener and an active beekeeper; our thanks go to him for standing in at very short notice.

Our January meeting takes place on Wednesday 17th January when we have a return visit from Harry Peace. Harry produces videos of a very professional standard and he will show three of his new videos - an evening not to be missed. I didn't manage to get to the National but our president George Hawthorne was one of the judges. George also put on a display at the National from his collection of horse brasses, some of which date from Victorian times.

Hon. Secretary:- George Butler 0118 983 2735

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

At the AGM in November it was decided to raise the subscriptions to £21 for ordinary members and £18 for seniors, in order to adjust for the increase in Federation and BBKA fees. Payment is due by the 1st January. Please pay your subscriptions promptly to help our secretary's cash flow, and to ensure that you are covered by insurance. British Disease Insurance has made some alterations. I strongly advise you to look closely at these, especially the 6Oday rule. Every gathering of bees headed by a Queen, must be insured, this includes mini nucs, nucs, swarms and colonies. BDI has to receive payment by 31st March; they should reach our Treasurer by the end of February, so that they can be recorded and sent off to BDI. You will have had a copy of the rules by the time you read these notes.

We have elected a new secretary, namely Robert Kiff, but there were no nominations for a new chairman. However, Michael Blackburn has promised to remain as vice chairman. We therefore begin a new period without a chairman. What a sad reflection on our association! After the business of the evening our past chairman conducted a photographic quiz, which was ably won by Mr. J Davy. At our next meeting on Thursday, January 11th Mr. Geoff. Burroughs of Halcyon Honey Farm will be giving us an insight into the work of the bee farmer. This should prove to be quite interesting. Don't forget it will be at our new venue, Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Woodcote Road.

The date and venue of our annual dinner: This will be at The Pack Horse Inn on the Woodcote Road Mapledurham. The cost will be approximately £15 for a three-course meal. Full details and directions will be given in the February Newsletter

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

"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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