



FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

July 2002
Number 555

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

From The General Secretaries Office -

You will find attached to this newsletter a letter laying out the proposals for the future organisation of beekeeping in Berkshire. With it is a return slip and a stamped addressed envelope for you to make your preference known.

Please take the time to read the letter and return the slip. It is very important to hear from as many of you as possible in order that the outcome will be the wishes of the majority of members, not just the majority of people who took time to send the slip back.

The result of this opinion survey will be announced at an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Berkshire Federation. This meeting will be publicised beforehand to allow as many of you to attend as wish to attend.

Again, at the risk of being a nag, please give this Opinion Survey your full attention. Thank you.

On a slightly different note - At the Federation Committee Meeting on 21st May the Autumn Event came up for discussion and a small sub-committee is being set up to arrange this year's event. This is a small band of die-hards who refuse to throw in the towel. They may be able to organise it, but they cannot be expected to run it on their own. The success or otherwise of this event depends on you. For entries, attendance on the day & help on the day.

Watch this space for further details as they become available.

While I'm in "help for the show" mode, your support has also been requested for The National Honey Show at Kensington Town Hall on 14th, 15th & 16th November. Again, this request is for entries and attendance on the day. I will have a limited number of schedules available later, so how about having a go? Just give me a call.

Apparently, Northern Bee Books & E.H.Thorne have generously offered to transport entries to and from the Show. From where I'm not quite sure, but further details will follow.

Sandra Napper

FROM THE EDITOR

What a season it has been so far, early swarms, swarms issuing without a queen cell in the hive, swarms landing like cowpats, etc. Some of us have seen it before; I have had early swarms in the past, mainly in colonies that have returned from the heather with brood chambers full of stores. This spring many colonies came through with brood chambers full of crops from late ivy, this resulted in no room for the queen to lay and a congested brood area. What happens? According to Manley, if the drones present are not yet mature for mating, a swarm is likely to emerge without a queen cell in the hive and the bees themselves will put the matter right. There are many reasons for cowpat swarms, the most common being swarms emerging in prolonged periods of inclement weather, bees too wet to fly any distance so end up on the ground, and wrongly clipped or old or damaged queens. These days, there can also be absconding due to Varroa infestation, not known in Manley's time!

Some of us have had an early crop which is a very sticky and viscous mess that will not leave the combs and has to be melted out, some of this has an unpleasant taste, but this will mellow in time. Others have been luckier, however, the weather throughout May was such that a good many colonies were short of stores and near to starving by the end of the month.

Further incidences of Varroa resistant to pyrethroid treatments have been confirmed in West Country apiaries between Wadebridge and Hartland and there are other suspect cases. There is no need to panic, but if anyone suspects pyrethroid resistant Varroa in their colonies CSL would like to know, in the first instance your point of contact is your bees officer who will give the appropriate advice. It is less likely to be found where treatment methods are varied between pyrethroid (Apistan and Bayvarol) and other alternative methods.

It is important to remember that if your mites are NOT resistant then Bayvarol and Apistan are still very effective controls.

As colony inspection has been hampered by weather conditions particular emphasis should be given to "looking for evidence of foul brood", in the recent conditions this can be easily overlooked, if you are in any doubt you should contact your bees officer. Remember, sick bees and dead bees do not gather honey.

This year, as last year, there will be an August and a September Newsletter but there will be no January edition. This will avoid delivery problems over the Christmas period.

RFC

THE APIARY IN JULY

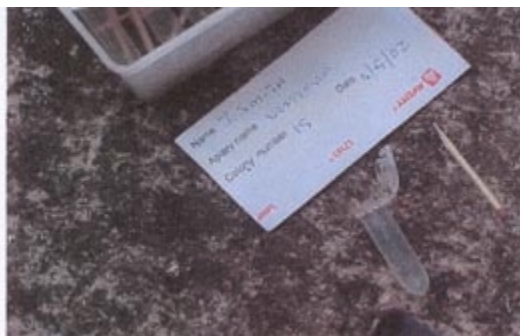
THIS MONTH. –Seasons are getting earlier and so are honey crops. Most of your honey will be in by the end of the month and you'll need to Bayvarol or Apistan early next month.

- Buy honey jars early in the month and get the clearer boards and extracting gear ready.
- Order replacement queens for those colonies that have not performed well or been less well behaved. August is the ideal month for queen replacement using British queens. Specify a docile strain!
- Buy Bayvarol or Apistan sufficient for ALL of your hives, not just those that you think are heavily infested.
- Keep up the ten-day inspections. Swarming re-occurs as soon as the hives are full and the flow begins to slacken. Casts are common at this time of the year and often completely ruin a colony, while you are on holiday.

-At the end of the month take off the honey crop and extract as much as you can. This leaves you nice and clear for Varroa treatment in early August and a few supers for a late crop - even in October, as happened last year.

MAIN TOPIC. -The tube method. Foul brood is on the increase and, shamefully, we Berkshire beekeepers seem to be doing very little about it. We no longer have the excuse of the cost and inconvenience of sending a whole frame for analysis. The tube method is now available.

You need a tube, a label, (from your Association Secretary) and a sharpened match.
Keep these in a small clean box or wallet in your inspection gear. Routinely inspect the larvae in your brood comb and watch for any that looks anything but pearly white or is lying any way but curled up in the bottom of the cell. Transfer it to the tube using the sharpened match. Use one tube for a sample of the suspect larvae in one hive and break off the contaminated end of the match into the tube.



Tube, sharpened match, and label.



Break match so that the possibly infected
End goes in with the sample.

Close the tube, fill in the label, and attach it to the tube. Write a note giving your name and address. Put all the tubes in an ordinary envelope and address to: -
The National Bee Unit, CSL, Sand Hutton, York YO41 1LZ.

Add a FIRST CLASS stamp and post it. The answer will be back in 48 hrs and at NO COST to you. If the worst comes to the worst and you have got EFB, the NBU will notify your County Bee Inspectors and they will soon be along to help you solve the problem, usually, these days, without the loss of your bees or hives. EFB, nowadays, is neither the disaster nor the stigma that it used to be –that is, if you catch it early enough. Leave it until the hives start stinking and you will deserve all you get. I know, it happened to me.

Garulus.

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 MAY 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	SU69 Benson	SU79 Stokenchurch	SU89 High Wycombe	SU99 Amersham	TQ09 Rickmansworth EFB 2(3)
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	SU97 Windsor	TQ07 Staines
SU26 Great Bedwyn	SU36 Inkpen	SU46 Newbury	SU56 Thatcham	SU66 Burghfield Common	SU76 Shinfield	SU86 Crowthorne EFB 2(3)	SU96 Ascot EFB 1(1)	TQ06 Weybridge
SU25 Ludgershall	SU35 Hurstbourne Tarrant	SU45 Litchfield	SU55 Kingsclere EFB 1(1)	SU65 Basingstoke	SU75 Hook EFB 1(1)	SU85 Farnborough	SU95 West Guildford EFB 3(6)	TQ05

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

In an early May, we met again at Viola and Basil Crowe's delightful apiary in the orchard section of their garden at Brightwell cum Sotwell. A very good attendance of members and visitors enjoyed a fine afternoon; chairman George (supported by V - P Ian) enjoyed demonstrating the six W B C hives.

The first hive had swarmed on the 20th April from two extra deep brood boxes and three shallow supers: proof indeed of a very vigorous colony and the early-season from Cherry and other fruit crops of the area. Eggs could not be found, but from their excellent behaviour, it was considered that the bees were happy with their virgin queen.

Inspection of the remaining colonies proved equally time-consuming because of the elusive queens and the propolizing of extra deep frames. The temper of the bees remained first class throughout, proof that Viola has been very successful in re-queening with docile stock. Our visit ended with the sale of gifted plants and a sumptuous tea: many, many thanks to Viola and Basil for such a memorable meeting.

The July meeting will be held at 2.30 pm on JULY 20 at RON CROCKER'S APIARY.

The apiary is sited at Darkwood Farm, Park Corner about 2 miles from Nettlebed on the B481 (OS reference 993884). The meeting will include a demonstration by Beulah Cullen including testing for pyrethroid resistant Varroa mites. Sometimes slurry runs onto the footpath, so bring your Wellingtons.

Secretary: Brian Carter. 01491 680226

Wokingham & District Beekeepers Association

Our Summer Apiary Meeting on Sunday 19th May, at the home of Rosemary Bayliss, went well with ten members/observers in attendance including two younger potential beekeepers. All watched keenly as Bob Loades ably worked through his hives giving a commentary as he went, with answers for all the questions asked. The weather behaved, but unfortunately, the bees didn't, with the elder of the two young men taking two stings in the foot (the only part of his body not fully protected!), hopefully this will only deter him temporarily, as we need the young upcoming interest to carry on our craft.

Rosemary's Book of the Month

At our last AGM Bob Loades gave us a run down on the large collection of books we as members of the WDBKA own in our library. They run from simple beginner's guides through *How to Pass Beekeeping Exams* to books on pollen and plants that bees like and on to reminiscences by famous beekeepers such as ROB Manley and Brother Adam. We even have a facsimile copy of the first book on beekeeping in English (17th Century). It was sad to hear Bob say that this extensive library is under-used when it is so interesting and easy to borrow from – you just dial 0118 961 9631 and ask to come around and browse.

Honey Days by Oliver Field

The author of this very pleasant little book is a bee-farmer who lived in our area, kept bees in Berkshire and took hives down to Dorset for the heather. In a conversational style he goes through the year month by month, describing the sort of work he has to do – feeding, supering, swarm-controlling, and extracting. These are the tasks we all have to do but he has to do it on a huge scale (it must be non-stop in June!). Oliver obviously loves his workplace – the open fields and woods. He is a naturalist and fisherman and he weaves his observations and experiences into the book so that it is not just a record of work or a manual of beekeeping but an expression of what beekeepers love to be involved in – nature and the passing seasons in the countryside. It is an easy book that anyone will like – non-beekeeper, beginner, or National honey judge.

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

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Back in December 2000, Mr J Harmer a bee farmer showed us an extractor that he had constructed from a domestic spin dryer. Unwired combs were mashed up and spun - out came clean honey and virtually dry wax. This made quite an impression on us all, especially Peter Kimber. He resolved to make one of these and informed me later that he was going to put empty frames, (no foundation, not even starters), in his supers and try the method out. I advised against this as I visualised supers filled with honey-laden combs, adhering to the sides, and to each other. However, he went ahead with this scheme.

There was a good turnout of loyal souls at Peter's apiary on Sunday 12th May. Unfortunately, I, who was supposed to be the demonstrator, failed to turn up at the allotted time as I forgot that there was a meeting! I arrived later after a telephone reminder, when I found the event in full swing, ably conducted by Michael Blackburn. However, my fears were unfounded. I was somewhat amazed when we found that the bees had manufactured combs all nicely parallel to each other and free from the sides of the supers. These little creatures never fail to amaze me! It remains to be seen what Peter intends to do with the quantity of wax this method is likely to produce.

At our Sunday July 7th meeting, we will be the guests of Cyril McCombe at his home apiary, 50 Chazey Road Caversham Heights. The meeting will start at 11.00am. See you here.

Enjoy your hobby.

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.

Two of the hives at the apiary appear to have been badly depleted by the early swarms leaving them under populated at a crucial time when the weather turned cold. There were signs of brood dying in the late stages of development and both were very weak. They were united and it is hoped that they will recover. A surplus nuke has also been donated, so it is hoped that the apiary will be able to return to its former strength.

The July dates for the apiary meetings are Sundays, the 14th and 28th and the last meeting of the summer will be on Sunday, August 11th. We start at 3pm - if you need directions, call any of the committee as shown on your programme for the year, or the number below. If you haven't been along yet this year, there is still time to show your support for this valuable asset to our society.

I have been asked to pass on a request for entries to two shows in Windsor, which regularly have a section for honey to be judged. Both would like to have a significant number of entries to celebrate the Jubilee year events. So any of you out there who may still have some jars that were prepared for last year's shows, or better still, have some good specimens from this year's crop, may get schedules as follows:

- For the Royal Windsor Rose and Horticultural Society's 98th Annual Show at the Brigidine School, Kings Road, Windsor, to be held on Saturday the 13th July 2002 from 11am to 5pm. Schedules for the five classes are available from The Co-ordinator, 29 Queens Road, Windsor. Tel: 01753 852352. www.royalwindsorroseshow.co.uk
- For 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. Schedules for the nine classes are available from Mr Bill Birch, Tel: 01753 861714.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

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

GET THE BEST DEALS LOCALLY BY ringing John Belcher on 0118 984 2321 for the full range of Thornes equipment. Most items are in stock and the rest just a phone call away. Apistan, together with other approved treatments at very competitive prices including the Thymol based products, Apiguard, and Thymovar. Rendered beeswax in exchange for foundation.

WBC equipment in reasonable order required. Call 01628 664091.