



**FEDERATION OF
BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS**
President: Miss Margery Cooper

March 2002
Number 551

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

7 th March 2002	The Reading Flood Memorial Lecture	See Below
15 th March 2002	Leaver Memorial Lecture	Directions from General secretary or Editor
27 th April 2002	Stoneleigh 2002	

FROM THE EDITOR

In like a Lion, out like a Lamb or vice versa, this is what is usually associated with the month of March, considering the strong winds at the end of January, nature may give it a miss this time.

Mild spells of weather since Christmas have no doubt caused increased activity in the beehives and it will not be long before beekeepers will be lifting the covers to check for stores etc., followed some time later by a regular routine that is common to us all, or is it?

Woodpecker damage is again prevalent this year; I have received reports of the birds finding their way into wire cages and wiping out colonies.

Reminder: - Whilst we must consider Varroa Public Enemy No: 1, - less of a threat nowadays (you are treating according to manufacturers instructions aren't you?), don't forget to keep the other diseases in mind, especially A.F.B. and E.F.B.

RFC

THE APIARY IN MARCH

First of all, the major threat to your stocks from now until the spring flow starts is starvation. Colonies with limited stores can get through the depth of winter because not much food is consumed by the inactive bees. When the new season gets under way, it is a different story and stores are used up at a remarkable rate. So, until the weather is warm enough for opening the hives, check the position by hefting the hives - it's easy to spot the very light ones. If in doubt, a gallon of syrup may well save the situation. Personally, I don't bother with half measures, 4 kg of sugar and 4 pints of water make 1 gallon of thick syrup which is fed from a contact (bucket) feeder.

Once the sun is shining and the air temperature is in the 50's, which is generally towards the end of this month, you can resolve any worries by a quick inspection. Take the opportunity to scrape the floorboard and combine the inspection with the spring Varroa check (see recent issues of this News). Make sure that the combs have food stores and that there is brood present. This can be done in seconds and by working quickly you will avoid chilling the colony. Brood present means a laying queen so don't waste time and warmth by looking for her.

Matrix revisited

From the General Secretary's Office -

Everybody else's New Year starts on January 1st but the Federation's New Year started on February 19th with the AGM. All Officers have to be re-elected or new Officers voted in to replace them. So this could be my last entry, as when you read this I may no longer be General Secretary. If this is the case, then I wish the new incumbent luck and good wishes and hope that they find everything to their satisfaction at the handover.

If I am still in the job, then I will continue to do my utmost to serve the Federation on your behalf.

You are the Federation, and by supporting your Committee you are helping yourselves. To this end more support is needed for events organised on your behalf, both at Local Association level and at County Federation level.

We are in danger of losing everything through complacency!

During my time as General Secretary I have sadly seen overall member numbers decline and support for organised events decline dramatically.

We must all work together to turn this situation around before it goes any further.

Future Events: - West Sussex Bee Market and Auction. Venue - Brinsbury College, Pulborough.
Date - 11th May 2002. Further information available from Dave Staples; Telephone No 01903 539205.

Limited number of Schedules & Entry Forms for Auction Items available from your General Secretary.

Sandra Napper.

Candy is dandy - or is it?

As beekeepers we try to ensure that our colonies have sufficient stores for the winter - often by feeding syrup in the autumn, however syrup should not be given in the winter. In dire emergency candy can be given over the cover board. Home made Candy is difficult and messy to make, but a fondant is available from suppliers such as E.H.Thorne or fondant can be purchased from friendly bakers, alternatively you can mix warm honey with caster sugar-or icing sugar-until it is as stiff as putty, some beekeepers do use candy in the autumn with success.

Pollen substitute

To build up a colony in spring a pollen substitute can be used, many "flours" have been used in the past but soya flour mixed into a stiff Patty with liquid honey or full strength syrup placed directly on top of Frames is satisfactory. Flying start is a soya based pollen substitute available from E.H.Thorne. The substance is mixed with water to form a paste, which, after partially wrapping in greaseproof paper, is laid directly on top of the frames.

Cyril McCombe.

Bees Abroad Value Added Day

Sat March 2nd 2002 Hartpury College of Agriculture, Gloucester. £15.00 per person
Details from Mrs P Gregory Telephone: 01570 493601

The Reading Flood Memorial Lecture

Would you like advice on how to manage your bees in the spring? Then come to our special memorial lecture at the Wesley Methodist Church Caversham Heights on Thursday 7th March when Mrs Margaret Thomas N.D.B will be speaking. The meeting will start at 7:30pm The National Diploma in Beekeeping (N D B) has been in existence for over 40 years. It is the highest bee keeping qualification recognised in the UK and internationally for a bee-keeping lecturer or for specialist appointments requiring a high level of academic knowledge and practical ability in bee keeping.

Members of other associations are very welcome

BUCKS COUNTY BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL SEMINAR DIVERSE ASPECTS OF BEEKEEPING

Saturday March 9th 2002 Wendover Memorial Hall, Wharf Road, Wendover, Bucks. Cost: - £8.50 including lunch. For booking and further information contact Sylvia Chamberlin 01494 522082 or wwinds@ntlworld.com

Newbury and District Beekeepers' Association Inside an observation hive Graham law

Friday 15 March 2002 at 7.30pm Upper Bucklebury Memorial Hall, near Thatcham, Berkshire

Newbury Beekeepers' Association warmly invites you to the 20th Annual Leaver Memorial Lecture, to be given by Graham Law, an amateur beekeeper who has videoed some intimate and fascinating aspects of the lives of bees in an observation hive in his kitchen. If you haven't already seen Graham's video clips, you have missed something very special. And if you have seen them already, you'll probably want to see them again. You will learn things about bees that aren't in the books.

The lecture is free and all beekeepers in the region are most welcome.

Letter to the Editor

Ron, how times have changed. If years ago somebody had suggested to me that in the future I would be burning beekeeping equipment because nobody wanted it I would not have believed them Sadly that is the position I have found myself in, granted they are split top frames which I always wired myself being the cheapest way. Exteriors of WBC go very readily as garden ornaments and I am toying with the idea of turning brood boxes into Bird boxes. I am still keeping the species going with one WBC hive and two German hives, which I have on a shelf in a shed. The bee inspector took me at my word that they were OK, he was not keen to venture.

Recently I have ended my connection with Berkshire, which started in 1958 in the days when G.H. was based at Abbots Walk. Travel is not as easy as it used to be. Hope you have no bee problems and that 2002 is a successful year for you Best Regards.

John. (Batt-Rawden)

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

Proposed Jealott's Hill Trial

This wheat trial is the only open field trial of genetically modified crops planned for the 2002 season at Jealott's Hill. Subject to approval from the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the trial is likely to be planted in early April and will be harvested no later than October.

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Your committee met on January 15th and began the process of organizing our programme of interesting events and venues for the next twelve months. Three possible locations are to be investigated for the Annual Dinner, a trip to a Honey Packing Station, three or more demonstrations and at various member's apiaries and maybe our own Honey Show. During the autumn and winter evenings it was proposed to have a quiz and a visit by Dr Beulah Cullen the regional officer for our area who ensures our bees are kept healthy

For those who are unaware of the origins of our Flood Lectures a word or two of explanation. Years ago two sisters by the name of Flood were devoted members of our association and kept bees in their large garden in Reading. Upon their death they requested that bees should remain there. However the property was left to the Wycliffe church, which wanted to develop the site and did not desire having bees there. (Geoff. Fowler our President had been looking after these bees for many years). He, together with Hazel Blackburn entered into negotiations with the church and obtained £1000 to have the bees removed. This money was banked and the interest from it used to engage important people in the beekeeping world to lecture us on diverse subjects in this field.

At short notice a visit has been organised to Rowse Honey at Wallingford. Please make a note in your diary for 11th April 2002 at 5:30pm. **Tickets are limited**

Please try and attend as many of the events as you can, much time and thought has been spent organizing them. You may be able to learn quite a lot about our hobby to further your interest and expertise in our craft.

Your subscriptions were due in January. There are still some people we have not yet heard from. Enclosed is a form inviting you to rejoin us, if we don't hear from you I am afraid that this will be your last newsletter. However if you think have already paid your subscription, please inform our secretary, Robert Kiff

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

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

The first meeting of the new committee (Chairman George Butler, Treasurer Linda Scurr, Programme Secretary John Westcar) was held on 9th January. Among the items discussed were the programmes for the forthcoming summer meetings and the winter 2002/3 meetings. Marcella Skinner agreed to arrange the annual dinner. It will be held at the Pack Horse, Mapledurham, on Wednesday 13th March 2002. The approximate cost will be £17.50. Members can contact Marcella directly on 01189 723226. The venue, a 14th century inn, was chosen following the recommendation of another local society.

By popular demand, Matthew Allan from Thornes, returned for the January meeting. Matthew had clearly spent a lot of time and effort on preparing "The Quiz with a Difference". It certainly was different and brought out the competitive element in many of the members although most were still on speaking terms at the end of the evening. The quiz included solving anagrams, identifying various ancient beekeeping activities from far-flung countries and identifying a range of old and unusual beekeeping gadgets/equipment. Some of the items were so old that even the oldest (most experienced!) members were unable to identify them.

Stan Palling will give this season's last winter meeting entitled "Greys Court". The talk will be illustrated with slides and will cover both the historic house and its garden. The meeting will be held at the usual venue on: Wednesday 20th March at 7.30pm.

As usual the Librarian, Tim Selwyn, will provide a selection of books and videotapes that members can borrow to prepare for the coming season

Secretary: Brian Carter. 01491 680226

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

The January meeting was a great time to test everyone's bee-keeping knowledge when Matthew Allen from Thornes of Windsor brought his Bee-keeping Quiz along. Some other local associations have already had the pleasure (?) and those that haven't – well we won't spoil it for them. Suffice to say that we all enjoyed the evening immensely.

The Annual Dinner this year is on Friday the 15th of March, 7.00 for 7.30pm at the Aurora Garden Hotel in Bolton Avenue, Windsor. Contact Don Church direct on 01753 831939 if you still have not booked, to see if there is any room left for you. And no, that is *not* the second Friday, as stated in your programme, but the Friday after the second Tuesday! I did get the date right though. Hope to see you all there.

The first summer meeting at the Society's apiary will actually precede the last winter meeting at Windsor. So mark the dates in your diary if you have not already done so - Sunday the 7th April at 3pm, call any of the committee for directions if you have not been there before. Also, Sunday the 21st April, same time, same venue. Then, Tuesday the 9th April, for an 8'oclock start, at the All Saints Parish Hall on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor. This time, we shall have Terry Langden talking to us about "Bee-keeping, but not by the book", I for one, who very rarely reads books, will look forward to hearing what he has to say! We look forward to seeing all of you there for this last meeting the season.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

Wokingham & District Beekeepers Association

December's meeting brought Harry Peace with an interesting collection of videos, some homemade and some recorded. Topics included a study of the impact of African bees on the tropical rainforests of Central America and a lovely compilation of soaring red kites and gliders with musical backing. The meeting concluded with a festive drink and mince pies.

Ged Marshall entertained us at the January meeting with a slide show that took us through his annual activities as a commercial beekeeper. A most interesting talk that revealed Ged's pragmatic and cost-effective approach. His presentation was followed by an hour of detailed questioning from enthralled members.

One of our senior members, Marie Waller, has moved away and has kindly donated a considerable collection of WBC equipment to the Association. Any members looking to start a new hive or replace an old one should contact the Secretary at the phone number below.

ee book of the month by Rosemary Bayliss

Well, four books really.

At the National Honey Show Bob Loades collected some additions to our Beekeeping library, to keep us up-to-date on the latest publications.

The "*Beginner's Guide to Candle making*" by David Constable is a welcome follow—up to Derek Porter's talk on the subject last October.

It is a practical book, with clear, plain instructions about what you need, what safety precautions are necessary, how to make all sorts of moulded candles, and there are instructions on how to make unusual rolled candles as well as dipped and how to decorate them. At the back is a section on problems and what to do about them. The book is well illustrated and it makes you want to go and get started right away,

Another book that follows up a recent talk is Michael Bossom's "*Encaustic Art*". Many of you will remember the ease with which June Hughes demonstrated this unusual art form for us, and will have seen her at the Federation Show as well. Again, there is a clear description of the tools and coloured wax and paper you need, and there is advice on how to get started. The illustrations show what June Hughes demonstrated — you can get some exciting effects from the word go. The book goes on to describe the way your technique can develop - and the illustrations of the fantasy effects that you can get are stimulating.

Joyce White, who compiled her widely known book of honey recipes, died in 1999. Her daughter, Valerie Rogers has revised her work and added one or two recipes of her own in two volumes — "*Honey in the Kitchen*" and "*More Honey in the Kitchen*". "*Honey in the Kitchen*" focuses on puddings and cakes, but there are also recipes for salads (there is a lovely Winter Salad) and a few meat dishes including a nice coating for roast chicken. In "*More Honey in the Kitchen*", there are many more meat and some fish recipes, soups and salads, and there are recipes for wax products and mead as well as desserts and cakes. The books are worth borrowing and browsing through.

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

Newsletter "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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