



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
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Future Events

Friday 14 th March	Leaver Memorial Lecture, Upper Bucklebury	
Saturday 26th April	The B.B.K.A Spring Convention Stoneleigh	

From the Federation General Secretary: -

B.B.K.A. Membership

Your B.B.K.A. Membership card should be issued with the February copy of B.B.K.A. News (or so I'm reliably informed).

If you have paid your full member subscription to your Association for 2003, and don't receive a card, please contact your Association Secretary and also let me know. I can then check the list and make sure your name is included.

On the other hand, anyone receiving a membership card who has not renewed their subscription as a full member for 2003 should either re-subscribe immediately or return the card and inform both myself and the B.B.K.A. to enable your name to be removed from the membership database.

The information from Berkshire supplied to the B.B.K.A. for the database was based on fully paid up members paying Capitation for 2002. I will be sending updated information to the B.B.K.A. in March based on B.D.I. return information supplied by your Association Secretaries.

-----I know there are always a few late payers but if you wish to continue to receive this newsletter make sure you have paid your subs, either as a "Full Member" or as a "Friend" of your Association.

Sandra Napper

THE APIARY IN MARCH

THIS MONTH. Springs are getting earlier. I saw the first pollen coming in on the 21st January, only a few basketfuls but possibly enough to get the queen going.

By March things should be well on the move. I had my first swarm on the 25th of March last year.

-If Spring is well on the way take out the last of the solid stores outside the brood nest, melt down, strain and keep in feeder buckets in case you need to help them out a bit as the month goes on. Replace these combs with fresh foundation so as to slowly expand the brood nest.

- If the weather is particularly good make quick first inspections of brood nests. Simply note the size and evenness of the brood nest while you are transferring them to a nice clean brood box and floor. Leave disease inspections until April.
- Order New Zealand queens for April delivery, to replace queens, which are not building up adequately.
- Make sure that you have at least one super of comb and a queen excluder per hive ready for the apple and rape. That swarm wasn't alone; I'd already made five nuclei to reduce the pressure on other hives.

MAIN TOPIC **-Queens from the Colonies.** Every year I replace a third of my queens with Italian strains from New Zealand (when I can get them), in April or very early May. A further third are replaced by my own queens later in the year.

I like to keep a high proportion of Italian in my bees for their rapid breeding good honey gathering and, above all, docility. I believe there is no excuse for spiteful bees. Furthermore the NZ queens become available at the end of their summer early enough to get going in time to take advantage of our late spring flowers. They are particularly easy to introduce at this time of the year when the bees seem particularly keen to make nuclei.

I have some difficulty in understanding the sort of logic that says we should not import bees from anywhere. Clearly it would not be a good idea to import colonies from Italy, increase the rate of development of resistant Varroa, or from the USA, and increase the rate of AFB. I had some from Australia but now that the small hive beetle is there I shall stop until we know a bit more about it.

I wonder whether the b****y Channel hasn't given us Brits a false sense of security. Every time something nasty comes along we ban imports and, despite endless failures rely on the 20 miles of water to protect us. How much better it would be if we accepted that these things will get here sooner or later and joined the rest of the world in looking for ways to control them. Oh yes, and a big thank you to Europe for Bayvarol and Apistan wouldn't go amiss, either.

P.S. My Italian queens have never had Acarine and would somebody please tell me why I should worry about Kashmir virus, which has been in this country for years.

Garulus

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The BBC on Radio 4 has just started a weekly series called "The Bee Inspector" on Sunday afternoons at 2.45pm. It covers the bee inspector's work and experiences. A recording can also be heard on the BBC website

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From the Editor

There is evidence of growing concern about the possibility of the „Hive Beetle“ arriving in this country. Imports of queens and bees from countries where the beetle is known to exist are banned; I feel that importing queens or bees from outside Europe is asking for trouble. What about importing treatment resistant Varroa? you may ask; regrettably it is already here, but then, this is more likely to be due to misuse of treatments than to imports. Perhaps Dr. Waite will give us what is known on the subject.

The Newbury Leaver Memorial Lecture gives an opportunity to to hear what the NBU is doing for us, and the current research being carried out there. Some of This research is part funded by the BFA and the BBKA, this means by beekeepers, so, support it if you can.

RFC

The-National Bee Unit- a hive of activity
Dr. Ruth Waite
Friday 14 March 2003 at 7.30 pm.
Upper Bucklebury Memorial Hall, near Thatcham, Berkshire

Newbury Beekeepers' Association warmly invites you to the 21st Annual Leaver Memorial Lecture, to be given by Dr. Ruth Waite of The National Bee Unit, who will give an insight into the workings of the bee unit. With slides, she will show the work of a bee disease inspector and the research carried out at the unit. The lecture is free and all beekeepers in the region are most welcome.

Directions:

- Take the A4 to the eastern outskirts of Thatcham.
- Follow the signposting to Upper Bucklebury and Cold Ash (turning right at a roundabout if coming from Reading or left at traffic lights if coming from Newbury) follow any signs for Upper Bucklebury and after 1½ miles, at the top-of a hill, the road bends to the right — continue on past Peaches Garage and through Upper Bucklebury.
- The Memorial Hall is the last building on the right before you reach Bucklebury Common. There is ample room for car parking beside the hall.

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

A New Pest?

This pest of honeybee colonies has caused so much trouble in the U S A, since it was first found in Florida in 1998. At the end of October 2002 it was found in two areas of Australia, imports of Queen bees and attendants into the UK are prohibited for the time being. N.B.U. inspectors will be looking for this pest in high-risk areas next season. The beetle is a native of sub-Saharan Africa, where it is only a minor pest. The beetle is also in Egypt.

Both adults and Larvae live in the hive. The Larvae, which are about the size of a small wax moth larva, do the most damage, feeding on pollen and honey; they defecate on the combs causing the honey to ferment. They can live on stored comb and soon render it unusable. The larvae move from the hive to pupate in the soil close to the hive entrance. The adult beetles are dark and vary in size, the largest being about one-third of the length of a worker bee and the smallest about half this size; they may be found on the bottom of the hive as they run away from light. Bees abscond from a heavily infested hive. If you find any unusual Beetles answering to this description, please send a sample to the N.B.U.

Dr B Cullen RBI

Letters to the Editor

Dear All

The NBU will shortly be recruiting Seasonal Bee Inspectors. Until my post has been filled, it is not definitely known which areas in the Southern Region need to be covered, but there will probably be a post for a person to cover Oxfordshire, North Wiltshire, and West Berkshire and there may be one other besides. The advertisements will be in the March edition of Bee Craft, so if you have an interest in such a post, please look there for further details. I can assure you that bee inspecting is a splendid way of learning more about bees (and beekeepers!)

Beulah

By E-mail
Dear Ron

I look at any beekeeping Newsletters that are available and I think that the Berkshire one is one of the most interesting and easy to read. I do not consider myself a very experienced beekeeper, however, I would like to make a comment on the articles by Garulus.

It was my impression that the "In the Apiary" articles are intended primarily with less experienced Beekeepers in mind. I was therefore very surprised to see a suggestion that hives could be opened up and put on clean floorboards and even a clean brood box, with a degree of manipulation, as early as late February

I would not feel happy to open colonies until late March - and then only if the weather is very encouraging!

Apart from anything else, in my view it would certainly be much too early to put in frames of foundation!

It is of course, necessary to ensure that there is enough food - a very quick peek under the cover board should be enough - if in doubt, some syrup - (even half strength, 1 lb sugar to one pint water) could be given.

True, we are getting some milder winters, but mild spells - even warm days often alternate with cold (and windy) ones. It is better to be safe than sorry.

As for putting on a box of new foundation, I would consider February very much too early - the Queen will be most unlikely to move up into the new foundation until the bees have made a good start to draw it. The colony may be quite strong by the end of February, but you need really warm weather and a strong colony to draw Foundation.

Regards, Bill (Evans)

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

'Fluology' in action.

24th January saw us assembled for our annual dinner at The Maltsters Arms in Rotherfield Greys with the quality, service, and ambience generally approved-of by all. We had as an after dinner speaker Mr. Bill Dartnall, Hampshire beekeeper and chimney sweep who introduced us to such characters as "Knocky Nora" and the 'over generous sandwich chef at The Potters Heron', in anecdotes generously laced with humour and soot!

In his time, Bill has delivered 100 plus hives to Kentish fruit growers; these days he concentrates on rearing early queens and is a consultant "fluologist" a sobriquet which he invented for his other activity, which he notices is being copied by more recent practitioners in this trade! With Bill was wife Mary who is a former Chairman of the B.B.K.A and is exemplary in her continued active commitment to the Association.

Our March meeting is on Thursday 13th at the Caversham Methodist hall and is our Flood Memorial Lecture at 7.30 PM sharp. All will be welcome to listen to Mr. David Charles a Somerset beekeeper who will give us a talk on 'hands-on beekeeping'.

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.

The Annual Dinner in January was an unqualified success, with 32 in attendance. This was something of a record, I gather, and it was good to renew acquaintance with some ex-S.D.B.K.S members. Guests of Honour were Dr Beulah Cullen and her husband. Our Chairman, Denis Way, thanked Beulah for all her efforts over the past 10 years as the Bee Disease Inspector for our area and wished her well in her retirement. Don Church organised a lovely basket of flowers as a token of our best wishes. Many thanks, Don, for organising this event again.

We are scheduled to meet the new Bee Disease Inspector at the last winter meeting this season, on the 8th April. Before this, though, on the 11th of March, we shall be hearing from the Braywick Park Ranger, who will be talking to us about his fascinating topic of entomology, in particular bumblebees and wasps. If you missed his last visit, it is well worth making the effort to join us.

Both meetings will be at the usual start time of 8pm and at the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor.

At the last committee meeting, we were pleased to welcome Jim Cooper onto the committee and he has kindly agreed to become the new Apiary Supervisor, along with Stan Green, who kindly agreed to assist him. So for all things to do with the apiary, would members please note on the backs of their programme, Jim can be contacted on 01628 783228. Don't forget too, that the apiary inspections will start in earnest on the 23rd March this year. Various committee members have been keeping an eye out this year to make sure that the woodpecker protection is proving effective, which has been the case.

We also heard that an edited version of Bernhard Schumann's excellent promotional article, which was published in the recent edition of The Village Echo, a newspaper for local South Bucks villages, had generated some real interest from non-beekeepers. It is hoped that further articles will follow in other circulation areas and that the new member category of 'Friend' for non-beekeepers interested in learning more about the art, will eventually encourage more people to take up beekeeping as a result.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Talk on Biodiversity

Some 15 members and friends turned out to hear Andy Glencross, the ecology officer with Wokingham Council, give an interesting talk and slide show on local plans for sustainable biodiversity. The district is bisected by the River Loddon, which forms a valuable nature corridor and supports a wide variety of unique wildlife. Andy reported on the ten otter Holts being constructed along the river and he had high hopes that otters would migrate down from the Thames in the next few years. After the recent bad floods talk turned to possible protection measures. The current concept of draining the land at maximum speed plainly does not work since the rivers rise too rapidly. A better approach is to allow farmland to be flooded but this will entail compensating farmers for loss of winter crops.

March Meeting

The March meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th March at 8.00pm and includes a talk and slide show by Peter Beale. This is part II of the show he gave last year entitled *Light amongst the Trees*.

Rosemary's Bee-book of the Month **The Archaeology of Beekeeping by Eva Crane**

Dr Crane is one of the few beekeeping experts who are international celebrities. Her work has been in bee research, but she is also famous for her knowledge of the history and archaeology of beekeeping all over the world and for the collection of antiquities she and the International Bee Research Association have put together.

Her book on the subject is the sort of book you can read straight through or dip into here and there. It is nevertheless scholarly and meticulously precise.

She links the activities of the ancient honey-hunters with those who still gather their honey in this way in many parts of the world, using illustrations of prehistoric rock paintings of 8,000 years ago and modern photos of Africans and Nepalese hunters of today.

She records some surprising facts: wicker skeps were in use 2,000 years ago; honey has been found in ancient Egyptian tombs; there are coins with bees on them which come from the ancient Middle East.

Dr Crane goes into the use of horizontal hives, and she traces the development of skep beekeeping and upright hives in interesting detail. Her chapter on movable-frame beekeeping shows the great variety of hives and methods that had evolved by around 1850 when Langstroth made his breakthrough. She devotes a whole chapter to the use of bee boles in Britain and Ireland. As you would expect, in a book of this calibre, there are some excellent illustrations. Many are from ancient sites and from far-flung places but most are from Europe and this country. Unfortunately there is no colour, which is surprising as the publication date is 1983 — although this hardly detracts from this delightful history.

Secretary John Edwards. 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 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 for sale, surplus to requirement in 30lb containers at £1.25 / lb Telephone. 0118 9479450