



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

March 2001
Number 540

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	Newbury's Leaver Memorial Lecture	Details : General Secretary
Saturday 28 th April	Spring Convention Stoneleigh	Tickets in advance From Mrs B. Showler

FROM THE EDITOR

The beginning of the active beekeeping season is again upon us. Many experienced beekeepers have said that a good nectar flow - and therefore a good honey harvest depends on a high "water table". Often after a very dry season, yields of farm crops are below normal and growers complain that bees had not been pollinating their "free" flowers. We all know that the flowers cannot produce the nectar, which attracts the bees if there is virtually no moisture in the soil. Maybe after the wet winter, which we have had, we can hope for a good honey harvest this year, 1947 was such a year when record yields were recorded.

The coming beekeeping season can be an anxious one, many of us not knowing how our bees have come through the winter, that is with the exception of those who have been able to keep an eye on their colonies and have fed where necessary. It is surprising the number of people that have telephoned in panic for fondant or candy and were disappointed that I do not hold a stock.

With commitments to business and social events it is not always possible to attend association meetings, please support these as this gives you an opportunity to gain more knowledge and have an enjoyable time talking with old and new friends.

Apitherapy: I can confirm that the CD-ROM has been ordered (and paid for) on behalf of the Federation, I have e-mailed Roch Domerego (Vice-President of the Commission of Apitherapy) and at the moment of writing these notes, I have not had a reply.

RFC

DATA PROTECTION ACT

Under the Data Protection Act, all Associations are required to give members the opportunity to prevent their details being held on computer files for anything other than membership records if so desired.

It is usually required that members of Associations are able to contact each other by telephone therefore there is a need to circulate telephone numbers within the Associations.

This information will not be disclosed, sold, or rented to any third party other than that required by law or to comply with any legally enforceable orders.

IF YOU **DO NOT WISH TO BE CONTACTED** or receive any information for the above purposes (i.e. ex-directory numbers) please notify your Membership Secretary or Treasurer.

Data Protection Act 1st March 2000.

THE APIARY IN MARCH

It is now probably warm enough to fit foundation into the frames you cleaned up during the winter. Before you go to your bees have a clean spare floorboard and two frames for each hive ready to replace those you worked to the outside last season. This will help to reduce the incidence of disease. Also, have a super of either drawn comb or foundation for each hive.

Now observe the hive entrance. Are they flying? Is the weather calm? Yes? Good, it is now warm enough to open up. Remove the mouse guard first if you haven't already done so on a previous visit and place the brood box on your upturned roof (Note, WBC users will have to use something else suitable.) Replace the floorboard with a spare one, or clean the existing one; and refit the brood box on it. Gently remove the crown board. If you placed matchsticks beneath the board last year it should lift fairly easily but if you didn't it will be stuck with propolis. If it has stuck, gently insert the live tool all around it to fracture the propolis, so that the board can be removed with the least possible disturbance to the bees.

Remove an outside frame to give you room to work, and examine the brood frames. Is the Queen laying? Is the brood healthy and pearly white, or do some cells contain brood which is discoloured, seem to have melted and lays in a twisted position, as if it has died in pain? This is likely to be infected with EFB. Later, evidence may seem to have disappeared, especially if the colony is strong, but it won't go away and will eventually affect all your colonies in the vicinity. You are rather unlikely to find AFB at this time, unless it has been in your hive since last season. It is a disease of sealed brood and is manifest by discoloured, sunken, or pierced cappings. If in any doubt, act without delay. I recommend you obtain confirmation from the NBU by sending suspicious cell contents to the NBU, before you contact your Regional Bee Inspector.

(The editor of the Berks. Fed. News or your secretary should have a supply of plastic containers to send suspected larvae to the National Bee Unit at the Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton, York, YO41 1LZ.) This service is free of charge.

Maybe you will come across all drone brood instead of worker brood. Either the Queen is faulty or the hive is Queen-less. Don't try to give it a Queen as they may think they already have one and will kill a stranger. I will endeavour to let you know next month how to deal with this situation.

Now remove the other outside frames you are going to replace and re-assemble the colony, placing your new frames on either side of the brood. Fit the queen excluder, then the super of either comb or foundation, add the crown board, and finish with the roof. Don't forget to make an entry in your record book or card and clean the floorboard you have removed, ready for the next hive. Treat all hives similarly and look forward to a successful and happy season. Learn how to handle bees by attending the monthly demonstrations organised by you associations to observe how more experienced beekeepers work and volunteer your own colonies for such demonstrations. They will be only too willing to help and advise.

Ambrosia

BEE CRAFT IS NOW ON THE WEB. Look at: www.bee-craft.com

SWARM COLLECTION

I am looking for beekeepers willing to have their name and telephone number on a swarm co-ordinators listing on the Kentbee.com website. I would like to extend the present listing beyond Kent to other parts of Britain.

URL: <http://www.kentbee.com/kentswarms.htm> If you are interested, please contact me direct or through your own Secretary or News Editor.

Steven Turner (Postmaster BeeNet) on st@zbee.com

BUCKS SEMINAR DAY March 3rd

Speakers: Graham Law Videos of bees
 Michael Keith-Lucas Pollen expert
 Norman Hughes Practical beekeeping

There will also be a Brains Trust with all three speakers.

At the Memorial Hall Wharf Road Wendover. Tickets £8.50 (includes a ploughman's lunch) from:

David Brownfield Telephone 01908 501532.

NEWBURY'S LEAVER MEMORIAL LECTURE

Pathogenic fungi: new ways to fight Varroa
Katie Shaw
ROTHAMSTED IACR

Friday 16th March 2001 at 7.30pm
Upper Bucklebury Memorial Hall, near Thatcham, Berkshire

Newbury Beekeepers Association warmly invites you to the 19th Annual Leaver Memorial Lecture.

This year our speaker will bring some fascinating news about ongoing research at Rothamsted on the search for suitable pathogenic fungi which can be used to manage the number of Varroa in colonies. The research is now in its third year and Katie Shaw will report on the latest findings, which we have heard are very promising.

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

Directions from your Secretary or from the Editor

BEES in the CURRICULUM

Bees in the curriculum now has its own site on the Internet

Have a look at www.bees4kids.org.uk

By now all schools in the country will have been circulated with the details, if you have children (or grand children) at school, get them to enquire about the subject from their teacher, in this way we can increase awareness of nature and bees in particular. Maybe some of you could make an educational visit to your local school; observation hives are available. We would welcome the experience and advice of anyone who has already given school talks.

DISEASE

Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -

Dr. Beulah Cullen. Hillingdon, Middlesex.
South Eastern Region:- Mr. James Morton

Fax/Telephone number 01895 810469
Fax/Telephone number 020 8571 6450

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION

Our January meeting was an intriguing demonstration of 'Encaustic Art with Wax' given by Mrs June Hughes. This was enjoyed by a good audience who appreciated the talent and artistic flair that June showed. It was fascinating to see the various pictures unfold and to realise that anyone of us could become proficient, given time, and that it would be a rewarding hobby. Two members took up the challenge to 'have a go', produced pictures to their credit, and were duly signed. Anyone wishing to find out more about this particular hobby should call June Hughes on 01256 464280.

At our next meeting on Wednesday 14th March, will be a talk on Bee Farming by Mr A Chambers. Do try to bee there.

An organisation called LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) has invited club members to tour Jealott's Hill Farm, in Warfield in an effort to raise awareness of environmentally responsible farming practices and the ways in which farmers are addressing current concerns. Their mission is to run a profitable commercial farm whilst minimising risks to wildlife and the environment and with the long-term aim of increasing the total number and frequency of plant and animal species on the farm. It promises to be a very interesting and educational visit. We have provisionally arranged a mid-summer, evening tour for Wednesday 20th June 2001. Reservations should be made with John Edwards on 0118 934 0238, before 1st June. Numbers will be limited to 30 people.

Members are reminded that we have an extensive library of over 100 books that sees very little use. It becomes questionable whether we should continue to maintain the library if the take-up does not improve. Do call Bob Loades on 0118 961 9631 if you need help on bees or any associated subject.

Hon. Joint Secretaries: Sylvia Smallbone & John Edwards 0118 934 0238

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

Our January meeting saw a return of Harry Peace with an excellent selection of beekeeping and non-beekeeping videos produced by Harry himself. A disappointingly small audience was rewarded with an astonishingly beautiful sequence of red kites soaring and sharing thermals with model radio controlled gliders.

Our last winter meeting takes place on Wednesday 21st March, when we will welcome Geoff. Seamark, a commercial beekeeper, and former foul brood officer who will talk about his world-wide beekeeping experiences.

Our annual dinner will by popular request again take place at the home of Anne and Peter Arlidge on Friday 2nd March. Last year we only just squeezed everybody in; this year I feel it will be a question of first come first served so make your reservation now!

Hon. Secretary: - George Butler 0118 983 2735

SLOUGH AND DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY

Once again, we thank Gerry McDonald for bringing us some fascinating videos on beekeeping for the January meeting. The main one was about Brother Adam and his quest for the 'perfect' honeybee. This legendary beekeeper had some extraordinary tales to tell along the way and we all enjoyed being able to see for ourselves the dedication he had to his chosen task. Even today, his Buckfast queens continue to be much sought after, what an epitaph to a lifetimes work.

Our Annual Dinner this year will be held at a new venue for us - Hot Rocks Bistro in the centre of Eton Wick. We hope to see many of you there on Friday, the 9th March, at 7.30 for 7.45pm. The order forms were distributed last month, so hopefully, you will have returned them and booked your place already. If not, then contact Don Church urgently to see if there are any places still available.

The final winter meeting will again be a video evening. This time, in order to help us start the summer schedule off in fine style, the subject will be 'The Bee-keeping Year', which it is hoped will remind us all of how and when we need to be doing the various tasks in our apiaries. This will be on Tuesday the 10th April at the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor at 8 o'clock as usual.

The summer meetings will also commence this month, on Sundays at 3pm. The first is on Sunday, 8th April and then 2 weekly throughout the summer, this year we will be having demonstrations on some Sundays, so watch out for the details which will follow.

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

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Geoff Burroughs of Halcyon Honey Farm gave us some idea of the life of a bee farmer on Thursday 11th January. It seems to me to be a job that demands hard work and dedication. His farm is in the tourist area of the Chilterns and he exploits this by selling his honey in various types of attractive honey containers. Apparently, the Japanese people love honey filled plastic teddy bears. When a coach load of Japanese tourists disgorges outside an outlet of his, these are the first items to be snapped up. He also utilises his wax to a great extent, selling candles in all shapes and sizes. All this and running a great number of colonies at the same time!

He uses a wax starter for the bees to produce their comb instead of wired foundation, and is able to supply a great deal of comb honey, which is much sought after in his area. Owing to his workload during the summer, he is generally unable to extract all his supers and when he finally gets around to carrying out this work in the New Year, they of course have granulated solid. He gets over this problem by cutting the complete frames out and depositing them in a large stainless steel warm tank fitted with a mashing device, which mashes the mixture. The wax is then removed when it floats to the surface and he is left with creamed honey. He finds fuel costs his most expensive outlay, so plans his visits to his outlets as economically as possible. He told us he has to produce about nine or ten tons per year to make it pay.

Our next meeting will be on March 8 When we will be enlightened in the art of producing candles and models made from beeswax by Mr Martin Buckle. This is a special Flood Memorial lecture, and is not to be missed.

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

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

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 recently released Thymol based products, Apiguard, and Thymovar. Rendered beeswax in exchange for foundation.

SURPLUS HONEY FOR SALE IN 30lb CONTAINERS £1.10 per pound. Apply 0118 947 9450/0370 273092.



Mummy, why do the bees hum?
---They have probably forgotten the words!

Comic von Wolfgang Willnat, Belau

From: Schweiz. Bienen-Zeitung