



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

May 2002
Number 553

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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From the General Secretary's Office -

The BBKA is intending to establish a register of Members.

Rule 33 of their constitution requires Member Associations to submit lists of their members on an annual basis which will "enable us (the BBKA) to use the information supplied to provide a better range of services and benefits to our members".

Membership cards will be produced (to be issued to members from October 2002), which will enable benefits to be available exclusively to BBKA members, e.g. discounts, privileged entry to events, access to resources (e.g. libraries / slides / films) as well as providing proof of insurance cover for Public and Product Liability Insurance. Only members whose names and addresses have been registered with the BBKA will be insured.

A link with BDI may follow, BBKA News could be mailed direct to members and members could be contacted directly by mail or e-mail with bulletins on national issues or local matters.

The data supplied will be covered under the Data Protection Act.

The register will be confidential to the BBKA, held securely and not released to any third party.

The register will comprise of name, address and postcode as essential fields with telephone no. / e-mail address as optional.

If you have any objection to any of this information being released to the BBKA please inform me via your Association Secretary. Otherwise the information will be as supplied to me by your Secretary for my own Federation membership list.

The register (and my list) can be updated regularly with any changes.

Hopefully this will be a positive move forward in communications between the BBKA and its members.

Upcoming Events Meridian Beekeepers Association Annual International Lecture.

A lecture on Queen Rearing by Jos Hillin from Belgium.

Date - Tuesday 30th April. 7.15 for 7.30pm. Venue - Marwell Zoological Park, Nr Winchester.
Price - £2.00 on the door. Finger Buffet on completion. Further details - Contact Jacky Lacey on 023 8043 4703 or Alan and Margaret Johnson on 01489 892390.

Sandra Napper.

SHOW TIME

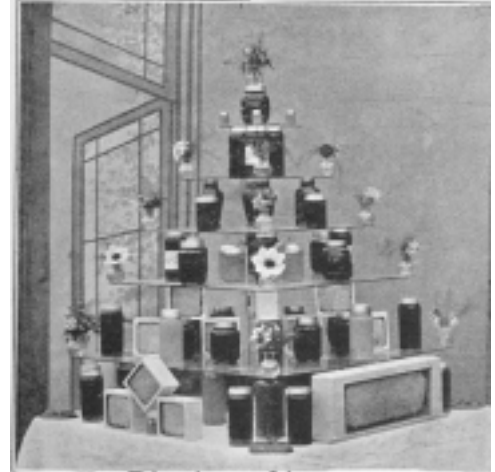
At this early stage – with the rape bloom well ahead of usual it would seem that there may be an early honey harvest! It is great to see the 'liquid gold' running from the extractor tap.

It is good to think early about our summer shows and keep back some jars of your best honey.

At this time keep in front of you the Show Schedule – ask the show organiser for one – your Association Secretary knows who the show organiser is.

It goes without saying that extracted honey must be well filtered; why not put some thin foundation in one of your supers for cut comb honey. Mark the frames of thin unwired foundation in some way - a drawing pin is an often-used marker.

When you are getting your wired frames ready for extraction look for the best one to enter the "A frame for Extraction" class - but not those filled with rape honey, as these will granulate and therefore are not fit for extraction by the time the show comes! Perhaps you are questioning why we have honey shows! I have always felt that a Honey show is a showcase for our craft. Certainly, if you aim to sell your honey, it should be such that you are proud to sell it because it is a good quality product and presented well, as such it should be good enough for the show bench! So make up your mind to enter the shows.



Display of honey
From Beekeeping New and Old

I referred to the show schedule. Do make sure to read the schedule carefully; you don't want to see NAS by your entry. What it does NAS mean? Simply, not according to schedule!

These are a few pointers. Do make a decision to put entries in both your association and the Federation shows.

Adapted for the 21st Century

THE APIARY IN MAY

By the time that you read these notes, the spring flow should be well under way and we hope that the supers are filling up. However it is quite clear, even at the time of writing, that losses during the winter of 1992/93 were particularly heavy in this part of the world. Many of my friends have lost one or more colonies and similar experiences are reported from other parts of the south of England.

The cause of these losses is not obvious. In the majority of cases, starvation can be ruled out because the dead stocks had plenty of winter stores left in the hive. Disease has also not been found generally, although occasionally it can be blamed for the loss,

Typically a stock survived until the spring; the only external sign of trouble being an unusually large number of dead bees on the ground. When the hive was opened, there was no sign of life apart from the inevitable robber from outside, all the inhabitants were dead. In addition there was no sign of any brood - not an egg, grub or pupa to be found. So that the disaster seems to have struck in the autumn since normally a small brood nest is started shortly after the turn of the year.

What is to be done? One cannot rule out the possibility that the underlying cause is disease, which has not been apparent, such as a virus. Therefore I personally would not re-use the combs from the dead stock, at least not without sterilising them with acetic acid. Nosema, American Foul Brood and some viruses can live for years in the old combs so I destroy them to be on the safe side. New foundation is expensive, (but so are bees), and local associations have foundation presses which can be used by members to make their own.

Swarms are the obvious and easy way to replace the lost colonies. There has been some argument about using swarms since the outbreaks of European Foul Brood and the spread of Varroa and each beekeeper must make up his mind about the risks. If you know the origin of the swarm, there is no problem; if you don't, it is well worthwhile to quarantine the swarm away from other bees until there is plenty of healthy brood to show that all is well. Varroa is unlikely to be spotted in a swarm, and if it is present in a local swarm, then it is almost certainly present in all the local stocks as well.

Matrix revisited

FROM THE EDITOR

Easter, and most colonies advancing rapidly, one or two lagging behind but in all probability they will catch up. Honey stocks are selling fast, some people are still selling at an uneconomic price, which should be a minimum retail price of £2.50 per 454g (1lb) jar. I am told that even this is too cheap, however, I feel that one must be realistic and fair.

Contributions for the Newsletter are always welcome but whether by letter or e-mail they will not be published unless accompanied by a name and address, names can of course be withheld from publication if so desired.

I Have contributed to "send a hive of bees" (that is a lie! My wife did it on my behalf) it seems to be a worthwhile charity. See the article below.

RFC

Golden Harvest

Families in Lesatho are beginning to harvest their first honey from bees provided by "Send a Cow" last year. Each household was given one hive, which they have kept in a protected area in their farm compound. Several of the 20 families will have delayed harvests because heavy rain has diluted the nectar, and kept the bees confined to their hives, but all the hives should have been harvested by April.

Average harvests are five kilos of honey, which they expect to sell at £6 a kilo. The delighted New beekeepers have already agreed what to do with their £30 extra income: they will divide it into four £7.50 shares paying one into a health fund on which each family can draw if they need medical treatment, investing another in a second hive, and using the third for their own needs. And that £7.50 is enough to pay for six months education for primary school child.



An experienced trainer using one of the hives for demonstration purposes


As for the fourth, that will be repaid into their community fund, to provide bees for other poor families. They will repeat this payment for the next three years until they have repaid the original cost of their hives and bees. This is the equivalent of the "pass-on" system we operate in other countries, but there is an extra element in this case.

The group have put catch boxes all round the village, so when the bees swarm some lucky villagers will be receiving a free gift of bees, courtesy of the sky and the wind.

■■■and finally

Thinking of a fund-raising event this year? We can help with ideas, speakers and support on the day/s. Our exciting range of merchandise is available and we have posters, leaflets and displays ready for your use.

Why not make the first move? Contact "Send a Cow" and we will be in touch to see the best way we can help.



Send a Cow
Livestock for Life

In partnership with *Heifer International*

Send a Cow, Unit 4, Priston Mill,
Priston, Bath BA2 9EQ
Telephone: 01225 447041
Fax: 01225 317627
e-mail: info@sendacow.org.uk
website: www.sendacow.org.uk
Registered charity number 299717

*To help protect the environment,
Lifeline is printed on 'Green Coat Plus'.
This paper contains 80% waste fibre and
is totally chlorine free.*

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

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

There was an extremely good turnout to listen to Margaret Thomas talk on Spring Management. I am sure that they were not disappointed. She was brilliant and imparted sound and practical knowledge and ideas from her years of hands on experience. She used considerable audience participation throughout the evening, which added to our enjoyment.

May is swarming time. If you find swarm cells, you must act before any are sealed, because as soon as any cell is sealed a swarm will emerge and fly off. Action to be taken if you can't find the queen: There may be a queen there but not laying so you are unlikely to find eggs. Take the supers off and move the colony about two yards behind its original position. Place a fresh floor and brood chamber filled with comb or foundation, on the original site and leave a space in its centre. Look through your colony, destroy all Q-cells except a couple of nice, occupied cells and transfer these to the middle of the new box. Add frames of sealed worker cells and bees and place next to the frame with the queen cells. At the outer edges of your new box place a couple of combs each of honey and pollen, close up, replace queen excluder and supers.

Fit the now spare foundation into the old box on either side of the brood nest. Leave the new box alone for a couple of weeks. This is not an ideal method but it can work for you if the conditions are right.

Our next meeting will be in Peter Kimber's garden Tel 947 1319 on Sunday morning May 12th at 11.00am. Hope to see you there. Happy beekeeping.

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

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

Our Annual Dinner was held on 13th March at the Pack Horse, Mapledurham when nineteen members enjoyed getting together for a meal and a chat. There were one or two things in the presentation of the meal that could have been improved upon but these were probably due to the fact that a new landlord had taken over two days prior to our meal. Very soon your Committee will be arranging next Winter's programme including the venue for our 2003 Annual Dinner - suggestions please to any Committee member.

The last winter meeting of the season was an illustrated talk with slides on 'Greys Court' given by Stan Palling one of the National Trusts 45,000 volunteers. The house is relatively small compared with most National Trust properties but it is still occupied and consequently has an appealing lived in feeling. The house was given to the Trust in 1969 but most of the updating and restoration had been carried out by the previous owners, the Stapletons. Among the attractions of the property are the Cromwell Stables (although there is no evidence that Cromwell ever visited), thatched Ice House, wood carvings, Chinese Bridge (slightly incongruous), a maze (with religious connotations), a visiting flock of special sheep (one of our members demonstrated that she knows one sheep from another by naming all the breeds) and the donkey and horse wheels once used to draw water. Stan Palling is an expert photographer and the talk was well illustrated, particularly the interior of the house with its special plasterwork.

The May meeting will be held at 2.30 pm at;

VIOLA CROWES apiary at Brightwell-cum-Sotwell on Saturday 11th MAY

As usual the meeting will include an inspection/demonstration and the annual PLANT SALE. Please bring along any spare bedding plants, surplus vegetables ready for transplanting, excess self-seeded flowers, rooted cuttings etc etc together with a large container to take home all the plants you will purchase.

Secretary: Brian Carter. 01491 680226

Wokingham & District Beekeepers Association

Peter Beale treated us to a fascinating slide show entitled 'Light amongst the Trees' at our March meeting. Peter explained some of the interesting conservation work he had undertaken during a long career with the Forestry Commission. His time-lapse photos showing how plants and animals re-colonise cleared patches in an otherwise sterile conifer forest were particularly impressive.

Our May visit to a member's apiaries is planned for 3.00pm on **Sunday, 19th May** where we will inspect Bob Loades' hives at 'Norbury', Binfield. Members should phone 01344 421747 to declare an interest in attending.

Rosemary's Book of the Month – *A Beekeeper's Garden* by Ted Hooper and Mike Taylor.

We all like to see bees in our gardens and most of us want to grow the plants that attract them. Quite often we are disappointed to find that what we lovingly planted either does not grow or, what is worse does not attract bees at all.

This book is designed to avoid these disappointments. It is written by Ted Hooper, who probably needs no introduction, and Mike Taylor who understands the problem thoroughly because he is Head of Horticulture at Elmwood Agricultural College and is also an amateur beekeeper himself. So between the two of them the information should be reliable!

The presentation is simple enough, listing plants in alphabetical order from Abelia to Weigela, giving a concise abbreviated indication of the sort of plant it is, followed by a good description and ending with a few suggested varieties and a word about the conditions they like. The book includes some very useful pages on hedges and on garden planning as well as advice on pruning and pesticides. There is also a good little section for the new beekeeper. The pictures are lovely too. It is a very informative new addition to our library.

ROY GILES

We are very sorry indeed to announce that Roy Giles has died unexpectedly. He was a keen and popular beekeeper and did a lot for the Wokingham Association in many ways. He was our chairman through the early Nineties. He will be greatly missed by his many friends.

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

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

Our March Annual Dinner was well attended and a very enjoyable evening was had, good food and good company, what more can one ask for? Our sincere thanks go to Don Church for organising the evening for us once again.

The apiary visits this month are on the 5th and 19th and we shall look forward to seeing some new faces this year to support our committee in keeping this vital part of our society flourishing. The hour or so that we spend on a Sunday afternoon twice a month is a pleasant way to learn how others would deal with the variety of circumstances found in the hives there. There is much discussion on the merits of various methods. We also hear how other members are faring and, more importantly, any items of news that have been circulated to the associations.

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. In June, the dates are the 2nd, 16th and 30th. Do mark your calendars now and make the effort – it's well worth it!

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson Burnham (01628) 664091

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

Honey for sale, surplus to requirement in 30lb containers at £1.15 / lb
Telephone. 0118 9479450 (3-4)