



# FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

May 2003  
Number 564

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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

13th-15th November 2003	The National Honey Show	
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### From the Federation General Secretary :-

The Federation Council meets four times a year and includes two representatives from each of our Member Associations.

You may feel that the Federation is distant and nothing to do with you, but you couldn't be more wrong. Your representatives are there to do your bidding. There to bring your problems, observations and questions to a wider circle, to be discussed and hopefully acted on, or at least answered

Use your representatives.

We also have a delegate to the B.B.K.A., and once a year at the Annual Delegates Meeting propositions are put forward to change the way that beekeeping in Britain is organised and run. Again these propositions come from you, the members.

Get involved, don't just sit back and accept things. Challenge them.

You can make a difference.

Sandra Napper

### From the Federation Chairman

The last issue of the Newsletter gave the results of the survey conducted by the Federation into assessing the views of the individual members as to how they would like the various Associations to be organized. Whilst the results were interesting and useful it would appear that it **may** be better to carry on as we are for the time being. I therefore repeat my plea that all members continue to support not only their own Association but also the Federation. There will be a Federation Show this year so do make a note in your diary when the date and venue are announced and more importantly not only attend but also enter as many classes as possible.

Derek Porter

THIS MONTH. Fine weather at the end of March gave plenty of opportunity to get spring-cleaning well under way. This month they should be getting ready to swarm and be filling up with early honey, rape, and apple.

- Keep up the ten daily inspections, taking out all old, stored honey and replacing with foundation.
- Have the gear ready to make nuclei and for Demareeing colonies showing signs of swarming.
- If you have rape in your area remove the honey and extract as soon as the nearest field begins to lose its all-over golden colour.
- Rape honey will always have some crystals in it after extracting. If you need to strain it through muslin it will need heating (carefully) first. If you can't, keep it in bulk and mix it with a later crop to make creamed honey –always the most popular hive product.

**MAIN TOPIC -Opportunistic queen rearing.** Something to do with all those nice fat queen cells which you find just when you'd rather not.

Fit a spare frame with a crossbar, using only one screw on each side, so that the bar can be rotated. Fit eight screws through the crossbar so that they are tight and the points project through by about 10mm. Get at least eight "hair roller" cages from Thornes. Cut four wine bottle corks in half and shave down one end of each so that it is a tight fit in the queen cage. Cut a shallow depression in the top of the shaved end of each cork. Fit each onto the frame screws at the unshaved end so that the cages can be fitted tightly.



When you suddenly find a hive full of queen cells remove them all taking care (with the eight best) not to cut into the top of the cells. Lay the frame on its side and rotate the crossbar so that the corks are pointing upwards. Light a candle (beeswax not essential) and drop two or three drops of molten wax in the depression on the first cork. Immediately put on the first queen cell and hold in place until set. Repeat with the other queen cells and fit the cages over the top of them.

Put the frame with all but three of the hive frames in a new brood box on a new site making sure that the old queen remains with the three frames on the old site.

Top up both brood chambers with foundation or good quality brood comb and shut down. Leave any supers on the old site. Check the queen cages every other day, and, as the queens emerge, use them to make mating nuclei.

When the first queen is laying well use her to replace the queen in the old hive.



**Garulus.**

## From the Examinations Secretary

Now that the beekeeping season is underway, why not enter for the B.B.K.A Basic Examination this year. It is very easy to pass if you have kept bees for a year or two. There are lots of publications available to guide you through the requirements of the various examinations. I will be pleased to hear from anyone who is interested in taking the Basic as I can supply a syllabus and other details.

Derek Porter 0118 979 0326

## FROM THE EDITOR

Reading's Flood Memorial Lecture in March showed that less experienced beekeepers are not adequately catered for. Some of the questions asked were a stark reminder that near beginners are sometimes at a loss to know what to do in some circumstances and are too embarrassed to ask. Most of the questions were beyond a short beginners class. One of the subjects was cut comb, there is a market for natural cut comb, not every one appreciates the thicker mid rib on such comb, and it is even thicker than standard foundation. When working for cut comb using foundation one should use thin unwired.

Newbury's Leaver Memorial Lecture by Ruth Waite gave an excellent insight into the workings of the research team at the National Bee Unit. There is much collaboration with various research projects at universities sponsored by B.B.K.A, B.F.A, appliance dealers, and pharmaceutical companies. The new testers for brood disease should be available shortly; indeed, the first field test for AFB was carried out in the Wallingford area with an impressive result.

RFC

## Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -

We have not yet been notified of the officers for our region – contact the General Secretary or the Editor.

South Eastern Region:- Mr. James Morton      Fax/Telephone number 020 8571 6450

## Appointed Bee Inspectors: - ?

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

Our March meeting was again well attended, to hear the Braywick Park Ranger talk to us about the life of the Bumblebee. During the spring, queens that have over wintered can be found searching for a new nest site. After hearing the talk, I have noticed quite a lot in my garden. In fact, at dusk one evening last week there were five or six, noticeably of several different species, gathered around the kitchen window but, thankfully, they have now dispersed. It is apparently a myth that they cannot sting!

The last winter meeting has now taken place and the summer programme of visits to our apiary is well under way. The earlier start to these proved to be well timed to prevent two of the colonies become distressed. One had too few bees to support the laying queen, whilst the other had plenty of bees but no queen. These have been united and it is hoped they will now thrive. The others were doing quite well and all had escaped attention from the woodpecker this year as the protective cages had done their work.

The attendance was good at this first meeting, so keep up the support for this vital work at the visits in May. They will be on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> at 3pm at the Society's apiary in Fulmer. For directions, call the Apiary Supervisor, Jim Cooper on 01628 783228, or myself as below. In June they are scheduled for the Sundays of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. See you there.

Newsletter items:      Joy Dodson. Burnham (01628) 664091

## WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Our meeting on March 12<sup>th</sup> had to be hurriedly re-organized, as Peter Beale was taken ill not long before the meeting. Bob Loades kindly brought along some videos together with his video player and TV set. Despite having tested the equipment before he left home, it refused to perform when set up at the hall. The day was saved by Rosemary Bayliss going home and bringing her video recorder. This behaved impeccably so we were able to enjoy a showing of a film which none of us, apart from Bob it seemed, had seen before. It was about the honey badger, which is a ferocious little animal that lives in parts of Africa. It raids wild bee colonies and will not give up until it has got every last bit of comb even if it means taking several stings. We were all enthralled at the tenacity of this creature. There was a good turnout for this meeting, which was the last of the Winter programme. The Committee has been very heartened by the numbers of people attending the meetings this year and they will soon put together a new programme which I trust will be as interesting and entertaining.

Derek Porter

(John Edwards is in South Africa where the weather is hot but England's cricket was not)

### Rosemary's Bee-book of the month.

R.O.B. Manley was an influential figure in British beekeeping in the 1940's and 50's. His book, "Beekeeping in Britain" is a classic. It came out in 1948, just after the war and it was a great source of information for the many people who had been tempted to take up bee keeping as a source of extra income at a time when sugar was in short supply.

Manley himself was a bee-farmer at Benson in Oxfordshire and he had kept bees for many years. In the book he gives information and some sound advice from his own considerable experience.

The basic principles of beekeeping, of course don't change. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice some of the ways in which things have altered over the last half-century. In those days most small beekeepers went for W.B.C hives and there is a lot of advice on working with them. Bee-keeping equipment supplies were not as accessible as they are today, so under the heading "In the Workshop" he gives detailed instructions on making equipment, Foul-brood was as much a menace then as it is now, but the treatment he suggests does not include an antibiotic because these were only just coming into use. There is a chapter on the prospects for bee-keepers in which he mentions the price of a jar of honey - 1 shilling and ninepence. There is a chapter on the different strains of bees which were in use then in which he describes their different characteristics,

As a working manual the book tends to ramble into personal anecdote however, as a book on bee-keeping, it is a pleasure to read.

Rosemary Bayliss

**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 1<sup>st</sup> 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

**Late submission attached:  
READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

On March 13<sup>th</sup> Reading Beekeepers Association hosted Mr. David Charles for our Flood Memorial Lecture on the subject of "Hands-on Beekeeping." David is a past chairman of FBBKA and appropriate for the season majored on building-up of colonies for honey production and swarm management, in particular the continuing problems of nosema which maybe present in colonies which build-up slowly, microscopy should be considered and replacement of old combs with new wax.

David's apiary is in Glastonbury, he uses a programme of managed pest elimination that includes a mesh floor, appreciable numbers of Varroa mites fall-off their hosts, and the floor should be as high as practicable above ground to reduce the chances of climbing back. Also recommended was the use of a shallow frame in the brood chamber, which the bees should draw-out as drone cells, Varroa apparently target the slow developing drone imago for their own cycle and these can be sacrificed along with the developing mites. As David is in Somerset, measures like this are being used with the pocket of pyrethroid resistance in the next county. It would be advisable that in our area we are aware of techniques to control Varroa as well as the use of Apistan and Bayvarol. Literature is available. A very good lecture, which kept us talking right up to closing time!

Members of Reading Association who received an invitation to the South Chilterns Association annual dinner on 5<sup>th</sup> march would like to express their appreciation, just because they have declared 'UDI!' doesn't mean they are no-longer nice people and fellow enthusiasts!

Our May meeting is on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> at 11.30, at Cross-Lanes Apple Farm Mapledurham where Cyril McCombe has a apiary, Cyril's bees should be hard at work on the apple blossom.

Jon Davey

**The Editor** has been asked for web addresses of other Associations and for other Newsletters. Below is an extract From **the Bromley Website**; by using the various links you can access many bee-keeping sites. The addresses below are hyperlinked, go to <http://www.beedata.com/apis-uk/> If anyone wishes to receive the Federation newsletter by e-mail please apply to your own Secretary.

**Improved web version of this newsletter with pictures**

URL: <http://www.kentbee.com/bromley/newsletters/aprilbbk03.htm> Photographs are always needed for our newsletters, if you have any interesting beekeeping pictures send them to the editor and we will publish them.

**Apis-UK - The free Beekeeping web magazine and newsletter**

Contents: Beekeeping news; Bees for Development web review; Bee Press; Using some of the products of the hive - John Yates; Fact or Fiction - The honey bee dance questioned; Historical note; Readers letters - Kate Gurasashvili, Brian P Dennis, Mike Gaze, Thiele consulting news; Kent one day Beekeeping course - Richard Worden; Beekeeping events diary. Total D/L 242KB

URL: <http://www.beedata.com/apis-uk/newsletters/apis-uk0303.htm>

**This article found on BeeSource.com**

"Housel Positioning" - How I View It's Importance To Beekeeping! by American commercial beekeeper Dee A. Lusby. URL: <http://www.beesource.com/pov/lusby/housel.htm>

**Diablo Beekeepers in the USA** URL: <http://www.diablobees.org>

**The Bees for Development** new website now open for business URL: <http://www.beesfordevelopment.org>

*Steven Turner*