



**FEDERATION OF  
BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS**

**President: Miss Margery Cooper**

October 2003  
Number 569

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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**

<b>The Federation Lecture and Honey Show Oct 11<sup>th</sup>:</b>		
13th-15th November 2003	The National Honey Show	

**From the Federation General Secretary:**

If you haven't entered anything for the Autumn Event on October 11<sup>th</sup> yet, there should still be time. So, get your fingers out and your entries in. If you've lost or misplaced your schedule and entry form, phone Hazel Blackburn on 0118 947 5451 (Evenings) or 0118 947 9450 (Daytime).

I have noticed an error on the back of the schedule regarding times for staging of exhibits. Staging of exhibits is between 10.00 a.m. and 11.30 a.m. (not 11.00 and 12.30 as stated).

Our first speaker for the day has at last been finalised as Peter or Barbara Dalby giving a talk on "Apitherapy" (This talk is timed to start at 11.45a.m.)

Dr. Rose Cooper will follow this with her talk "Honey and Healing" in the afternoon, starting at approximately 2.15 p.m. So, between talks there should be plenty of time for lunch, making new friends or just catching up on all the gossip.

Sandra Napper

**IN THE APIARY: October.**

THIS MONTH: At the beginning of August the nectar dried up just like everything else and even the blackberry produced very little. There is still a trickle coming in with most hives having about half a super. I shall take the supers off and force them to put anything else down below. We will need a really wet September to produce a crop from the ivy and this doesn't look likely.

October is the first of the quiet months and the last when feeding remains practicable.

-Check the weight of all hives and feed all those that appear to be unduly light. 2lbs of sugar to 1 pint of water makes the strong syrup, which means the bees only need to store it.  
-This is also the last chance to unite weak stocks, making sure that you consolidate with as much stored food as possible.

-Fit mouse guards. I often forget and pay the price with lost colonies or, at the least, ruined comb.

-Start dropping hints about Christmas presents. Why not buy your partner a new bee jacket (making sure that it fits you!).

A pack of ten sheets of foundation won't break the bank and will let you start one hive with a complete set of clean combs (see Main Topic). Its time you had a stainless steel hive tool, that old thing, smothered in propolis and nosema spores, is a disgrace. O.K so it takes you five goes to get your smoker going, you've got all the time in the world. How about a self-igniting blowtorch? £15 from any DIY emporium. Even your son can afford that! New Year's resolution –increase his pocket money?

**MAIN TOPIC** A Clean Start. One or two of our members had the great privilege of seeing one of Beulah Cullen's apiaries this year. The year before last we had an outbreak of EFB in our Association apiary and had to flame the insides of all our hives and transfer the bees onto new foundation. We were all amazed at how well the bees did that year. They'd replaced the lost brood within a month, and still brought in a reasonable crop of honey. It reminded you of just how a swarm roars away when in a new hive. It also leads you to think that many bee diseases are endemic, being constantly renewed by infection from contaminated hives. We never see the bees carting out the dead brood!

Beulah replaces ALL of her brood comb, every year in one operation.

The trick is to catch her brood nests just when they are starting to expand and this requires some action during that good weather week which always seems to occur in late February or early March. You need to have ready a spare brood chamber, crown board, six frames and two dummy boards. All should have been sterilised by flaming or Acetic acid and the frames should be ready with new foundation. (This wants a bit of planning and this is why I am telling you about it in October).

Start by putting the half brood chamber or (if you work doubles) the one without any brood underneath so that the brood is at the top. Turn the brood chamber "warm ways" with the frames across the brood chamber parallel to the entrance.

Working quickly take out all frames that don't have brood and move the frames with brood to the front of the hive with one dummy behind them. This makes a compact brood nest with no further room for laying.

Now put the clean brood chamber on top with the frames immediately above the brood and the other dummy board behind them. This creates a narrow brood chamber with the only room for laying up in the top (when the bees have drawn out the foundation).

Give a good feed of light syrup to stimulate wax production and leave for a fortnight for things to settle down.

By this time the queen should be laying upstairs and you can put a queen excluder under her (make sure she is up there) to keep her up.

Meanwhile clean out, sterilise and re-foundation the combs removed at the first visit. Once the brood in the bottom chamber has all hatched put it on top and use a clearer board to send the bees down into the new brood chamber. Slowly use the re-founded frames to fill the new brood chamber as the queen expands the brood nest.

Clean out and sterilise the floor, old brood boxes and all remaining brood frames. Keep for next year or as supers for the much-improved crop of honey that will result.

One quibble. I've seen this procedure done, I know it works and I strongly recommend it –despite the fact that I've had no success with it myself. I work 14" x 12" brood chambers and the brood nest, being on extra deep frames, almost always has an arch of stored honey over the top of it.

I suspect that the queen wont cross this to start laying above. It will be interesting to see whether the method can be used, sideways, in a Dartington long deep hive. This will be one of the first projects I will suggest when we get our Dartington in the Association apiary. It should be much easier to carry out in the Dartington.

Garulus.

### **From the Editor:**

CS L has reported that pyrethroid resistant Varroa has been confirmed in Shropshire and also in county Durham, one case in Shropshire (see the letter below) and two cases in Durham several miles apart. It is reported that a hive of bees had been moved from Devon to the Durham area but no connexion has been established between these last two cases. I am of the opinion that resistant Varroa is more widespread than was first thought. I also feel that a positive test using a sample of only about 300 bees will indicate that the infection is heavy, and is widespread in the immediate area bearing in mind that while brood is in the hive the majority of Varroa will be in the cells containing brood.

Get testing.

Your secretary has a testing kit, use it as soon as possible; if pyrethroid resistant Varroa is in our area the sooner it is found and tackled the better for all of us.

We are **still** looking for a replacement for "Garulus". If you have at least four years practical experience and an ability to crib from other beekeeping sources (without infringing copyright) then please contact the Editor, the General Secretary or your own Secretary. Alternatively, suggest someone who you think could do the job but are too modest to come forward.

R.F.Crocker

### **Your Regional Bee Inspectors are: -**

Southern Region: - Mr. Ian Homer.

Fax/Telephone number: 01308 482 161

South Eastern Region: - Mr. Alan Byham

Fax/Telephone number: 01737 217409

### **Appointed Bee Inspectors: -**

Mr. David Purchase: - Hampshire & Berkshire:

Telephone number: 01256 781288

Mr. Will Messenger: -. Oxfordshire & South Bucks:

Telephone number: 01608 674429

### **Letter to the Editor:**

Bad news from Shropshire.

We have had some tests for resistance to pyrethroids come back positive. It is a few miles North of us but so close that it means that it is here. There is a lot of concern that our seasonal bee inspector is only under contract until the end of September and there will be many beekeepers feeling very alone in a month's time.

I shall be doing a test on my bees this week but haven't a clue where things might go from here. Does anyone know what the procedure is? How can beekeepers get their colonies through the winter?

I have told our association education officer that whatever else is on this and next month - THIS IS NOW THE PRIORITY! We need an extra meeting to get every beekeeper we can together for someone to come and talk to us and give us the information we need.

Sleepy Steve in Snoozy Shropshire has just had a wake up call and it looks like I over-slept.

Steve Watkins (Shropshire)

## **READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION**

On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August, members met at Jon and Jill Davey's apiary in Northcourt Avenue with temperatures in the mid thirties in the shade. The chairman has been giving the roofs of the hives a good sprinkle during his evening rounds with the garden hose, we read that bees spread water or nectar on the frames during very hot spells to cool the interior by evaporation so hopefully this will help them. It's been noticeable during the heat wave that the bees draw fully inside the hives at night whereas on a normal 'balmy' summers night they tend to be seen clustering at the hive entrance.

The largest colony had a brood frame looking a bit 'pepper-pot' though all of the uncapped cells had small healthy looking larvae inside. The adjacent frame however was fully utilised nicely graded with eggs through to different stages of larva development, so the chairman was optimistic that this was a sign of a successful supersedure. Another colony had something which has been seen in other apiaries this year; a small patch of brood with lava developing to imago apparently occurring with the cells not fully capped, just a small collar around the top of the cell.

Although at time of going to press samples from the apiary have been sent to the National Bee Centre, it was discussed that this may be a symptom of wax-moth developing near the spine of the comb. The chairman certainly has wax-moth in his apiary and had two supers full of frames being treated with PDB inter-layered on newspapers, he will store all his extracted frames this way, wet: after extraction. In this heat the caterpillars are black and dead in about ten days, just leaving the mess of cleaning-off and the loss of drawn-out wax.

This is also a very effective wasp trap, many wasps manage to force their way-in somehow and succumb to the fumes, true a few bees have been found in this condition but unlike the wasps who are avid for it, the bees only seem to be interested for about an hour before dusk: 'after work', as it were!

Many thanks to all who attended and braved the heat, and to Jill for the iced drinks and sandwiches.

In October the first of our winter meetings is at the Highmoor Road Methodist Church Hall in Caversham on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> at 7-30 sharp. This meeting will be a forum to discuss 'Our Beekeeping Year' and will be an ideal opportunity for beekeepers to outline the incidents and mysteries of this season and to throw it out to the assembly for discussion and wise advice: this writer certainly has some points and questions for the meeting!

Then, we would like all Reading members to give their full support to the Federation event on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October at St. Joseph's hall at Berkshire Drive Tilehurst.

Jon. Davey

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.

**Apiary report from Jim Cooper:** The two hives that were causing a problem at earlier apiary inspections, as so often happens, were much less aggressive by the time that the supers were removed for extraction. The honey has now been taken off and the bees treated and fed. All that will be left to do before the winter is to monitor the ivy flow and then put the mouse guards in and woodpecker cages around the hives.

Thanks again to Jim, no doubt we shall have heard what the yield was at the September Review meeting, it should be quite good this year.

We hope all your preparations are nearly complete for your entries to the **Honey Shows**. The Federation's is on **Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> October**, followed by our own on **Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> of October**. Newcomers are also encouraged to attend the **National Honey show** in November by receiving free entry tickets, which have now been distributed by the Secretary, Michael Sheasby. Don't forget to let Bernard Schumann know of any entries to more than 5 classes prior to our show, so that he can have your labels done in advance, otherwise just enter your items as you arrive on the night. Staging will start from 7pm and judging will start at 8pm. We shall be at the usual venue, the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor.

All are welcome at our meetings and we hope to have a good attendance again this year to pick up a few more tips on good showing practice. Do bring along anyone you know who has an interest in bee keeping. They may even like to become a "friend" of the society.

The following month will be the AGM and Supper, on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November. If you wish to propose anyone for election to the committee, please let the Secretary, Michael Sheasby, know beforehand, having established that the person is willing to stand and that another person will second him or her. After the formalities have been completed, we shall enjoy the fare that members have provided, so do please bring something along for the table.

There will be a number of surplus library books on sale and the library is available at all meetings as well.

Lastly, a second reminder that the committee is attempting to bring an inventory of all equipment owned by the society up to date. It will be appreciated if anyone holding an item for safe-keeping could let us know. In particular, we would like to trace the original extractors for both Slough and Maidenhead, functional or not, or perhaps, who they were passed on to. Also, if you have knowledge of anything being scrapped in the past, do please let us know.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson. Burnham (01628) 664091

## WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

### October meeting

Our first autumn meeting is to be held on Wednesday evening on 8<sup>th</sup> October at the usual location at St Paul's Parish Rooms. We look forward to a talk by Norman Hughes entitled 'Queen rearing with a single hive'.



## Rosemary's Book of the Month

A little while ago I discovered in our library a book by Tickner Edwardes, which was written around 1900 and was about a picturesque beekeeper in Sussex.

I thought it might be interesting to look at something a bit more technical by the same author such as his "The Lore of the Honey-bee" which came out in 1908.

The style is a bit romantic, but the book reveals the author's own scholarship and his vast knowledge of bees and beekeeping and it also shows how much was generally known a hundred years ago.

His opening chapters cover the craft in antiquity (including Virgil, of course) and in mediaeval times.

Moving to modern times, he praises the English Black Bee which he says is most suitable for this climate having evolved here and he laments the introduction of the 'motley-coloured' Italian bee.

He discusses the roles of the worker bees at the different stages, the idle lives of the drones and the essentially 'servile part the queen bee plays. He is perfectly clear on swarming, re-queening, superseding and he explains clearly why these things happen.

In a chapter called 'A Romance of Anatomy' Edwardes shows how much was known about honeybees from observation under the microscope. In describing the wings he also talks interestingly about flight, ventilation in the hive as well as the joint between the thorax and abdomen. This is all in words - there are no sketches and no glossy photos.

There is a thread of political thought running through the book. At the time it was written there was a great interest in Socialism. He sees a colony of bees as a system where everything is done in the interests of the State as a whole. Anything that is of no use such as drones at the wrong time, old queens, injured workers are ruthlessly dealt with. It is the perfect Socialist State ....

Secretary John Edwards 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 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.  
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