



FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

President: Miss Margery Cooper

October 2002

Number 558

NEWS

Hon. Secretary
S. Napper
56 Lamorna Crescent
Tilehurst Reading
RG31 5WF
(0118 945 5094)

The Federation, its Council and its Officers cannot be held responsible for the views expressed in the Newsletter or possible errors.
(E-mail: berksbees@lineone.net)

Hon. Editor
R.F.Crocker
25 Shiplake Bottom
Peppard Common Oxon
RG9 5HH
(0118 972 2315)

Future Events

November 14,15 and 16th	National Honey Show	
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Federation Family Event and Honey Show

TO BE HELD AT

St. Joseph's Church Hall, Berkshire Drive, Tilehurst

ON

SATURDAY 26th OCTOBER 2002

Admission Fee - £3.00 Adult: £5.00 Family Ticket: Under 14's Free

PROGRAMME:

- 12.00 – 1.30 Staging of Exhibits
Lunch Available
- 2.00 Judging of Exhibits by appointed Judges
- 2.0 Introduction and welcome to our Speaker by the Chairman Mr. Derek Porter
Mr. Oliver Field "Beekeeping Projects in Developing Countries"
- 2.15 – 3.45 Children's Activities. Face Painting, Colouring Games etc.
(Approx)
- 3.45 Teas available
Show opens when judging is completed
- 4.30 (Approx) Raffle
- 4.45 Presentation of Cups and Trophies by Our
(Approx) President Miss. Margery Cooper

Removal of exhibits will be under the supervision of the Show Secretary

Spare schedules available from Show Secretary Mrs. Hazel Blackburn Tel: 0118 947 5451

Further details available from Federation Secretary Mrs. Sandra Napper Tel: 0118 945 5094

From the General Secretaries Office: -

At the last Federation Meeting on 20th August a closing date for receipt of "Opinion Survey" letters was set as October 31st.

There are still nearly 50% unreturned.

If you've lost it, let me know and I'll give you another.

If you do not agree with either of the two options given, that's fine, send back the letter and tell us.

If you have some alternative ideas for the organization of beekeeping in Berkshire, don't keep them to yourself, tell us. There may be others out there with similar ideas.

If you would like things to stay as they are, that's fine.

Send back the letter and say so.

Tell us. We want your opinions.

Autumn Event Update:-

As you know (and have hopefully marked on your calendar) the Autumn Event is on October 26th.

Venue – St. Joseph's Church Hall, Berkshire Drive, Tilehurst.
(Chosen for it's easy access from M4 Junction 12 as well as it's facilities)

Admission - £3.00 per adult.

£5.00 for a family ticket (Family in this instance = 2 adults).

Children under 14 Free.

As you can see in the attached schedule, there are classes exclusively for children aged 14 and under, with a cup on offer for the person who wins most points in these classes.

Please whatever age you are, make an effort to enter as many classes as you can.

Points make prizes, and entries make a Show.

It's simple. No entries = No Show.

Good luck and I'll see you there.

Sandra Napper.

What? Enter a show, and show my honey

Come on now, don't try to be funny

You know I just don't have the time

All that preparation and pantomime

I've got to make sure it's good enough to sell

Yes, I know if it's that good I could show it as well

Yes, I've some in the comb, some set, some runny

And some swarm catching photos that are pretty funny

O.K. ! Maybe I could find time to bake

A "stick to the recipe" honey cake

Alright! Alright! I'll give it a go

If it'll keep you quiet, I'll enter the show



Who knows? I might even win!

WJN.

THE APIARY IN SEPTEMBER

THIS MONTH. –October is one of those difficult months. If the weather is fine the bees may work the ivy and you may even get a small crop and be able to work the bees. If it is bad they are best left alone.

-If fine, make last inspections paying particular attention to the weatherproof nature of the roofs. Damp, not cold or starvation, is the biggest winter killer in this country.

-Make last feeds so that each hive has at least 40lbs of stores. Start hefting the hives so that you can make a rough judgement of weight as the winter goes on.

-Fit woodpecker protection and a brick on the roof on windy sites. Better still build a wind-break or move them to a better site. I had to move one of my apiaries to a windy site last year and the crop about halved in a year when my other two apiaries boomed.

-Check bulk stored honey to see how it is beginning to candy. Reserve the best to make creamed honey –it really does command a premium price.

-Bring back all that spare equipment that is rotting, unused, in your out-apiaries, clean it up and store it in the dry, so that you will know what you have got, next year.

-Start cleaning and servicing supers and frames. My winter project is to see that all of mine have the same (top or bottom) bee space. I'm sick of levering off burr comb and dislodging frames from the super below, all through the flow.

-Get out your best and enter the Federation Show (use it or lose it!).

MAIN TOPIC –Oh my aching back! After thirty years my back, although not injured is beginning to make me think about giving up the craft. Beecraft has just finished running a long series on the problem and very good it was too! However, one thing I thought the author glossed over a bit was the importance of having the right car. More and more beekeepers have to keep their bees away from home and have to cart everything to and fro. At extracting time the job of hefting full supers into a saloon car boot involves just the sort of actions, which are virtually guaranteed to cause, back injury (stretching and twisting).

If you have to move your hives then the situation is even worse, because the things to be lifted are bulkier, heavier and need more care.

Obviously an estate car is better for the job but over the last few years a new breed of car has been introduced which, by chance, is ideal. This is the MPV or multipurpose vehicle. The smaller (mini) MPVs hold a remarkable amount of stuff, mine, for example will carry 34 supers, or 14 gross of honey jars without removing the back seats.



Choose carefully and you will have a high, square roof so that you can pile the load high and a completely flat floor so that you don't have to lift over a high sill. Fit a piece of smooth plywood onto the boot floor and you will be able to easily slide things forward to the front.

Make sure that the wheel arches don't stick too far into the back so impeding loading. Some of these vehicles have wide tyres so that you can make a much better job of navigating through muddy tracks. Finally, these vehicles have a very high driving position, which gives you a better view on the road and, best of all, puts you above the headlights of oncoming vehicles at night. Worth buying for this reason alone!

I'm not in the habit of advertising, but, if you want to know what is the car in the pictures, (mine), Hon. Ed. will tell you, if you ask.

Garulus.

FROM THE EDITOR

Except for the Ivy, the season is almost at an end, having said that, my remaining colony at Brightwell cum Sotwell is still gathering honey. I hope it is not going the way of its neighbour and end up in the fire. I suspect that the proximity to a honey packing station might have something to do with it.

Ivy looks like being early this year; Ivy honey has a nasty habit of crystallizing so hard that the bees cannot use it, resulting in starvation in the spring. I recommend that if you do get a crop from the ivy, supply a block of candy or fondant to tide your bees over.

Some colonies had to be fed right up to the end of June but from mid July reasonable crops have been reported so, in our area, the season has not been entirely disappointing. Others have not been so fortunate, the north of the country and Ireland have suffered more from the weather than we have, in some cases there have been no crops.

Foul brood has again reared its ugly head in the Wallingford/Goring/Ipsden area; possibly there are apiaries that we, or CSL do not know about, otherwise every effort has been made to get it under control. On the brighter side, Varroa infestation seems to be lighter this year. Tests for fluvalinate resistance carried out by South Chilterns members have thankfully, so far been negative.

If you have not yet returned your Federation "opinion survey" do so as soon as possible, if you wish, you can vote for a "Status Quo" in my view this would avoid a retrograde step that would break up the Federation. I have had some verbal comments but no views to put in the Newsletter

RFC

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I thought I'd drop you a line about the day I spent at the National Bee Unit in Sand Hutton. That Central Science Laboratory site is awesome, and the Bee Unit even have a fair sized apiary on site.

I was shocked to discover they don't have hives full of AFB and EFB to study. Although scientists can bend the laws of Nature it seems they are subject to the same official 'treat or destroy orders' that we mere mortals are! The disease slides we were shown were excellent. I thought it would be difficult to top the excellent MAAF booklets, but it was a pleasure to see some even better pics.

The research and development team have excellent projects on the go, including raising bees from egg to insect without a cell! I hope that they will be able to study several brood diseases in the laboratory on test pupae soon. I didn't dare ask about the ill colony ("animus") vs. an individual infected pupa in such scientific surroundings, but I have a feeling there are some very caring bee-keepers there who will be projecting lab results into the hive environment.

The laboratory hour was the best for me. Foulbrood combs in every stage, including an AFB comb with THE smell. At last! One of my favourite smells, that of a healthy, storing colony on opening her lid. This year some of my hives have smelt a bit stale or off at times...but that oily fishy whiff shall remain with me for years now. That experience alone was worth the trip. To be able to inspect combs in distress, and then ask the experts to explain...we are lucky beekeepers. I would heartily recommend the day to anyone serious about his or her bees. The days are aimed at those prepared to share the knowledge they gain, and those with many hives. My telephone no is 01491 682986, and I'm happy to discuss with anyone to decide whether to phone their BDI or not. And I am seriously informal.

Phoning your BDI (they really need a name image message Bee disease inspector is better than foulbrood officer I suppose, but barely) is not actually unleashing the hounds of hell on your bees. You are likely to get excellent advice and the advisors I have seen have looked at my bees. Not me, my hives my garden etc... The bees. Such focus indicates devotion and we are lucky to have their service. Rothamsted are sticking to their £2000 per annum per hive value to the economy ...so don't ever feel your bees aren't worth their time. Varroa has made the wild honeybee extinct in this land. Without our hives there will be little fruit.

That said, the statistics were encouraging. Foulbrood is at a very low incidence nationally. It appears the approach taken is working, and if we work together we can control disease. That the insurance schemes are not better set up for those of us in the process of expansion is a pity. I firmly believe that BDI is a Godsend for most beekeepers. Beekeepers in New Zealand and America can't believe how well organized we are here.

At the end of the day a very Southern voice asked 'So what is the worst disease facing English bees then?' The answer?

....."THE WEATHER!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

John S.

BERKSHIRE FEDERATION FOULBROOD AUGUST 2002

Number of infected apiaries in 10km squares
 [Number in brackets () = Number of infected colonies]

SU29 Buscot	SU39 Stanford in the Vale EFB 1(2)	SU49 West Abingdon EFB 1(1)	SU59 Dorchester AFB 1(1)	SU69 Benson	SU79 Stokenchurch	SU89 High Wycombe	SU99 Amersham	TQ09 Rickmansworth EFB 4(11)
SU28 Bishopstone	SU38 Lectonbe Regis	SU48 East Wantage	SU58 Blevbury	SU68 East Wallingford EFB 3(6)	SU78 Henley on Thames	SU88 Marlow	SU98 North Slough	TQ08 Uxbridge
SU27 Aldbourne	SU37 Lambourn	SU47 Cheveley	SU57 Yattondon	SU67 Pangbourne	SU77 Reading EFB 3(4)	SU87 White Waltham EFB 2(2)	SU97 Windsor	TQ07 Staines
SU26 Great Bedwyn	SU36 Inkpen	SU46 Nevebury	SU56 Thatcham	SU66 Burghfield Common	SU76 Shirfield EFB 1(1)	SU86 Crowthorne EFB 2(4)	SU96 Ascot EFB 1(1)	TQ06 Weybridge
SU25 Ludgershall	SU35 Hurstbourne Tarrant	SU45 Litchfield	SU55 Kingsdare EFB 1(2)	SU65 Beasingstoke	SU75 Hook EFB 1(1)	SU85 Farnborough	SU95 West Guildford EFB 3(14)	TQ05

03.09.02 I apologise for an error in SU68 last month; it is now correct

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

Appointed Bee Inspectors: -

Mr. Julian Johnston. Oxfordshire & North West Berks: Telephone number 01993 850432

Mr. David Purchase. Hampshire & South West Berkshire: Telephone number 01256 781288

It is frustrating when you know all the answers but nobody bothers to ask the questions!!!!

No one knows all the answers but there are sources to find a lot of them. In recent months there has been a dearth of questions and points of view, I am sure that some of them will be of interest to others. Put your questions and if there are no official answers we will throw them open to our readership. Names can be withheld if requested.

READING and DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Probably due to the fact that many people with children are obliged to take their holidays in August, only a few of us were able to attend the apiary of our chairman Jon Davey, on Sunday 11th August. As it turned out it seems that the people away unfortunately had drawn the short straw, as we here basked in wall-to-wall sunshine whilst many countries in central Europe had the worst weather in living memory. At the time of writing these notes the temperature is hovering in the high eighties, whilst the television is showing pictures of such places as Southern Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic experiencing downpours and disastrous flooding on a scale never known before.

Jon has a mixture of Smith and National hives. This is not ideal, as although the frames and comb are identical, the top bar of the National is 17 inches, but the Smith top bar is 15½ inches, so they are not easily interchangeable. This was exacerbated by the fact that Jon is using extended brood frames in his Smith hives. Personally I would have extended the brood capacity by adding a super (not separated by an excluder) known as 'one and a half'. Some people will say that the Queen will be reluctant to cross the wood, but I have not found this to be so. Its great advantage is that if any swarm cells are being raised, the first cells are likely to be on the bottom of the top frames. This can be a quick method of checking for the first signs of swarming, - just tip the 'half' up, and peer underneath it.

One of his colonies has a severe attack of Acarine, which Jon has decided to treat with Apiguard. This is a Thymol base gel. It is easy to handle and is effective against Varroa, chalk brood and Acarine, but as it relies on the properties of evaporation, it should only be used in warm weather. Another hive was bursting for more room, but being a comparative new beekeeper he was suffering from a shortage of suitable brood frames and Supers. I am sure he will eventually be able to sort it all out, but it all takes time and outlay. Thank you Jon for letting me 'play' with your bees and to your wife for providing us with very welcome refreshments.

Our next meeting will be at the Methodist Church; Wesley Room and the talk will be about beekeeping in Australia, given by George Butler. (NB he is a 1½ brood man!)

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

SOUTH CHILTERN BEEKEEPING ASSOCIATION

There was no meeting in August. Members were too busy removing, extracting, bottling, and selling honey.

The first meeting of the winter programme will be held at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 16th October at Woodcote Village Hall. It will be the 21st Annual General Meeting of the SCBKA and after the presentation of last year's results there will be a question and answer session from the floor. All members are encouraged to attend because there are several decisions to be made concerning the way in which we will operate in the future due to potential changes within the Berkshire Federation of Beekeepers.

Secretary: Brian Carter. 01491 680226

WOKINGHAM & DISTRICT BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATION

Equipment for sale

A retired member has kindly passed on a substantial amount of equipment that is now available for sale to members. It is mostly National (but some Commercial parts) hives and includes three complete hives, Miller feeders, a skep, a metal filter/settling tank, some plastic honey tanks, many frames & foundation, two nucs, a warming cupboard, three wonderful observation hives, a solar wax extractor, hive stands etc. Interested members should contact John Edwards on 0118 934 0238.

The Most Useful Bee-book by Rosemary Bayliss

If you were marooned on a desert island where you had to keep bees but you were only allowed one book, that book would have to be Roger Morse and Ted Hooper's *Encyclopaedia of Beekeeping*.

It was published by Blandford Press in 1985 and was doing very well indeed but Blandford was taken over by another company and the book went out of print. So you can't buy it now and the book that originally retailed at £15.95 costs in the region of £100 second-hand.

Why? Because it is so good in every way. It covers the whole field of beekeeping from what to wear to detailed descriptions of the tip of a bee's tongue, from what to put in a smoker to how to rear queens, from how to manage a nucleus to a breakdown of the bee's communication dance. It is quite hard to think of anything that is not there and I can only come up with a couple: Dartington Long Hives, but then they were not around in 1985 and Apistan, which is a very recent medication. However, Varroa is there all right and the authors rightly realised then that it is a scourge.

The book has been written for the ordinary beekeeper. It is presented in plain, concise English that is clear and easily understood. Even the scientific entries make sense and are easy to read.

There are many first class illustrations, all relevant to the text and all interesting to look at. We are lucky. Few of us may own a copy of this excellent book but we can all borrow it from our Association library.

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

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

This year's Honey Show is being held on Tuesday, 8th October at the All Saints Parish Hall, on the corner of Frances and Alexandra Roads, Windsor at 8 o'clock. Details of the schedule have been sent to Slough members but can still be obtained from the organiser, Bernhard Schumann. Call him on 01189 343501 for one. We would welcome entries from anyone in the surrounding associations, as non-Slough members will be competing for the former Maidenhead Society's Cups.

Please also call Bernhard ahead of the day if you plan to enter more than five classes, so that he can have the labels ready for you. Staging will be from 7pm, so bring along your entries, and watch how you fare first hand from this year's judge, Viv Brown. If you are successful, you are invited to enter your exhibits in the Federation Show to be held at the end of October, on the 26th.

The meeting on November 12th will be this year's AGM and Supper, at 8pm. Nominations are invited for all officers and may be sent to the Secretary, Michael Sheasby at the address on the back of your annual programme, or you can call him on Slough (01753) 642656 for details. A contribution for the Supper after the formalities are completed would be much appreciated.

Just a reminder for those who will be attending - the re-scheduled committee meeting will be held on Thursday, 10th October.

It was suggested at the last committee meeting that your attention be drawn to the items in the August BBKA News about BDI Insurance and proposed notices that may need to be displayed at any apiary. Discussion of these points will probably have taken place by now at the Review of the Year meeting, but if you were not there, please look so that you are aware of them.

Newsletter items: Joy Dodson. Burnham (01628) 664091

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

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.

Bees available, surplus to current requirement due to enforced apiary move. Healthy, quality stocks, on 11 BS brood frames (short lug), 2001 queens. All aggression culled over past 20 years.
Telephone 01491 574728

WBC equipment in reasonable order required. Call 01628 664091.