



# South Chilterns Beekeepers Association

President: Ian Wootton

**The AGM is this month, on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October. It is your opportunity to air your views. Send your nominations for officers (having obtained their prior consent) to the Secretary. See also, the Secretary's report below.**

Newsletter No.10  
October 2003

Forthcoming events:

Ploughing Match  
Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> October

FBKKA Lecture and Show  
Saturday October 11th

National Honey Show  
13<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup> November

Hon. Secretary:  
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**Secretary's Report:**

There was no meeting in August to report.

The first meeting of the winter programme will be the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual General Meeting and will be held at the Woodcote Village Hall at 7.30pm on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October. Following the report on the activities of the past year and the election of new officers there will be a question and answer session from the floor. Members are encouraged to volunteer to serve on the committee.

Brian Carter

**In the Apiary:**

In some ways this year is reminiscent of 1947, so far we have had a couple of dry months and the warm weather is forecast to continue through September and possibly into October.

I have had calls that bees are short of stores, how should I feed. Perhaps too much stores had been removed! I can only repeat from last month News, "Aim to finish feeding by mid October at the latest. 2lbs sugar to 1pint water (approx) fed in the evening at a temperature that you can just bare to put your fingers in." After this, if syrup is used, some means must be found to prevent it from fermenting, Manley advised the use of thymol; care is needed to avoid getting it into the honey supers in spring. Bees can be kept alive with candy or white bakers fondant. Remember, October is the first of the quiet months and the last when feeding remains practicable.

Some colonies are working the ivy but in my opinion, this year this source cannot be relied upon.

If it has not already been done, small (but healthy) colonies should be united. Small colonies can often be got through the winter above a screen over a strong colony. If you wish to do this, and are not familiar with the method, get assistance from a more experienced beekeeper. I have even wintered mini-nucs like this but one must be in a position to monitor their stores.

This month fit mouse guards, examine the outside of your hive, I am not the only one whose hive was entered by a mouse through a woodpecker hole. If your protective screen has a gap big enough, (you will use one if necessary won't you?) rest assured that Woody will get in. Woodpecker guards have had to be kept in place all the year in one member's apiary.

R.F.Crocker

## Chairman's Chatter:

Several of our members have asked for details of our **third party insurance scheme**, which was formerly supplied by the B B K A. We now have insurance cover under a block insurance scheme supplied by the National Farmers Union. In order to get the lowest premium, we joined forces with Newbury and Wantage B K A for insurance purposes only, in order to achieve this. The level of cover and conditions are on a par with the B.B.K.A. scheme.

At our AGM our Treasurer will give details of the cost per member, which was less than we were paying under the B B K A scheme.

If you need a certificate of insurance to show that you are indeed covered, would you please contact our Treasurer, Linda Scurr on 01491/652916 evenings or 01628/827510 daytime.

It is worth noting that the insurance will cover members for claims made against them for all their beekeeping activities but this does **NOT** include dealing with wasp's nests.

I have received lots of cries of alarm from my students and others about wax moth damage to stored supers etc. Due to our high summer temperatures the wax moth population has exploded and is causing considerable damage. Wax moth will not usually cause a problem with a strong colony but it could invade weaker colonies and certainly will invade stored combs. Weekly checks on the combs are the answer and PDB treatment administered.

Our editor included a foul brood chart supplied by Regional officer in our September Newsletter and asked for comments on its coverage. My view is that the necessary information could be given to members in a few lines of print bearing in mind the cost of space in our Newsletter.

Any member wishing a more comprehensive coverage could obtain it direct from our regional officer covering the whole of the south of England if necessary.

**Finally, may I remind you that our AGM is on October 15<sup>th</sup>? Here is your chance to have a say in the running of our association.**

George Butler (Chairman)

## 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.

Don Thomson, the Secretary and the Editor have testing kits, borrow one and 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.

## The Berks Federation Honey Show Oct 11<sup>th</sup>:

The afternoon lecture, by Dr. Rose Cooper of the University Of Wales Institute, Cardiff, on the healing properties of honey, including recent clinical findings and planned future research, is scheduled for 2.15pm. This talk is well worth listening to.

I note that the South Chilterns Trophies appear on the schedule; no doubt this will be discussed at our committee meeting.

Schedules and map are available from Hazel Blackburn Tel: 0118 9479450. Staging of exhibits commences at 10.00am. The Chairman will introduce the morning speaker (Apitherapy) at 11.45am. Programme and map available from 0118 9455094. I also have a few copies.

### **Foul brood grid:**

In the last issue you were asked to air your views on the presentation of the foul brood grid. Apart from comments by telephone (I do not think that these people would have said anything about the grid had they not rung me on another subject), there were only two responses in writing, one does not have bees but is entitled to have his say; both are against having a grid at all. The Editor has a duty not to exclude any section of the membership from any service available; however there is no object in providing a service in which members are not interested. Maybe we shall hear otherwise at the AGM?

Ron Crocker

### **Forum:**

Can anyone say whether or not there is any evidence to suggest that colonies that have access to a late honey flow are likely to produce a larger number of bees later into the autumn than those bees without, and as a result come through the winter stronger?

### **Small time research!**

During the hot weather a bee came to take water from a plant on my garden table at lunchtime each day. I was curious as to whether it was the same bee. I marked her with tippex and much to my surprise the same bee came back.

Kate Malenczuc

### **Improving Bees:**

Reg. Hook and I lately attended BIBBA's mid summer queen rearing workshop at Thrumpton near Leicester in the company of enthusiasts all tutored by the knowledgeable experts of the East Midlands group of the Bee Improvement and Bee Breeding Association.

Those of us who had been able to attend the National Honey Show in 2002, and hear Albert Knight's lecture 'Bee Breeding as a Group Activity', knew we would enjoy a well-organised course by the leading group in England. Assembling at 09 30 in the Thrumpton village hall we paid our modest fee, and soon transferred to the nearby BIBBA apiary founded by the late Beowulf Cooper in the mid 60's.

In the walled orchard of the Manor house we were first given a ripe queen cell, and then divided into small groups. In our group of six were beekeepers from Oxon (us), Herts. And Staffs.

We were first instructed in grafting of very young larvae, before moving round the apiary of some 20 hives to the next demonstration. By rotation of the groups each student received excellent tuition from very experienced beekeepers in making up mini-nucs (Apidea), preparing colonies for acceptance of grafts, and colony assessment and selection of best pedigree for breeding.

For us the East Midlands beekeepers have convincingly demonstrated that it is possible, working as a group, to make much greater progress in pedigree bee breeding than could ever be achieved as individuals.

On our return home we introduced our previous ripe queen cells, and can now report that we are both the proud owners of a BIBBA queen, albeit mated by unknown drones. More importantly we have benefited greatly from the excellent advice of our tutors, based as it is on 20 years of striving to improve honeybees in Britain and Ireland. Thank you BIBBA, most sincerely.

Reg Hook and Don Thompson.

## Letters to the Editor:

Thanks for the September Newsletter. You published a foulbrood chart July 1<sup>st</sup> 2003 and ask if members find it does not cover a sufficient area. It does in fact cover too large an area. We do not need a chart, nearly half a page, to tell us that Foulbrood has been found in three parishes. Two lines of print would suffice. We do not need a chart that gives 'Nil' information on the other twenty-one parishes on the chart. Members other than myself, perhaps too diffident to write to you, have expressed the same sentiments.

George Hawthorne.

## 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)

**The following note** from The Bee Unit is in answer to requests from two of our members for Will Messenger's e-mail address.

We don't currently have SBI email addresses on the NBU web pages. Not all SBIs have their own e-mail. But we are reviewing the information on our web pages, and maybe it would be appropriate to have more SBI details.

James Morton

**Newsletter deadline:** 10<sup>th</sup> of the month for inclusion in the next Newsletter

**Advertisements:** - Small advertisements free to members. Traders £1 per issue (up to 5 lines) additional lines 20p per line. Cheques to be made payable to South Chilterns B.K.A. and forwarded to the Editor.

**Heather Press:** Free for collecting. Not Stainless steel. For full details please call George Butler 0118 983 2735

**FOR SALE:** A number of Dadant hives. (No frames) Arthur Aldridge, Telephone: 01491 681305

**Don't Go Miles** to get your bee supplies or pay expensive carriage. **Go to John Belcher** who has most of your needs in stock and every thing else at the end of the telephone. Please call any time on: - 0118 984 232

**Wanted:** Bee suit to fit child 5-7 years of age. – George Butler, 0118 983 2735

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