



# South Chilterns Beekeepers Association

President: Ian Wootton

The first **FIELD MEETING** of the summer will be held at the BERKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, Burchett's Green on Saturday April 17th at 2.30 pm.

## Newsletter No.16 April 2004

Forthcoming events:

Spring Convention, Stoneleigh  
24 April 2004

Apimondia Dublin 2005

Hon. Secretary:

Brian Carter,  
Eastfield,  
Potkiln Lane,  
Goring Heath, RG8 7SR  
01491 680226

Hon. Editor

Ron Crocker  
25 Shiplake Bottom,  
Peppard Common,  
Henley on Thames  
RG9 5HH  
0118 972 2315

Association E-mail:

southchilterns.bees@btinternet.com

### Regional Bee Inspectors:

Ian Homer

Tel No: 01308 482161

e-mail: i.homer@csl.gov.uk

## In the Apiary: APRIL

This is the month when it all starts to happen. Keep an eye on your local rape crop. Manage your bees according to the weather and the possible flowering of the rape. **GIVE YOUR BEES PLENTY OF ROOM.**

Check stores, if the hive is light, feed as advised in last month's newsletter, conversely, after last autumn's late flow the colony could be so congested that swarming is induced. If this is the case, replace a couple of full combs with foundation and add a super. This is a good point to add a second brood chamber particularly if you want increase. If you wish to replace your existing brood chamber to help in disease control, (the Bailey shift) it is advisable to enlist the help or advice of a more experienced beekeeper.

Get supers ready early and if any have been stored with PDCB, give them a good airing to avoid residue in the honey (see note below) better still, use a different moth deterrent.

Treat for Varroa if possible **BEFORE** the rape comes into bloom, even if we get prolonged frost or possibly snow, early bloom could catch us out. Carry out a test for pyrethroid resistance – Both the Secretary and Don Thomson have test kits.

Start inspections for swarm prevention. Concentrate on strong hives and hives with old queens. Practice examining a hive in ten minutes! We are all capable of messing around for hours, but the ability to do the job in ten minutes makes a ten-

day routine entirely practicable. Don't trap the queen in your hurry. If the weather is bad, feed weak colonies. Why are they weak? Are they diseased or have they an old or drone laying queen? If in doubt ask for assistance or advice!

If you find an unmarked laying queen, mark her; do not mark a virgin. Practice on drones.

When the first sealed drone cells appear, check mature drone brood for Varroa by uncapping with an uncapping fork.

Of course, you will have followed George's advice in the last Newsletter and have supers ready. However, if there is oil seed rape in the area it is wise to use supers with unwired foundation as rape honey quickly sets and may need to be melted out. Personally, I use a lot of new foundation as it helps to reduce swarming.

As soon as a honey flow starts or the rape starts blooming add supers. When these begin to fill, remove outer old honey-filled brood combs, one at a time and replace with new foundation on the outer edge of the brood nest. Give strong colonies plenty of room.

Check over all your clearer boards and extracting gear, you will need them next month. It all happens sooner than you expect!

R. Crocker

## **FROM THE SECRETARY:**

### **APRIL MEETING**

The first field meeting of the summer will be held at the BERKSHIRE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, Burchett's Green on Saturday April 17th at 2.30 pm. George Butler will be both host and demonstrator giving the bees their spring inspection

### **Southern Region Associations Open Day**

As advertised in the March Newsletter, the Southern Region Associations Open Day will be held on April 25th. It will be held, very conveniently, at Stockcross only a couple of miles west of Newbury and will start with coffee at 10.30am. Two members from all 46 Associations within the Southern Region have been invited to attend. Please contact the Secretary (01491 680226) if you wish to attend. Invitations will be on a first come, first served basis.

**Apiary site:** An apiary site is available at Fawley, for details please contact the Editor or the Secretary.

Does anyone know of a possible site not too distant from Cholsey? If so, Bill Seivwright who has a potential neighbour problem is interested.

## **LETTER TO THE EDITOR: -**

I feel that a response to the points made by Marcella Skinner in the last Newsletter regarding the electing of Committee members etc. needs addressing.

What in fact happened for the benefit of those members not present at the A.G.M. was that some names were proposed but then a further proposal was made and duly seconded that the existing Committee members be re-elected en bloc. At this point at least one of the new names proposed, withdrew and the en bloc proposal was duly voted on and carried and no further discussion on this matter took place.

Perhaps as Chairman I feel that a bit of criticism was justified in the way the meeting was run. But as I recall nobody wanted to be Chairman 3 years ago so you got me for better or worse. You will all remember in the year prior to my becoming Chairman we didn't have a Chairman at all!

Our Treasurer, Linda, also took on the job when no one else would do so despite her having many other calls on her time. Some members have expressed concern that things have not been dealt with by Linda as promptly as they should have been. But have a heart and some sympathy for your officials! Help them if you can but please don't throw bricks from the back row.

My 3 years stint as Chairman comes to an end this year but I am sure my successor will deal with the other point Marcella raised in her letter, namely to put it to the members at the next A.G.M. to decide whether or not they are in favour of the full minutes of the A.G.M. being sent to every Association member.

George Butler (Chairman)

## FROM THE EDITOR

### **Bee sting Therapy: -**

Attention has been drawn to a recent Richard and Judy show on Channel 4 where a therapist used a bee to demonstrate bee sting therapy on a patient. It is understood that a doctor was present. We are told that this is a dangerous practice. Our information is that any therapy including desensitisation should only be performed in a specialist environment where full resuscitation equipment is available in case of adverse reactions such as anaphylactic shock.

Anyone with professional or first hand knowledge of the subject is welcome to comment.

### **Varroa**

A new product against Varroa, "Exomite Apis", is shortly to be launched. Exomite Apis is formulated from Entostat (™) powder and thymol, trials were carried out on 33 hives in co-operation with Meridian Beekeepers, rather a small sample. I cannot find any independent research with which to compare the effectiveness of the product with other treatments.

Together with several South Chilterns members I attended Reading's Flood Memorial Lecture to hear Dr. Brenda Ball on the problems created by Varroa. What she had to say certainly gave reason to ponder how we tackle the fight against Varroa and associated problems in the future

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Our Treasurer reminds us that there is no third party insurance cover where subscriptions are unpaid. Further, delivery of the Newsletter will cease where subscriptions have lapsed.

### **EDUCATIONAL APIARY TOUR** (Free, of course)

This year it is again proposed to organize an "Apiary Tour" with our Bees Officer. It is hoped that arrangements can be made for Saturday July 10<sup>th</sup>, as this is the only day available that does not clash with other events. Anyone interested in taking part or wishing to have his or her bees inspected on the tour, please contact the Editor or the Secretary.

Participants will have their bees inspected in logistical order. The Tour will allow "students" to join or leave at any point. There will be a break at a convenient pub during the day but anyone may bring his or her own refreshment

(Editor)

## **FEBRUARY MEETING**

Our February meeting was a talk by our Regional Bee Officer, Ian Homer, entitled 'No Bees, No Honey, No Money'. An almost record turnout of 31 members including a visiting member from the Reading Association. Ian spent a large part of the evening outlining the problems of resistant Varroa mites to Apistan and Bayvarol. He gave us helpful advice on integrated pest management control ranging from drone trapping to Varroa control through artificial swarming by taking advantage of the brood-less periods created during artificial swarming. He demonstrated the use of wire mesh floors, which resulted in a bulk order being placed with the manufacturer for approximately 20 floors. This was organised by Lynn Penfold who negotiated a substantial discount! Thank you Lynn.

I have just heard with regret, that one of our members, Arthur Aldridge, has died after a long battle against cancer. The Association will be represented at his funeral by our former President, George Hawthorne who also was a personal friend of Arthur and I have written a letter of condolence to Mrs. Aldridge.

George Butler (Chairman)

## **DEVON BEEKEEPERS' ASSOCIATION SUMMER CONFERENCE (FORMERLY SEALE-HAYNE WEEKEND) EXETER 17TH – 18<sup>th</sup> JULY**

For further information and application form please contact Mrs Jane Ducker, Oak Cottage, Chapel Lane, Manaton, Devon, TQ13 9UA. Tel. 01647 221225

### **ARTHUR ALDRIDGE**

Our member Arthur Aldridge of Goring Heath died on February 21st in the Sue Ryder Home at Nettlebed. He was 61

Arthur had fought a long battle with cancer. 18 months ago he was given six months to live, such was his love of life and family that he kept going to the end.

Arthur was the eldest of 10 children, after working for a contractor and then a stone mason he set up his own business of ground clearance, fencing, etc., in fact anything to do with the countryside, timber in particular. He was noted for his wide circle of customers, it was a reflection of the man that his customers became his friends.

I knew him principally through our mutual interest in steam-rollers. He restored and rallied an eight-ton Aveling Porter steam-roller and was never happier than when attending charity events.

Arthur was involved with bees in various ways for many years, including transporting bees to the Kent orchards and to the heather but only became a beekeeper himself in more recent times. When we met at steam events he never “picked my brains” regarding bees. He knew bees were my job and was too much of a gentleman to raise the topic while I was engaged in a hobby.

Arthur was a big man with big hands used to heavy physical work but he never took nature and the countryside for granted, he loved the open air, the sunshine and the skies the ever-changing pattern of flowers and everything in his world the countryside.

Rest in peace Arthur, it has been a privilege that our paths have crossed.

George Hawthorne

### **BED and BREAKFAST**

A directory of beekeepers that can provide bed and breakfast holidays is being prepared by the BBKA, If any member would like to be included go to: - <http://www.bbka.org.uk/holidays.php#> alternatively, those without web facilities can notify the Secretary or the Editor.

R.F.Crocker

## A TRUE STORY ABOUT A MAN WHO WENT TO MOW A MEADOW.

One day during the early Fifties I had been helping Harry and his boss with a TT test (tuberculin test) on some cattle at Lower Farm, Swyncombe. Test over and we were about to go our separate ways when a little Ford 8 roared into the farm yard Stirling Moss style and out gets a burly great Scotchman, foreman from another farm, he asked how the test was going, "test finished" I said "I'm on my way home". "I am in trouble and need your help," he said. I replied, "it's going to cost you" I used to pull his leg about Scotch men having deep pockets and short arms! "No No this is serious", "this morning I sent a tractor driver to start mowing Bradcutts", "he had only been gone just over an hour when a local fellow was passing and saw him with his hands covering his face and rolling over in the long grass", "he drove his car out to him, but when he saw he was covered with bees decided to get help and came down to the farm", we were lucky as there was an ambulance in the area and we were able to get a doctor. The poor chap is now in a Reading hospital.

The problem now is, the tractor has been left running for over three hours and it is covered with bees. I drove my car out to it thinking I could let the window down and turn the fuel off, no such luck; the bees flew at the window, so here I am wanting help.

I get the message, you want me to get stung, I will get some gear from home, and see you at the Field Gate in 10 minutes time. So I took off on my motorcycle.

On arriving at the field the little Ford waiting, "they gone/" I said, he shook his head. Gear on and I was away to have a look, true enough the tractor was covered thick with bees, (my camera safe at home). The bees failed to show any interest in me, I often wish I knew what they were thinking.

I reported back to the Ford 8 for instructions. "Can you park her under that oak tree and turn off the fuel, what has happened?"

He said, "well I don't know but I think he must have cut into a swarm on the ground or on those thistles". "I will know in a few minutes, a stale swarm can be a bit of a handful."

I returned to the tractor, removed seat cushion (sack stuffed with hay), gave it a good bang on some metalwork and sat down on it, pushed the clutch out, the gear lever flopped about anywhere, I chased some gears into a corner and grabbed one, we then moved slowly forward to the oak tree, at about the half way mark I realized that the bees didn't think too much of me and was leaving as fast as they could and by the time I had reached the oak, a distance of no more than 20 yards not a bee had the guts to stay. I was very offended!!

On returning to the spot where the tractor had stood, not a bee. I then pulled the heap of grass apart which has been the reason for the tractor stopping, not a bee to be seen. I removed my hat and veil and came to the conclusion that the bees had changed the rules of engagement.

My attention was drawn to a small aircraft and there in front of me was the real reason for all the fuss.

I returned to the Ford and said "bees gone home" "you must come and have a look" this was the hardest part getting him out of the car, put my veil on and I will show you what happened, I took him to the spot where the tractor had stood, turned the veil back, now look up in the sky, which he did but never said a word only went very pale.

I remarked your tractor driver had to stop right under the flight path of 20 stocks who were funneling in to enter their apiary just on the corner of that wood, they didn't like T V O exhaust being blown at them and came down to protest.

The tractor driver had to stay in hospital for several days, his eyes were a cause for concern, later he came to see me and wanted to know all the details.

Having told him, he then remarked, "all **that** happened to me, and I only went to mow a meadow!".

John Vickery

## **PDCB RESIDUES IN SWISS HONEY**

The Schweizerische Bienen-Zeitung in its February edition reports that residues of paradichlorobenzine (PDCB) were found in samples of honey following treatment against wax moth. Sampling from 1997 to 2002, showed that 30% of the Swiss honeys had residues whilst only 7% of samples of imported honey showed this residue. These residues can be avoided altogether by using alternative wax moth control methods carried out according to good apicultural practice.



Go to [www.apis.admin.ch](http://www.apis.admin.ch) alternatively see the pamphlet "Protection of honey combs from wax moth damage". "Liebefeld Information No 24" English version produced by our Association. (Available from Northern Bee Books.)

## **Advisory leaflets: -**

The BBKA have issued four 4 page advisory leaflets to all their members, "Bees and Neighbours", "Bee Stings", "collecting a Swarm", and "Swarm Control for the Beginner". Non-members of BBKA can pick up leaflets at the BBKA stand at Stoneleigh for 12p per copy. The cost of reproducing these leaflets, even if it were allowed, is more than purchasing the originals

## **Honey Show and Lecture: -**

The Federation of Berkshire Beekeepers Associations have booked their honey show and lecture for the evening of Thursday 30th September at Charvil Memorial Hall. The speaker will be Claire Waring.

**Newsletter deadline:** 10th 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.

**FREE** to anyone interested! Selection of French concentrated essences to create authentic liqueurs like Benedictine and Chartreuse. Just add vodka or brandy. Ring Lynn Penfold on 01628 825718.

**Wanted: -** For a group of beekeepers. Small, motorized stainless steel honey extractor to take all sizes of frames. Details to the Editor

**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

The South Chilterns Beekeepers Association cannot be held responsible for the views expressed in the Newsletter or possible errors. Any use of copyright material must be accompanied by an acknowledgment of the author(s)