



# South Chilterns Beekeepers Association

President: Ian Wootton

**The May meeting will be held on Sunday May 16th at 2.30pm at Waltham Place Farm by kind permission of Mrs Oppenheimer. See Secretary's note page 2.**

## Newsletter No.17

May 2004

### Forthcoming events:

The Royal Show Stoneleigh  
4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> July

FBKA Honey Show  
30<sup>th</sup> September

Apimondia Dublin 2005

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## In the Apiary May:

May is a swarming month and a time of the year when you cannot afford to neglect your bees. At the time of writing these notes, the first spikes of rape are beginning to appear and by the time you read them, the rape will be in full bloom. I would suggest: -

1. Make weekly inspections if your queens are not clipped, or at 10 day intervals if she is clipped, to spot the first signs of swarming. Remember, it only takes 8 days from an egg laid in a queen cell to the time it is sealed and after this a swarm may emerge on the first fine day. I am a double or 1½ National brood box man and it takes only a few minutes to do a test inspection. You will be unlucky not to spot Queen cells on the bottom bars of the top brood box.
2. If the brood box has 9 or so combs of brood and the first queen cups appear, possibly containing eggs, I will be doing something that some books caution against, namely splitting the brood nest by putting 2 or 3 frames of foundation in the middle. Remove 2 or 3 combs of brood (leaving the queen behind) and insert your foundation spread throughout the brood nest. This will give them so much work to do that swarming will not be uppermost in their minds. Do not attempt brood nest splitting unless the brood box is packed with brood and bees.
3. Mark your queens. It makes life so much easier when you have to find her, e.g. "leave the queen behind" as said in paragraph two.
4. Super well ahead of the bees' requirements. I put the next super on when the previous super is well occupied by bees, not ¼ or ½ full of honey that is too late.

Go back to paragraph two. What to do with the three combs of brood and bees taken from the brood box? Why not make a nucleus? Take the three combs of brood and bees, shake in

bees from two more combs and then introduce a young queen. Site the nucleus away from the parent stock to avoid losing flying bees. If increase is not wanted, unite back in the autumn. These options are only some of many open to the beekeeper who wants to progress beyond breaking down queen cells as a swarm control method.

I have had a number of reports of drone laying queens this spring. Two options here, if the hive is short of bees unite with another colony using the newspaper method. If the queen has recently turned drone layer and the colony is still quite strong introduce a bought in queen. Find the drone-laying queen of course, and dispose of her first.

If anyone has difficulty in obtaining queens, feel free to give me a call and I will willingly pass on names and telephone numbers of queen breeders. The mated queen will arrive through the post in a queen-introducing cage.

George Butler

## **FROM THE SECRETARY:**

### **MAY MEETING**

A FIRST for SCBKA with our first Sunday meeting! The May meeting will be held on Sunday May 16th at 2.30pm at Waltham Place Farm by kind permission of Mrs Oppenheimer. The apiary is sited near White Waltham. Go past White Waltham church for approximately 1/2 mile and at the T-junction turn immediately left down a track. OS Ref 855771. Note: - The OS Ref. In the programme is incorrect.

The May meeting is also our PLANT SALE day so please bring your plants and money.

Brian Carter

## **Annual Dinner**

Dinner went down well

Thanks to the generosity of member Barbara Prior, the 21 members and partners attending the annual dinner on March 10 were treated to a pre-dinner drink. She donated the value of a ticket she was unable to use at the last minute.

It was a good start to an evening memorable for the excellence of the food at the Crooked Billet (Stoke Row), the roaring log fire and subtly lit ambience. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the local produce for which the pub has created a name, such as thinly sliced water buffalo, delicious local pork, roasted with root vegetables and honey from hives in the grounds.

The pub and its talented young chef could easily have coped with more of our number, but it wasn't to be. I hope lack of numbers was only due to other diary dates and not because £21 was considered too much. By today's standards it was very good value, interesting modern cooking and presentation based on old themes and with good-sized portions that sent you home pleasantly full but not bloated.

Discussions are already taking place about an event for next year, so we'd be interested to know what sort of annual 'do' you'd like. Ring me on 01628825718.

Lynn Penfold

## **March Meetings: -**

Two events in March. On the 10<sup>th</sup> we held our annual dinner at the Crooked Billet, Stoke Row. Very professionally organized by Lynn Penfold, the 21 members and partners attending all seemed to agree that the slightly higher cost than usual was definitely value for money.

The last of our winter meetings was a talk by Robin Dartington on "The Dartington Long Deep Hive". The merits of the Dartington Hive were mainly labour saving and avoiding lifting heavy boxes into a vertical stack as we do with our conventional hives. This made swarm control using for instance, the Demaree method much quicker and easier.

The logic behind the long hive was very sound and worth trying out. One of our members has used the Dartington Hive for some time now and speaks highly of the system.

A word of thanks to George Hawthorne who donated 7 Kg of wax to the Association. This was converted into foundation and sold off at our March meeting raising over £16.

George Butler (Chairman)

## **FROM THE EDITOR**

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

The proposed "Apiary Tour" with our Bees Officer is scheduled for July 10<sup>th</sup> as this is the only day available that does not clash with other events. Ian Homer has suggested a starting time of 10.30 a.m., with a suitable break about mid-day, possibly at a pub. Participants can join or leave the tour at any point. Any beekeeper or prospective beekeeper that is interested in taking part or wishing to have his or her bees inspected on the tour, - not necessarily an Association member - please contact the Editor, the Secretary or Ian Homer.

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)

### **BEE VENOM - Bee sting Therapy: -**

Further to the report of a recent Richard and Judy show on Channel 4, where a "therapist" used a bee to demonstrate bee sting therapy on a patient.

### **Answer from Doctors: -**

Desensitisation (or specific immunotherapy) to wasp and bee venom is a method of teaching the immune system of people with allergy to wasp and bee stings to not over react in the future. The treatment involves giving weekly injections of gradually increasing concentrations of venom for eight weeks until the patients are receiving a dose equivalent to two stings. The course then continues with monthly injections for the next two to three years. There is a small risk of anaphylaxis or severe allergic reactions, with the injections and so they must only be given in specially approved clinics where full resuscitation facilities are available. Our local centres are: Oxford, Guildford and Southampton.

It is clearly a substantial time commitment for the patient involved but it might just be worthwhile for those who live their life in terror of having a severe allergic reaction.

Happily, fatal reactions to wasp and bee venom are relatively rare. One estimate puts the numbers in England at about 4 per year. Interestingly, only about two of the four have ever suffered any allergic reaction to wasp or bee venom before. Older people are more prone to fatal anaphylactic reactions because their hearts are more susceptible to the effects of the venom.

In summary, desensitisation is available, but it is a big time commitment. The risks of fatal allergic reactions are happily quite low.

Kind Regards

Yours sincerely



Dr Andrew Burnett

(Sonning Common Health Centre)

There will be a further contribution on the above subject as it affects beekeepers from Dr. Ian Wootton next month,

## **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

### **Linda's Recipes: -**

#### **Honey Flapjacks**

100g Margarine: 50g light brown sugar: 3 Tbsp set honey: 225g porridge oats.

Melt margarine, honey and sugar together in a saucepan. Mix in the oats. Press in a greased 27.5 x 17.5cm rectangular tin and cook in an oven at gas mark 4, (180°C) for 20 minutes. Cool in the tin and then cut into fingers.

Linda Clarke

### **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.

Patricia Mills wishes to dispose of her father's **hives and equipment**  
Telephone: - 0118 97223748

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

For sale: - Three Langstroth hives, two with bees, two supers for each Apply Editor 0118 9722315

For sale: - Two National hives with two supers each, one with docile bees. Details from Editor.

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**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