



South Chilterns Beekeepers Association

President: Ian Wootton

There is no Apiary meeting in August; the next meeting is in September.

In the Apiary - August

Newsletter No.8
August 2003

Forthcoming events:

Ploughing Match
Sunday 5th October

FBBKA Lecture and Show
Saturday October 11th

National Honey Show
13th – 15th November

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By now most of your extracting will have been done. The prediction is, however, that the hot weather could possibly continue well into August, this could mean a late crop from the clover, clover requires a ground temperature in the 60s F but rain will be needed in the meantime. This happened in the late forties and many beekeepers had as big an August/September crop as the main crop.

At the time of writing (6th July) I notice that bees are not working the flowers on Peppard Common or the Greys Green Golf Course, although there are bees in the vicinity, whilst at Upper Basildon even the clover on dry lawns is being worked

This month, start thinking about next season! You will require healthy bees. Thoroughly examine the brood, if you have any doubts regarding disease call for assistance. Although it is possible to over-winter small colonies – even mininucs, it is generally recognized that five combs is a minimum, anything smaller than this is better united to a stronger colony, provided that both are healthy. I have nursed small nuclei through winter over strong colonies above double screens; all must have adequate stores

Mark any combs that will need replacing in the spring and move them to the outside of the brood chamber. To retain a comb in the brood nest beyond its effective life is false economy. Remember that in all probability on an average, three bees are raised in each brood cell every year, leaving their pupa skins behind thus reducing the size of the cell. The effective life of a brood comb should not be determined by its age. Its condition and the proportion of worker cells to drone cells should also influence your judgement; a small area of drone cells at the bottom corners of a frame can usually be disregarded.

While you are at it, do a test for Varroa resistance to pyrethroid as demonstrated last year by Beulah Cullen, Don Thomson and Brian Carter have test kits together with instructions for their use. Maybe you do not use Apistan or Bayvarol, and feel that you are not vulnerable, wrong, this time of year most colonies will be throwing out their drones and they will try to enter any hive taking Varroa with them. Even if they do not gain access, Varroa will migrate to defending bees so, in a short period, a colony that is virtually free of Varroa can become heavily infested.

Once the honey crop has been removed Varroa treatment can commence. The optimum results are obtained when there is no sealed brood in the hive. Unfortunately, particularly for the users of oxalic acid, all colonies are not free of sealed brood at the same time, hence the inconsistent results when using evaporators, the state of the brood cannot be ascertained without opening hives.

Time for treatment? The idea of a National Varroa week seems to have been dropped, possibly because it is not always convenient for everyone to carry out their operation at the same time. The aim is the same however, to reduce infestation as much as possible.

Use medicaments according to instructions; remove strips as soon as possible after six weeks and dispose of them. Do not save them for re-use.

R. Crocker

Secretary's Report:

Over 20 members attended the President's day held at Marcella's rural apiary on a gloriously sunny day in mid June. Ian Wootton's audience included old (er), new and potential members. Ian and Marcella had done their homework prior to the meeting and about two weeks previously had prepared an artificial swarm following Marcella's discovery of queen cells.

Prior to inspecting the artificial swarm, Ian described the procedure that had been used to prepare it and the method that would have been used if they had not been able to find the queen. The hive containing the stock i.e. the hive in which the queen cells had been retained was then inspected for evidence of a laying queen. The queen was not seen, neither were any eggs but three of the frames included a half circle of polished cells suggesting that the queen would soon be laying. A queen cell with a rounded opening was also seen indicating that the bees had not torn down the cell but that a queen had emerged from it.



Ian suggested that prior to the start of the 'swarming season' every beekeeper should have to hand a floor, drawn combs and possibly a roof to give the option of preparing an artificial swarm the minute queen cells are discovered. Not many members could claim to have the equipment available!

The second colony on a brood and a half, with two supers, was found to contain eggs and brood in all stages. Before closing the hive the queen excluder was cleaned and brushed with lanolin to deter the bees from re-building comb on the excluder.

Finally, the underside of the top brood chamber of a two-chamber colony was examined for queen cells with negative results. The colony was then re-closed.

Not a single queen was seen during the afternoon, showing that it is not always necessary to find the queen for a satisfactory inspection.

The afternoon concluded with tea and an excellent selection of sandwiches and cakes (including rhubarb and date) on the lawn with the sun still beating down.

There is no August meeting. Details and location of the September meeting will be given in the August Newsletter.

Brian Carter

From the Editor

CSL are worried about the small hive beetle coming into this country via imports, not only in bees from the Antipodes but in timber, particularly to Ipswich. Having seen the vast stacks of timber on the smaller docks at Harwich, (also on the Orwell), I can quite understand the concern.

I feel that any imports of bees from the southern hemisphere or the Americas pose a risk; we can reduce this risk by not importing bees from these areas. Imports of timber we can do nothing about. Keep an eye out for this pest, if it is here the sooner we detect it the sooner that it can be combated and damage limited.

R.F.Crocker

High Wycombe and District Beekeepers Association

Recycled Bees

Children

Do you like making models? Why not try to make a model of a bee using material that has previously been used for something else.

Your model will go on display at the Environment Centre at Holywell Mead on the Rye and maybe win a prize?

***You can do this by making an entry for our
Children's Competition***



You are allowed to use glue, sticky tape and colouring that is new.

It would be good if you could write notes about how the things you used, were used previously.

There will be prizes for bees with written notes and also prizes for bees without notes. Your age will be taken into account.



Children's competition organiser

Sylvia Chamberlin, 61 Wordsworth Road, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP11 2UR Telephone 01494 522082

The show takes place on August 16th & 17th and Entries marked with your name, age, address and telephone number must reach the Children's competition organiser by Thursday August 14th.

Linda Scurr posed a question about the buzzing of bees, I do not know the scientific answer perhaps someone else does.

Just after WW II a contemporary of Reginald Gamble, Edward Woods, invented the Woods "Apidictor" to predict when swarms were imminent, he got a gong for his efforts. At the time Gamble was the BBC beekeeping expert and Woods was a sound engineer for the BBC, so in probability it was through Gamble that Woods took up beekeeping.

The machine worked on the premise that the "buzz" of bees changed with the state of the colony. Woods concluded that the sound was generated by air in the spiracles (breathing tubes), whether or not this was correct I do not know, anyone that has observed a queen when she is piping will have noticed that her wings do not appear to move, indeed she may continue piping when held by the wings.

Up to the moment I have not found any literature on the subject but until someone does, I am sticking to the idea that "buzzing" and "piping" are produced in the insects breathing tubes.

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

RFC

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.

FOR SALE: A number of National and Langstroth hives and supers – no bees: New Langstroth equipment in the flat, 5 roofs, 3 floors and 3 supers: Quantity of wired and unwired Langstroth brood foundation. Price to be negotiated. R.F.Crocker. 0118 972 2315

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

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