



# South Chilterns Beekeepers Association

President: Ian Wootton

**The September apiary meeting** will be at Anne Arlidge's apiary at Lower Assenden on Saturday September 20th at 2.30 pm/ Demonstrator: Ian Homer – also see details below.

Newsletter No.9  
September 2003

Forthcoming events:

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

FBBKA Lecture and Show  
Saturday October 11th

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

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## In the Apiary: September

Your extracting should be finished by now and averages worked out. As a new beekeeper I was always taught to work out the average per colony on the autumn count - if you go into winter with 5 colonies and one or two do not make it through the winter you still divide your total honey crop next season by 5. It works the other way as one's skill as a beekeeper improves – if you make increase early in the season and these new colonies produce some honey, still work on the autumn count and divide by 5.

I think it is well known by now that I store my supers wet. I do this for two main reasons. 1. Wax moth are slightly less prone to invade wet supers and 2. When the wet supers are given to the bees next spring the bees immediately occupy the supers and usually stay there. However, if you prefer to let the bees clean the supers and put any remaining honey in the brood box, then that's fine – only remember to put supers on the hive for cleaning late evening otherwise robbing may be started.

Once you are happy that your colonies are queen right, that's it, don't go pulling the brood box to pieces, leave them alone. It is a bad time of the year to risk an accident with the queen. So leave any queen marking / clipping until next spring. Don't jump to a hasty conclusion that a colony is queenless just because there is no brood – some strains of queen cease laying the moment the flow stops. If there is evidence that the drones are being kicked out and there is pollen going in then the colony IS queen right. It can be quite worrying if one colony is broodless and the colony next door has brood in all stages. Usually it is the darker strains of bee that shut up shop when the flow stops whilst the lighter strains, e.g. Italian, continue to raise brood.

No need to put on mouse guards yet – end September will be O.K. but reduce entrances to lessen risks of robbing and wasp attacks. Feeding should commence mid September and aim to finish 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. I prefer the Ashworth type feeder, which takes 2 gallons at a time.

Finally, September is a good time to unite weak or unwanted colonies. Use the newspaper method. Kill the unwanted queen, i.e. old; heading a bad tempered colony or any other trait that you dislike. Always put the weak colony on top and make a few pinprick holes in the newspaper to get things started. You can unite two lots without bothering to find the queens but there is no guarantee that the best queen will survive.

You should have put the Varroa strips in weeks ago but if you haven't for goodness sake do it now on the "better late than never" principle.

George Butler

### Secretary's Report:

For the July meeting, approximately twenty members passed the map reading test and found their way to Tim Selwyn's apiary at Chalgrove. The apiary is sited near a road and open arable farmland but is screened on all sides by low trees and bushes. After the meeting an avenue between the trees made an excellent site for the lavish spread of sandwiches and home made cakes kindly provided by Yvonne. The travelling gas cooker again came in useful.

Ron Crocker was the demonstrator on Tim's two colonies of bees housed in new Langstroth hives. Before opening the first hive Ron observed that drones were being ejected. The colony contained a little honey, sealed brood, eggs, freshly polished cells but few larvae in line with Tim's belief that the queen present was about three weeks old. The queen was found but unfortunately could not be marked because no one had remembered to bring the Tippex!



The second colony based, on a Jumbo Langstroth, contained lots of honey and a three-year-old queen. Both the queen and a possible supersedure cell were observed and the

frame containing the queen cell was marked with the hive tool. Because of the age of the queen the bees will be allowed to supersede if they wish to. Before closing the hive, Porter bee escapes were fitted to clear the top chamber.

The September meeting will be held at Anne Arlidge's apiary on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September at 2.30 pm. Anne now has an out apiary and after meeting at Orchard Dene, Lower Assendon, Henley members can walk or drive to it. For members requiring detailed directions please telephone Anne on 01491 574580.

**Committee members are reminded that the next committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September.**

Brian Carter

There seems to be heavy crops of honey this year with a few colonies that had yielded exceptionally well last year returning poor results this year. This is a frequent occurrence, I do not know the reason and I do not know of anyone that has given a satisfactory scientifically proved answer.

The beginning of August saw the predicted hot weather with corresponding clover yield. However, no one predicted the extreme heat, which quickly dried out most plants and caused the leaves of many trees to shrivel. Trees in France are actually dieing and not much better in Switzerland. Many alpine slopes are bare and even Lake Constance is receding at 2cm per day and fish were dieing because of the heat.

Where can I get queens? I have three strong colonies that are queenless and with no brood.

Answer! Your bees are probably not queenless but may have ceased laying to reduce the hive population for the winter. Take advantage of the situation and do your Varroa treatment now while there is no brood in which the mite can enter. Join your local Association, you will find members are keen to help.

When I forecasted a hot August and an accompanying clover honey flow I did not anticipate the high temperatures that we have had. This, of course, has resulted in the clover drying up, consequently the flow is reduced, and indeed in many cases the clover and many other sources of nectar have died.

**Ron Crocker**

**FOULBROOD July 18th 2003**

Number of infected apiaries in 10km squares

SU49 West Abingdon	SU59 Dorchester <b>A 2:2</b> <b>E 1:1</b>	SU69 Benson	SU79 Stokenchurch	SU89 High Wycombe	SU99 Amersham
SU48 East Wantage	SU58 Blewbury	SU68 East Wallingford <b>E 1:2</b>	SU78 Henley on Thames <b>E 2:4</b>	SU88 Marlow	SU98 North Slough
SU47 Chieveley	SU57 Yattendon	SU67 Pangbourne	SU77 Reading	SU87 White Waltham	SU97 Windsor <b>E 2:6</b>
SU46 Newbury	SU56 Thatcham	SU66 Burghfield Common	SU76 Shinfield	SU86 Crowthorne	SU96 Ascot

This chart is derived from maps provided by the Regional Officer. If any member finds that it does not cover a sufficient area, please let the Editor know.

18.07.03 [Number in brackets ( ) = Number of infected colonies

**Letter to the Editor**

Newsletter No.8 poses Linda Scurr's question on the buzzing of bees: the best answers I have found so far is in Ted Hooper/Roger Morse excellent work 'The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Beekeeping' published by Blandford Press of Poole in 1985. When Marcella Skinner and I both bought our copies at Stoneleigh for £12; the book has not been re-published and second-hand is now worth £70.

The Apidictor invented by Woods was not a commercial success, unfortunately, but is referred to by Hooper on pages 356-7 in his wonderful encyclopaedia: I have sent copies of these pages to Linda for her information and retention 'Sounds made by the Honey Bee!

Don Thomson

P.S. Does anyone have access to library copies of Nature (1959) 184?

### **Obituary: Dickie Bird.**

The death of "Dickie Bird", as he was affectionately known, occurred in July.

I first met him in the 1950's as he was taking up beekeeping being encouraged so to do by his employer who owned and ran a wholesale pharmaceutical business. Dick was his boss's "right hand" man. On his boss's retirement the firm was taken over by Vestric – a national company, Dick becoming manager of their Reading branch.

Dick soon became involved in both Reading and County Associations. At various times he was Chairman, later President of Reading and Secretary of the Berkshire Federation for quite a few years.

He lived and kept his bees at Three Mile Cross, a purely domestic beekeeper with four or five colonies at the most. He supported shows, most of his honey being dark he achieved success in the appropriate classes. He also excelled with sections and frames of honey. Dick went on to become a well-respected judge of honey at local shows.

Dick's wife died some years ago, he continued to look after himself, doing his own shopping and washing etc.

He is remembered as a true gentleman, not one to push himself forward but reliable and dedicated in all he did.

George Hawthorne

## **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 Schedules and map are available from Hazel Blackburn Tel: 0118 9479450. Staging of exhibits commence at 10.00am

**The Editor**, having upgraded his computer operating programme finds that his two-year-old scanner will not run on Windows XP. It is available to someone running Windows 98 in return for a donation to the Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

**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.

**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

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

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