



THE FEDERATION OF BERKSHIRE BEEKEEPERS ASSOCIATIONS

The Federation, its Council, and its Officers cannot be held responsible for the views expressed in the Newsletter or possible errors.

August 2014

Number 69

General Secretary:
Martin Moore
Tilehurst
Reading
0118 967 7386
07729 620 286

E-mail: berksbees@btinternet.com

Web: <http://www.berkshirebeekeepers.btck.co.uk/>

Newsletter Editor:
Sue Remenyi
Curtis Farm
Kidmore End
RG4 9AY
0118 972 3699

Editors Corner

The flow has been good this year and the bees have been making the most of it. I have enjoyed a bumper crop of raspberries, redcurrants, gooseberries and blackberries this summer and I have in no small part to thank my busy bees for this bounty. As if this is not enough, I have also benefited from, what is for me, a bumper crop of honey, so I am well aware that it is now time for me to ensure that my apiary has what it needs to continue to thrive. It is hard to think that as we continue to enjoy warm summer weather, we are fast moving into what many refer to as the beginning of the beekeeping year. We will be concerned about varroa control and feeding over the course of the next couple of months to prepare for winter.

Our Associations have been enjoying apiary visits and as can be seen from the write-ups in this newsletter, these provide valuable educational opportunities for beginners and more experienced beekeepers alike. The In My Apiary contribution from Jon. Davey is a xxxxx. I am sure you will also enjoy the contribution from Felipe Sabanly, a recent recruit to South Chilterns who writes an entertaining and informative piece about his experience of bee keeping in Zimbabwe.

Our Associations also have been, and continue to be active at local events and on behalf of everyone I would like to thank the volunteers who give up their time to promote the art of beekeeping to the greater community. Two upcoming examples are the Reading Association's honey show as part of the Swallowfield show and South Chilterns manning a stall at the Dorchester Abbey Craft weekend – both events take place over the Bank Holiday weekend. See the calendar for more details.

If you are looking for reading material, I was sent a link to <http://northernbeebooks.co.uk> the other day where you will find a wide variety of general and specialist books on beekeeping. I was also sent a link to an Italian newsletter called L'Apis which is starting an online version in English – see <http://www.lapisonline.it/index.php/en/l-apis-excerpt>. Oh to have time to do all this reading – I took a week's holiday and am now chasing my tail at work to catch up – my excuse for the late publication of the newsletter this month – for which I apologise.

Sue Remenyi

C WYNNE JONES

Ty Brith Pentrecelyn Ruthin Denbighshire LL 15 2SR
Tel. 01978 790279. Fax. 01978 790265

wynnejones@btconnect.com

www.bottlesandjars.co.uk <http://www.beesupplies.co.uk/>

SPECIAL PRICES ON APIGUARD - 30 HIVE TUBS A SPECIALITY VARROA
TREATMENT - WAX FOUNDATION - AND MUCH MORE
OUR PRICES WILL BENEFIT YOUR POCKET!!

See Our Website for full Range of Products

In My Apiary

In my Sonning garden apiary.

Our bees had spent several happy years located behind the old Sonning fire station off Pound Lane in a super old orchard. This site provided good forage together with free Victoria plums and masses of blackberries for us, and which, together with the grass we had to keep under control as our 'rent'! However, we took the hint and moved-out before the bulldozers arrived when the owners finally got permission to develop two substantial dwellings on the site. The hives went off to our site at Sulhampstead about 8 miles away I we thought we had finished beekeeping in Sonning, which is close to our home where the garden's limited to four colonies by mutual agreement! However as luck would have it we were given the chance to take-over Nick Matenga's apiary at South Hill Sonning. Nick, being sports master at Bluecoats School and having to deal with great success in touch rugby (his team are national champions and he has internationals to organise!) had moved away from his cottage in Sonning village to more spacious accommodation in west Reading. So Jill and I were back beekeeping in Sonning in the 2 ½ acres of beautiful park-like gardens.

We took over in early Spring 2013. It was thought that only one colony was queen-right, but inspection showed eggs and larvae in the second and having arranged the box configurations to suit ourselves we had two very spacious hives with colonies going well. Summer of 2013 was



reasonable and some honey was taken of both hives. Some efforts were made to divide the biggest to establish a third, but although we had some queen activity they never thrived and by spring of this year they were moribund. The garden backs onto Sonning Junior School and a splendid wildlife pond fronts the apiary where great crested newts have been seen, as well as mace reed often (wrongly) referred to as bull rush. As we all know these are attractive to small boys and trespassers from the school also threw some billets of dead

wood at the hives on one occasion, but luckily the stout fitted stands Nick had made for the hives kept them upright. Whether this contributed to the temperament of the bees in the biggest hive, formerly the smallest colony, we don't know, but earlier this spring yours truly was reduced to wearing a Sherriff's shoulder fencing type jacket and veil under my big Joyce Jones hat and ring jacket with matching pull-on trousers to feel secure enough to work the big-un! Got some interesting honey off at the end of May though. I'm glad to announce that the bees are now reasonable, a bit feisty when I go into the brood, but I'm glad to be a bit cooler wearing only one bee jacket when I work them. We read that changes in worker bee temperament are largely because of the queen using up sequential pellets of seamen in her spermatheca, when the aggressive genes get used-up calmer ones can follow, this can also be seen, for example, when the bees turn from dark to blonde or vice-versa.

The apiary now houses four good colonies. I'd like to pay tribute to the pack of Vita Swarm attractant that John Belcher supplied me with. My bait hives here in South Hill attracted two good swarms, one of which will give me a full super of honey the next week, and I've been similarly successful at my Sulhamstead apiary. Better to have them arrive and move-in than going out collecting them and trying to keep them in! Sonning is an interesting place, and we mostly know about the attractive Thames-side dwellings and the picturesque 18th cottages, but it's not many decades ago that there was agricultural land up to the village boundary. Many people buying plots 120-80 years ago were able to furnish themselves with spacious gardens of an acre or more. There are beekeepers located off Thames Street, off Charvil Lane and just across the bridge where there's still a dairy farm with more 'Reading' beehives, so its not necessary to ponder too long as to where the swarms might be coming from; east of Charvil Lane! It's mainly agriculture all the way up to Maidenhead Thicket. This belt includes Messers Rocks (Rocks Organic Cordials), who have an acre of elder bushes planted before Twyford on the Bath Road and a bit further along Sheeplands Fruit Farms have 200 acres of mainly raspberry, some early seasons berries under tunnels which probably use the Dutch bumble packs for pollination but many acres of field grown raspberry. Although I've had several supers of good liquid honey off

at the time of writing, my first extraction in May was a light flavoured slightly granular soft-set honey, which I like to think is raspberry ! I've experienced this in the past when working in Blairgowrie and either side of the Tay. I tell myself it is, but maybe it's just the influence of the OSR grown across the river at Playhatch! And what of Nick Matenga? He still swings by from time to time and scrounges a couple of jars of South Hill honey! The picture show the hives in July with the big-un on the left.

Jon. Davey, RBKA



Becky's Beezzzs

For all your Beekeeping needs...

At Beckys Bees we sell top quality mated queens and nucs as well as stocking a wide range of beekeeping products from cedar hives and varroa treatments to smokers and fuel and bee feed.

All our nucs comply to the standards set by Defra and NBU.

Manufacturers of Correx boxes that take both national & commercial frames, ventilated for optimum air flow when transporting bees. Light, strong and secure.

Stockists of

Top quality cedar hives • Polystyrene & Ply Nuc Boxes • Frames & Foundation • Rauchboy Smokers & Smoker Fuel
 Varroa Treatments & Medicines • Vita Gold & Vita Green • Ambrosia Fondant & Syrup • Pollen Substitute
 Disposable & Leather Gloves • Bee Suits & Gauntlets • Feeders • Extractors • Jars
 And lots lots more...

WE SELL LIVE BEES AND MATED QUEENS

Visit us online at www.beckysbeesonlineshop.co.uk
 Or contact us 01264 351104 • 07973 423628 • beckysbeezzzs@gmail.com
 Distributors for Aulumgaard's Ambrosia Beefeed, competitive quotes for pallet orders.

Beekeeping in Africa

By Filipe Salbany

I am just about to complete my first year with bees in the United Kingdom with a sense that although so much has changed over time there are some things that remain the same. My fascination with bees developed as a ten year old visiting my grandparents in Portugal and seeing beehives for the first time. The hives were in the pinhais; forested areas that my grandfather owned and the majority were cork hives, or Cortiços.



My brothers and I used to go to Portugal during the European summer (South African winter) and stay with my grandparents. I always saw the bees at their most productive and watched in amazement as the older generation opened the hives with no gloves and very often with no veils or protective clothing. This fascination and naivety was to lead to my first experience with African bees.

In 1980 our family was forced into exile and we settled in Zimbabwe where we lived in staff accommodation within the University of Zimbabwe where my father lectured in mathematics. This was a wonderful time we had lots of spare time and wonderful weather to explore the countryside. During one expedition, on our bikes, we discovered an abandoned apiary of around 8

hives. Many of the hives had collapsed. As I found out later, ants are a real threat to bee colonies in Africa. These determined little insects in their huge numbers will do anything to steal honey (hives are placed on stands to keep them off the ground, but over time a determined army of ants will chew through the timber legs and siege the hive). We looked through the hive debris and collected some old comb that we gleefully took home to show our parents. A few days later, we returned, suitably prepared with socks to cover our hands, a string vest each to fit over our khaki hat and a bag to place the honey in. After all, what could be so difficult? We had both witnessed the old Portuguese villagers open up their hives and work with the bees with bare hands with no apparent ill effects. We had no idea what was in store.

With no smoke we opened the roof, the wood was so rotten and insect ridden it fell apart in our hands and from then there was no way back. As we held the crumbled pieces of timber in our sock covered hands the bees, who were not so pleased to see us, began to swarm out of the hive. In no time at all my brother and I were covered in bees. At first, we were not aware of the painful experience to which we would be subjected but as we stood there momentarily, the bees swept into a frenzy. We were stung repeatedly and were soon running back towards our bikes as fast as our legs could carry us. We put to use all our instincts of our 14-year-old life experiences, racing through bushes, low trees, anything to stop the bees from following. African bees are committed in their pursuit of robbers and they did not stop. We found our bikes and were off probably close to setting a new junior record time for the 3km journey back home. To this day, I still recognise that intense smell of bee venom and I have never forgotten that bees are to be respected.

Undeterred, a month later, I caught my first swarm in the large Jacaranda tree at the end of our drive and began my journey of learning from these fascinating insects as a young beekeeper in Southern Africa. I eventually did work with European bees in Portugal and helped my grandfather repair his Langstroth hives that were in an old barn; thereby coming round full circle, to my interest began.

After being in England for over 15 years, I have returned to keeping bees although it is a completely different environment and climate with a totally new set of parameters and things to learn. I am enjoying working with the peaceful (so far) European bee; their temperament has meant that I am now in a similar position to my Grandfather all those years ago able to share my interest with my own children; an opportunity that may not have been so easy to accomplish with the feisty African bees.

There are things I miss from my 18 years of beekeeping in Zimbabwe. Gone are the days of naïve experimentation in a garden with neighbours 2 acres away on each side, figuring things out without the internet, small hive beetle, ants and wax moth being the only thing to worry about in terms of disease. Working out how to increase hive size by having double brood boxes, two queen colonies resulting in hives with 10 supers, the cropping of hives every two weeks during the massive Jacaranda honey flow, never seeing a harsh cold, wet winter or having to think about bees not producing honey.

There were also the experiences of digging up termite nests to remove a colony, catching wild swarms in cardboard boxes pretty much as and when we wanted (making sure they were removed before the next rain shower!), bee houses, using cow dung as smoker fuel, two queen hives falling over and killing the neighbours livestock and helping to move over 500 hives to pollinate the citrus estates.

Now there are new skills to develop such as overwintering, coping with varroa, working with hives that I can open with no veil or gloves, visits from bee inspectors, an almost given swarming period, more than one hive type, neonicotinoids, Apiguard, tangential extractors etc. etc. The main thing is that bees still provide the same wonder and fascination, and I still learn by watching, working, keeping notes and observing. I still pick up the "Manual do Apicultor", the beekeeping manual my grandfather gave me in 1974 and turn the pages, over 1200 of them, with the same inquisition as the boy who naively opened his first African hive.

Filipe Salbany

Wokingham and District Beekeepers Association

Day trip to Wisborough Green Apiary



On Saturday the 5th July, W&DBKA were invited to Wisborough Green by Roger Patterson, if you're not sure where Wisborough Green is, it's a conservation area just outside the South Downs National Park about hour and a half from Wokingham and about half an hour South of Guildford and where Roger Patterson has his teaching apiary.

It was to here that the W&DBA crew made their way, suited and booted like 'Knights of the Round Table'. On arrival a few of the Wisborough Green members on seeing us remarked "you must be from Wokingham!". Was it our newly washed bee suits, as prompted by Garth the night before? It was then that the penny dropped as their members are kitted out more like our antipodean friends at a BBQ.

We would soon see for ourselves the reputation Roger has for breeding calm bees.

We grouped in a clearing in the wood where we made our introductions and watched as Roger explained the day's proceedings and gave a demonstration. We were then split into teams according to our ability and each team was headed up by a demonstrator. I struck gold as my demonstrator was Daisy, a Master Beekeeper, but I am sure all the demonstrators are equally knowledgeable and proficient.

Each team had about five hives to go through, the apiary itself must have about 40+ hives in situ. Daisy, with her team checked the hive records for the first hive and explained what needed to be done and then stepped back to allow one of the team to go through the hive under her supervision. We proceeded through our quota of hives with each team member taking turns to go through the hives myself included. I was quite relieved the brave soul before me had done



the Queen marking and clipping. The manipulations themselves were done with no gauntlets or thick marigolds so being defter in working with the bees.

The hives themselves are single National brood with castellated runners and the bees are on the darker side, a tribute to Roger's many years of queen rearing. And to answer my earlier question were his bees calm? ...As a millpond

I would highly recommend to any beekeeper given the opportunity, to visit other apiaries as it not only confirms your own beekeeping skills and

practice, but also introduces you to new ways of doing things. One such difference that I observed was the use of castellated runners, not only in the brood box, but also for the supers. When I first noticed this I thought it looked a bit fiddly as we use dummy boards and frame rests. But as I watched and later when I had a go myself I found it very easy to use. Rather than removing the dummy board and the first frame to give you room to move the frames around. With the castellations, which had no dummy board you could lever off the frames and rest them on the top of the castellation, also no need to move the frames outside of the brood box.



The day ended with tea and cake, which was very well received, together with more discussion and comparison between our clubs. Since our visit it has prompted lively debate about the pros and cons of castellations and other topics, but whatever as an individual or as a club we take back from our visit it is clear Roger runs a tight ship and he and his team have a wealth of experience.

We had a great day, thank you to Roger and his team for all their hospitality.

Gavin Darcy

South Chilterns Beekeepers Association

Apiary visit to John White and Caroline Knight



We were welcomed to John and Caroline's allotment apiary in Pangbourne on a hot and humid afternoon, and despite a poor weather forecast it remained fantastic throughout.

This visit gave us all the opportunity to follow on from John's winter meeting talk about small cell foundation and its use as a means of varroa control. Varroa mite counts suggest little or no varroa present in John's established colonies, although there was some evidence of varroa in a collected swarm.

Reg looked through three hives all of which were the national type and used a pair of supers as the brood nest. John explained that he preferred to use this type of brood set up because manipulations could be performed with less disruption to the hive, i.e. smaller amounts of brood and fewer bees can be used. The bees are given a starter strip of foundation on each frame and are then left to draw the rest out themselves.

Reg commented on the bees being of a smaller type, which was as a result of using the small cell foundation.

The first hive to be inspected had 7 frames of healthy brood in the top box. The clipped and marked queen was seen and the bees were quiet in nature. This queen (Latifah) started laying in early June this year. There was no brood in the lower box and Reg suggested reversing the boxes to establish brood in both boxes and he also suggested that if the floor inserts were put in it would reduce the chimney effect and encourage wider brood distribution.

The second hive was opened and as with the first, the bees were quiet, there was plenty of brood of all stages and the clipped and marked queen (Hera) was seen. This queen started laying in mid June this year. Reg pointed out that she was re-laying in the centre of the brood pattern.

The last hive was the only hive to be using an overwintered queen (Frances). As with the other hives she was clipped, marked and seen. John explained an interesting situation with this hive. In April the hive was inspected and two queens were present. After some thought John and Caroline removed what they thought was a younger queen and introduced it to another hive. However it became apparent that the queen they had left in the hive was a drone layer. Fortunately they were able to reintroduce the young queen and kill the drone layer. As with the first hive the bottom brood box had no brood and Reg swapped the two boxes over to encourage the laying out of both boxes.



An excellent tea followed in John and Caroline's garden.

Simon Cannings

Reading and District Beekeepers Association

On Sunday 22nd June we were at Mike and Marion Dabbs garden apiary in Long Lane Tilehurst. We had an excellent turnout including many of our new member friends, most of whom have their first colony now, often from swarms. Many of these have been collected by Mike, who does a tremendous amount for our newer members and provides a venue for the BBKA practical exams with his high spec. hives. We are pleased to say that Reading beekeepers are beginning to embrace this, which is thanks to Cathy Tucker our former secretary, who still correlates our BBKA exam entries, as well as to Mike and Marion.



Here we have a serious garden apiary with 18 colonies including nucs. You'll see from the photographs well founded hives, clearly numbered boxes all in a neat garden with young fruit trees and shrubberies. Also note the high-located bait hive on the roof of Mike's double garage. We started the session with a demonstration of the elements of an empty bee hive, we have had newly interested people at all of our meetings this summer season and on this occasion a demonstration of burning-out the surfaces an old bee-box intended to be put-back into service, more of this to follow.

There was a busy scene in the apiary with 40 people plus children, one clad in a bee suit. We split into two groups for hive opening and demonstration. Mike is proactive on swarm control and tends to use large and standard deeps together where he has a burgeoning colony with a lot of worker brood in evidence (as opposed to a 'brood & a half'). His bees have plenty of space. In the 9 colonies opened a number of cups were found, but with one exception nothing occupied. Although these were cut away, they were of the type usually described as 'play-cups', but no doubt the bees will soon make some more. The exception was in one colony where we were able to confirm Mike's opinion that he had a 'drone-layer'. As well as the characteristic crazy enlarged cell patterns on the comb face there were also some patches of sealed worker brood so maybe the queen had just 'turned'. Here we did find a queen cell occupied by a well grown larvae in a pool of queen food. We consulted Mike who decided to leave-it, after-all the bees are not going to bring-on a supercedure queen from an infertile egg! Mike will monitor the situation and hopefully the bees in this colony are going to solve the problem themselves. In all other hives examined, we found good brood patterns with eggs larvae and brood in all stages. It was a bright day and queens tend to run from light, but we were able to show our attendees queens in four of the hives we opened. One was a beautiful creature with two deep orange stripes at the top of her abdomen and her thronging workers all exact colour copies of her in miniature.



With Mike's insistence in giving his bees plenty of space using 12X14s together with standard deeps for brood there did seem to be a lot of honey going into deep frames. However with eighteen colonies in the garden all in good heart, there'll be no shortage of honey from the Dabbs apiary! And you can extract from deep frames if you've got a strong-arm to turn the handle!

Mike has now made the Dabb's mark 2 vacuum swarm collector, improving the air-flow speed and with an internal bee refuge cage inside the cylinder (yes it's made from a domestic vacuum cleaner). This is a useful addition to the swarm collecting activities of Reading association and was been used with some success on feral colonies in awkward places inside building structures etc.

While hot and thirsty beekeepers enjoyed the splendid sandwiches and cakes, iced and hot drinks laid out for us by Marion and helpers we proceeded with a 'free-affle' of quite a quantity old but serviceable hive elements and other equipment which Mike had assembled from several places, as far away as Crowthorne donated by families of elderly or departed beekeepers. Hence the demonstration of burning-out. As we all know, new elements are not cheap so given precautions previously used equipment should be brought back into service if possible.

This was a memorable summer season meeting of considerable benefit to Reading beekeepers members new and not-so-new. With very many thanks to Mike and Marion and all helpers, and to all who attended.

Our August Meeting is at 11-30 sharp with Matthew & Kirsten Linnard & 10 Wychwood Close Earley RG6 5RG. Please park of the LHS of the entry of Wychwood Close, if that area if full there are plenty of places to park in Wychwood Crescent, a short step away. The Linnards have recently had awards for honey at our shows and keep bees in a modern suburban garden plot. This should be of interest to some of our newer members in particular.



John Belcher
Beekeeping Equipment & Supplies
Valhalla, 6 Kennedy Drive, Pangbourne, Reading, Berks RG8 7LB

Main stockist for Thorne in Berkshire, was exchanged. Hives and all accessories in stock during season. Apiguard and all Vita products available, Varroa Gard, Bee-Bay products including Hive Clean in stock, Agri-Nova main supplier for extracting equipment, Sherriff protection and Ambrosia fondant and syrup always available.

See before you buy and save carriage charges at the same time.

Tel: 0118 984 2321 Mobile: 07929 586037 Email: john.r.belcher@talktalk.net



Slough Windsor and Maidenhead Beekeepers' Society

Summertime Activities

Windsor Great Park Open Day for Schools – June 4th 2014

Every two years The Crown Estate holds an Open Day for about 1500 Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead junior school children. There are stands and exhibits located throughout the Great Park, showing many of the activities which are undertaken during the year such as wood turning, carving with chain saws, managing cattle and sheep and working shire horses. There were also demonstrations by black smiths and of tractors and earth moving equipment to name but a few. SW&MBKS are the only non-park organisation invited to participate and Don Church and Glynis Morse manned the society's stand on a very wet June day. As always, some of the children asked interesting questions and many enjoyed poking into the frame of sealed honey passed around and squeezing the wild comb taken along!

The Royal Windsor Rose and Horticultural Society Annual Summer Show – 19th July 2014

During the summer months SW&M BKA attends a number of events to promote beekeeping and bee-friendly activities. Most are predictable, however The Royal Windsor Rose and Horticultural Society Annual Summer Show is a small but quite grand affair; which I attended with Don Church this month. The show is held in the grounds of St George's School, Windsor Castle, Windsor, which does not allow vehicles on the Head Master's lawn or anywhere else! Don had been along to put up a gazebo on Friday and we arrived on Saturday morning to unload our display items under the threat of thunder storms. We carried the tables, display boards and other items to our 'spot' which was a prime position directly between Competitors Marquee and the Head Masters lawn where a jazz band, The Elite Strollers and The Queen's Six, male voice a cappella singers provided entertainment. There were lots of other activities including pony rides and cream teas!

The clouds parted at lunchtime, the sun shone and we had a lovely afternoon. Surrounded by several plant stalls, complete with visiting honey bees, we answered many interested questions about bees, hives and bee-friendly plants. We had many questions about what goes on inside a hive and 'What is killing the bees?' so we explained about helping bees by planting bee friendly plants and not using harmful pesticides, amongst other things.

For me it was an interesting test of what I have learned on my visits to the Society Apiary and through my studies. It was also a valuable gauge of what is in the public consciousness about honey bees: most people still cannot identify a honey bee but they still believe that 'local' honey is inherently better for them. We were pleased to encourage everyone to be more bee-friendly; we promoted the BBKA and local beekeeping Societies and even managed to sell some of the Society's honey!

Roz Jones



www.beebasic.co.uk
All the protection you need, and more



Jackets from only **£32**

Bee suits from only **£42**

Leather gloves **£10.50**

Smokers **£16**

+ bee vests, smocks, hat & veils, tools and more



Free delivery on orders over £100

Call us for a free brochure, or visit our web site

5 Hillcrest Avenue, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 1AJ E-mail: sales@beebasic.co.uk ☎ 020 8866 3864
Start to fit you except Sundays

Did you know

In the 8th century Chinese Alchemists were busy experimenting with concoctions that would eventually lead to the creation of gunpowder. An early brew consisted of honey, sulphur and saltpetre, which, on evaporation over heat, caused the contents to suddenly erupt into flame. The honey, when dried by the heat provided carbon. Although honey did not stay in the list of ingredients for long, the chemicals sulphur and saltpetre are still used today in the production of fireworks.

Adapted from The Chemistry of Fireworks by Michael S. Russell

For your Diary

Date	Topic	Event Host	Contact
24-25 August	Reading Beekeepers Honey Show at the Swallowfield Show	RBKA	www.swallowfieldshow.co.uk (and see below and appendix)
23-25 August	Traditional Skills in Action - The Crafts that Built the Abbey	Dorchester Abbey – SCBKA hosting a stall on beekeeping	http://www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk/news4.htm
6 October	London Honey Show	London Bees	www.londonbees.com
9th November	Bee Improvement for All	Bucks County Beekeepers Association	http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/beeimprovementforallday.html

Looking Forward to August Bank Holiday weekend. We have our Reading Beekeepers Honey Show at the Swallowfield Show (in the horticultural produce tent) which will be held on Sunday 24th and Monday 25th of August. We have 13 classes to enter, honeys, beeswax, honey cookery & bee flora. Entry's to be received by the show secretary by Wednesday 20th August & staged at the showground either Saturday 23rd or by 9.30AM on the Sunday. Full Horticultural schedule available on-line at www.swallowfieldshow.co.uk. It's 20p per entry but hey you can win cash prizes! and The Reading Beekeepers Assn. Trophies will be awarded. The honey classes are open to all so do consider entering* For your convenience Jon. Davey the honey show secretary will process your entry's and stage for you if you like. Jon-davey.foodnet@virgin.net 0118 975 0734. Entries to be notified to Jon. by 19th Aug. And entries for staging by 22nd. Telephone entries accepted. See appendix for honey classes.

* There is a handsome silver trophy 'The Federation Cup'. If a non Reading but Berkshire beekeeper from our member associations wins the appropriate class our committee may be prepared to award the successful beekeeper!

Association websites

All four Federation member association websites have a lot of information – some of which may only be relevant to that association, but there is also quite a bit that is useful to us all. Here are the links for your reference:

Reading & District Beekeepers Association: <http://www.rbka.org.uk/>

South Chilterns Beekeepers' Association: <http://www.scbka.org>

Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead Beekeepers' Society: <http://swmbks.weebly.com/>

Wokingham and District Beekeepers Association: www.wokinghambeekeepers.org.uk/

Useful Links, Advice and Information

<http://www.apinews.com/> This website is a mine of information from around the world. You can subscribe to their newsletter.

<http://www.dave-cushman.net/bee/newhome.html> This website has a lot of really useful information for the beekeeper.

<http://www.beekeepingforum.co.uk/> This is a portal for all things beekeeping.

<http://www.bbka.org.uk/> The British Beekeepers Association.

<http://hymenopteragenome.org/beebase/> Beebase is a comprehensive data source for the bee research community.

NBU Advice for Obtaining Bees:

Join Beebase - By joining BeeBase you can access beekeeping information and ask for advice or help from the Bee Unit: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/beebase>.

Your Regional Bee Inspectors are:

Southern Region: Nigel Semmence at: nigel.semmence@fera.gsi.gov.uk,

The main website is: <https://secure.csl.gov.uk/beebase/public/Contacts/contacts.cfm>

National Bee Unit, Central Science Laboratory, Sand Hutton, York YO41 1 LZ, tel: 01 904 462 510, email: <mailto:nbu@fera.gsi.gov.uk>.

South Eastern Region: Mr Alan Byham, fax/tel: 01306 611 016

Contributions to the Editor are always welcome as long as they are signed. Anonymous letters and letters not in English will not be published. The Editor reserves the right to withhold names.

Contributions, including emails, to arrive with the Editor by the 20th of the month for publication by the 7th of the following month. Contributions received after this may be held over for a later month.

Advertisement entries, to be received by the Advertisement Manager in advance of the 20th of every month. Rates: 2 Lines for £1.00; Commercial rates: £1.00 per line. Please make cheques payable to FBBKA. To be sent to the Advertisement Manager: Mr Jon Davey, 107 Northcourt Avenue, Reading RG2 7HG. Tel: 0118 975 0734.

Appendix

Honey classes schedule for Swallowfield Show on August Bank Holiday weekend 2014. All items shown to be produced by exhibitor except for 10,11 & 12 where non home produced honey may be used. Open to all who wish to enter.

1. 2 1 lb jars of light Honey
2. 2 1 lb jars of medium or dark Honey
3. 2 1 lb jars of Naturally Granulated or Soft Set Honey
4. 2 1 lb jars of 'Honey labelled for sale. (Honey may be any colour, clear or granulated or soft set. All honey to be labelled with exhibitors own labels including name)
5. Novice class. A 1 lb jar of Honey, any type, any colour.
6. 5X 1oz blocks of beeswax.
7. A pair of beeswax candles, produced by any method except 'rolling', uncoloured, one candle to be lit by judge.
8. 2 1 lb jars of chunk honey
9. 1 plastic white tub of cut comb honey minimum 6oz

10. CORNISH HONEY FRUIT CAKE

170 g plain raising flour.
1 teaspoon baking powder
Pinch of salt
86 g caster sugar
113 g butter
113 g honey.
2 eggs
454 g (1 lb) mixed fruit including cherries
2 tsp. ground mixed spice
1/2 tsp. lemon juice
Milk as required.

Method. Preheat oven to 180C gas mark 4, grease & line a 7 inch square cake tin, cream the butter sugar & honey together, Add the eggs alternately with the flour, salt, baking powder mixed spice, add the dried fruits, mix fairly vigorously to ensure ingredients well mixed and cake batter is smooth and softish. Add a little milk if necessary Pour into the prepared cake tin & bake until well risen and evenly browned. 1- 1hr 15 minutes, add a square of baking parchment if top appears to brown too rapidly. Remove from tin & cool on a wire rack. Display on a plate or board, protected with clear film.

11. AUSTRALIAN HONEY GINGER BISCUITS

100g butter, 135g plain flour, 100g of clear honey, 1/4 tsp bicarbonate of soda. 1/4 tsp ground ginger.

Method. Warm honey & butter together until just dissolved, cool to luke-warm, add flour, add bicarbonate of soda & ginger & stir well until smooth. Grease a baking tray 7 line with a sheet of baking paper (keep top ungreased) Dot with walnut sized pieces of mix, allow plenty of room for spreading (this is a thin biscuit) Press down Bake for 5-10mins until well browned at 180C in a preheated oven. Leave to cool until cold. Display 6 biscuits on a plate or board protected with clear film.

12. SOUTH AFRICAN ORANGE HONEY MARMALADE.

800-1000G Ripe navel oranges (weigh with skin on) 150 g honey. Skin from 1 navel orange, pith removed & finely sliced.

Method. Peel the oranges, de-pip & cut into small chunks. Add to boiler or large saucepan with the honey & sliced peel. Stir & bring to boil over low/medium heat, then simmer for about 40 minutes until thick, stand for 10 minutes then fill into sterilized jar. Display 1 jar either 340 or 454 grams

13. 'BEE FODDER'

A display in a small vase or oasis of not less than 5 types of flowering plant (wild and cultivated) which is favoured source of nectar or pollen for foraging bees. Species displayed to be listed by common name on a card with the exhibit. Judges will mark on assortment, quality and decorative effect. The list below is for guidance (late summer/early autumn flowering).