



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.

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Editors Corner



As we start to prepare for winter, the issue of how to store equipment becomes pertinent. I have had to unite two hives due to a devastating wasp attack on one hive. The queen in this hive was failing and the brood box is pretty full of food and pollen. The condition of the frames is good and so I want to keep them over the winter. Last year I had quite a problem with wax moth, which I am sure was due to the room I kept the equipment in being too warm.

I have been browsing the web for advice and as is usual in beekeeping there are lots of suggestions, some supported by others, and some criticised.

Cold and light are definitely the main enemies of the wax moth and freezing the brood frames before storage is repeatedly recommended. Hmm, well that's all well and good, but at this time of the year my freezer is full of fruit and veg and there is certainly no room for a half dozen or more 14 by 12 brood frames! Last year I had wrapped my frames in black plastic, thinking that would be helpful – but it seems that the wax moth quite likes the dark and the closed bags provided good insulation – so that didn't work.

So, it seems that the ideal solution is to freeze the frames and then store them in the cold with plenty of light. Until I can get the space in the freezer, I will store the boxes on a gap free base outside with a roof and hope for a cold snap!

Lots of interesting articles in the newsletter this month which I hope you have the time to read.

Sue Remenyi

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In My Apiary

Thrills, Spills and Adventure

I am sure all of you agree that being a keeper of bees is a truly addictive past time. There are the thrills which we have to savour as they are usually only momentary, the spills when you have to tell yourself that the mistake has been made a million times before by other beekeepers and the adventure, for example, climbing trees to collect a swarm - but remember the insurance is only valid if you have your feet firmly placed on the ground.

Thinking about it, maybe most thrills in beekeeping are precipitated by a spill. Well, in my case, this story is; the colony in question was made up of and called 'Three Casts' one from Templewood Lane, one from Caldicott School and one from Seer Green. I do see swarm collection as a public relations exercise and on these three occasions it is just as well, if you know what I mean?

Anyhow, I am not usually troubled by early swarming, rather I have late supercedure which has its own problems, and I had been keeping an eagle eye on the 'Three Casts' colony. I thought I could go another week without giving them more brood nest space but I was WRONG as there were four queen cells. I had decided to make up a nuc with the queen this time and not to use the Pagden method for an artificial swarm. Just as well, because I damaged the queen cell I had been planning to save – that's the spill.

Having to rely on emergency cells for the colony to re-queen itself, a large sized colony was required, which I had. They produced six large, beautiful queen cells, which I removed 12 days later in the nick of time just as one virgin queen emerged - I assume she must have been made from a 1 day old larva. Now, it is not supposed to be best practice to mark a virgin queen and I usually don't, but I must confess in that in this instance luckily I did; I put her into the hive and closed up. I then made up a nuc with the other queen cells and decided to let them fight it out on the basis that the nuc was too depleted to swarm, job done, or so I thought.

Now for the adventure bit: piping, tooting and quacking. Well, I am sure you all know what I am talking about but just to clarify: piping is the general term for all the sounds that virgin queens make to challenge each other for a fight. The first virgin queen out toots (yes, it sounds just like a party tooter) and any queen still in a cell quacks (sounds a bit like a frog) in reply.

I often put my ear to the hive, mostly to be greeted by a soothing hum, but not this time. First, tooting followed by the response of quacking – oh no, I missed a queen cell! Since I had shaken all the bees off the frames, it must have been one of those annoying queen cells that the crafty workers build within the comb for the sole purpose of hiding it from the beekeeper. If it was not for the fact that I had marked that virgin queen, I probably would not have even attempted to find her, but find her I did and she went into the nuc with all the other queen cells where she now rules as she dispatched all of the other queen cells. Checking on the parent hive again the following day I heard tooting, but thankfully no response by way of quacking or tooting. Both queens got mated, the parent hive queen laid eggs after 13 days and the nuc queen after 15 days and, yes, it was beautiful worker brood.

From now on, I shall always make putting my ear to the hive part of my swarm control measures. If you want to try it yourself be fully suited and keep your hat on, good hearing and agility required!

Eva Jacobs, SWMBKA

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John Belcher

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Federation News

In the September edition of the BBKA news, there is a short article about a project to review the key dates in the BBKA calendar and to make a recommendation to the EC as well as a proposition for the 2016 ADM in January. Should anyone wish more information about this project, details are as per the communication below. This was sent on 1/9/15 to all branch secretaries and chairpersons, as well as to the Federation secretary and Chairman:

Dear Member,

The Working Party has now met twice and has developed an online questionnaire for the 69 Member Associations and some key BBKA roles and committees. The first progress report is now available in the members' only area of the BBKA web site along with a number of project documents. Please follow the link <http://www.bbka.org.uk/members/>

If anyone has any questions please feel free to contact us at the following email addresses:

Phil Sharman, Project Leader: sp.projectleader@britishbeekeepers.com

Caroline Bushell, Project Manager: sp.projectmanager@britishbeekeepers.com

Chris Thomas, Communication Co-ordinator: sp.projectcomms@britishbeekeepers.com

Kind Regards

The Annual Cycle Working Party

Bears and Bees

Isn't it funny, how a Bear likes honey?

Buzz! Buzz! Buzz! I wonder why he does?

Not so funny for a beekeeper I met while on holiday in Greece this summer.

Despite the delicate economy, we headed to Greece – the mainland - landing in Thessaloniki and then drove for over 3 hours towards Albania. If you have never been, I can heartily recommend Zagoria – the walking, the food and the people are fabulous. It is a very mountainous and sparsely populated region. So we had hired a guide to take us for 3 day's walking to the remoter parts of the mountains.

'Come on, get to the bees' I hear you say,,,ok, ok, just setting the scene.

Our guide lives in a village of only 10 inhabitants. It takes ages to get there and, my oh my it's hilly! We take a walk around the town to see the closed church, deserted school and the once popular, but now overgrown, village square.

But then, as we start our walk we pass a field of beehives – and they belong to our guide. When I tell him I keep bees it opens a whole new world of discussion – the usual - varroa, honey yields, that hive with “angry” bees ...oh and of course, BEARS!



He tells us that he has been visited by brown bears – a mum and cub – who were very keen to get to his honey crop. But, taking advice from locals, he had already installed a double electric fence around his 60 HIVES! I'll never complain about mice or woodpeckers again!!

We found huge bear prints all around the Guantánamo Bayesqu enclosure – way bigger than my hand. Then he took us

over to his cherry trees where, clearly determined to eat something, we found massive slash marks up the tree that they had climbed to eat the fruit.

I found it fascinating to talk to our guide, who harvested not only honey but also pollen and propolis from his hives, which, combined with his 3 day a week guiding business, kept him fully occupied, fed, watered and housed.

After our 5-hour walk we returned to the village for the best ever manouri cheese and beetroot salad at the only village restaurant – with of course honey balsamic dressing!

Rose Gill, South Chilterns

South Chilterns Beekeepers Association

Apiary Meeting – 15 August



On a glorious sunny Saturday afternoon, 30 beekeepers descended on the Alms Houses at Goring Heath to look at Chris Bergman apiary. About a month ago Chris was doubtful he could host the meeting with only one hive actually up and running, but by the time of the meeting he was up to four queenright hives.

The first hive Reg inspected the queen had just started to lay so it was shut up and let them get on with it.

The 2nd hive was a strong colony with plenty of bees. There was no sign of disease, but they did need feeding.

The 3rd hive had lovely wall to wall brood, no disease, but again not much food. The queen was found and marked.

The 4th hive was building up reasonably well, again not much food, and no disease. The queen was marked, which Chris appreciated because he had not been successful in finding the queens.

All the entrances were closed to a small entrance to deter wasps and any robbing bees. Chris was advised to feed as much as possible in the evening and it was impressed on everyone that the bee keeping year starts now not next year.

Chris was very pleased that all his stocks were queen right as a month ago he had wanted to cancel.

We discussed varroa treatment and then we all retired to the Common room to enjoy some delicious cakes which Sally (Chris's wife) had prepared.

A very enjoyable afternoon was had by all, many members went home to heft and feed their bees because and it is important to remember that we do now will give us good results for next year.

Many thanks to Chris and Sally.



Our final apiary visit will, as usual, be held at Greys Court on Saturday 26 September. Our AGM and first Autumn meeting will be on Wednesday 15 October at Woodcote Community Hall. Its also time to start thinking about your entry to the annual South Chilterns Honey Show which will be held in November – more details to follow shortly.

Reg Hook



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National Bee Unit e-Learning Initiative

The NBU would like to announce that its eLearning programme for beekeepers is now live and ready for use. The first module 'Honey Bee Pests, Diseases and Viruses' covers six main topics; Exotic Threats, Foulbrood, Varroa, Adult Bee Diseases and Viruses, Other Brood Disorders and Other Pests. To access this free and exciting platform, you will need to log into BeeBase where you will find an eLearning link to the left hand side of the navigation panel. When clicking on this, you will be re-directed to the eLearning platform where you can access the content. Like all of our material, the aim of the module is to provide you with a good understanding of the issues that might affect colony health. It will be available on most mobile devices and tablets, although you will need to make sure that your web browser is up to date, otherwise you may experience compatibility issues with some of the content.

We would encourage all beekeepers to use this tool to aid their own personal development and as always, would welcome any feedback on the platform.

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BDI Research Funding Scheme

Bee Diseases Insurance (BDI) set up a research funding scheme just over a year ago. They have been considering some projects in the intervening period and has now agreed a major funding commitment towards a new project - details of which can be found here

<http://www.beediseasesinsurance.co.uk/research/revive>

BDI is providing around 40% of the funding for the project and the sponsors are actively looking to fund the balance. BDI considers that this project is something that associations in general may wish to get involved in, as it has wide spread appeal.

When BDI announced its intention to fund specific research projects, it had a number of requests to advise associations of the projects it had decided to fund, so they could consider participating. BDI have therefore set out a specific proposal they would like Associations to consider. This can be accessed from the link below

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7YPTPR9>

This is the first time funding has been sought in this way and we think that it provides an exciting way for associations to join in the funding of major research with a relatively modest contribution.

Reading and District Beekeepers Association

On Sunday 2nd August Reading Beekeepers assembled at Giles and Emma McLaughlin's home apiary near Crays pond. The meeting was put back by one week because of inclement weather on the original date set of 26th July. This is a rural location heavily dependent with woodland and hedgerows for the bees to forage plus the parkland on nearby Flint House plus Giles and Emma's well stocked garden.

The meeting had good attendance of beekeepers new and not so new, with some 'first timers' interested in beekeeping present. We had four active hives to open, which we did in two groups. Giles acted as overseer and took notes for paraphrased in this report.



No 1 WBC . Lots of bees, lively and good tempered, a few play cups but no queen cells, plenty of larvae in all stages on brood and a half configuration. Some patches of eggs found on deep frames, one of which was transferred to No 7 National (see report further down) Good stores pattern in brood boxes and one good full super of light honey (glad sight in this season of sparse dark honey crop) plus another super becoming filled. Giles may extract the full one.

No 6 National. Smaller colony founded on a new queen. Brood in four frames, one or two bees showing deformed wings, but overall a good looking little colony which should do well.

No 7 National. Good population of calm bees, wax in brood box rather dark, cells polished but hard to find any larvae or eggs. Could have become queenless, frame with eggs and small larvae inserted from No1 WBC (see above) Reasonable amount of stores.



No 8 WBC. Good population of good-natured bees, brood and eggs and one small capped queen cell which was removed. Also good amounts of stores, super nearly filled, Giles said he'd probably leave the stores for the colony.

The writer, who was also a demonstrator on two hives is very grateful for these notes. The pictures show the busy scene, the pleasant location and one of the brood frames from the half on hive no 1. A very good late summer meeting. Eats and drinks

were provided by our hosts with very many thanks to Giles and Emma and all who attended. Pictures courtesy of Lee Whittaker.

For our September meeting, the final one in our summer programme, we are the guests of Katie and Simon Holmes on Sunday September 20th 11.00 o'clock for 11-30 start at their site of the Arborfield Road at Shinfield. Check your e-mails and our web site www.rbka.org.uk link calendar.

Happy event for Reading Beekeepers Kirsten & Matthew Linnard. New baby son Daniel, now about four months old. We're sure that we can pass heartiest congratulations from Berks beekeepers.

Slough Windsor and Maidenhead Beekeepers' Society

The Society's Apiary in August

There were three apiary meetings on the 2nd, 16th and the 30th and this was a month of new activities. After spending April through to July focussing on the build-up and health of the colony and swarm prevention activities, August brings new directions as we worry a little less about absconding honey bees and start to plan the honey harvest and subsequent medication of the colonies as they start to prepare for winter.

It always seems odd to be thinking about winter while we still enjoy warm weather and sunshine (well, some of the time) but it is evident from inspection, seeing the build-up of propolis that the bees have it firmly in mind.

The first visit of the month gave us a chance to assess the honey stores in the supers and other stores in each colony. The weather was sunny and warm and most colonies were good tempered but with one exception: a strong colony with three well filled supers was under constant attack from wasps and it was making them very bad tempered. The wasps were gaining entry between two of the supers and when we dismantled the hive we found that one of the super boxes was upside down, where the frames did not fit there was a gap left of which the wasps were taking full advantage. The problem was soon remedied but it gave an opportunity to reflect on how easily errors are made when we work in a hurry.

The second August visit was a busy one, decisions were made as to which supers would be taken from the colonies; clearer boards were inserted under the supers which were to be removed. The brood boxes were examined briefly before we added a single MAQ strip above the brood box. This year we have decided to experiment with varroa mite treatments because last year it was noted that some of the queens stopped laying for some time after being exposed to the MAQ treatment. It has been suggested that MAQs, which were developed in the USA, are designed for the larger Langstroth brood box widely used in the States and the two strip dose maybe greater than needed for the British Standard National brood box. We will follow up the reduced MAQ treatment dose with an Apilife Var treatment.

In between the second and third visits the cleared supers were removed, honey extracted and the 'wet' supers returned to the hives for the bees to clean out the remaining honey from the comb. So, on the last visit of the month we were able to take away the cleaned out supers for winter storage and dispose of the exhausted MAQ treatment strips. In preparation for over wintering the bees one super with stores was placed below the brood body and finally the feeders were filled up with heavy sugar syrup to help the bees replenish their stores before the ivy starts to flower and tempts the bees to store the crystallisation prone ivy nectar.

And finally many thanks go to Eva Jacobs who has supplied the 'In My Apiary' article for this month – I am sure that we will all be keeping our ears open for the toots and the quacks in future. Congratulations are also due to Eva who had success in Module 1 – Honey bee management exams this year.

Apiary Meetings

Our summer meetings are held at the society's apiary where members can learn and gain hands-on experience of all aspects of beekeeping. Meetings are held at 2.30pm on alternate Sundays and the next meetings will be on the 13th and 27th September.

Winter Meetings 2015

Our schedule of winter meetings recommences on Tuesday 8th September. The opening meeting will be led by Jim Cooper conducting a review of the season and sharing his queen rearing experiences.

Meetings are held at All Saints Parish Hall, Alexandra Road, Windsor SL4 1HZ. The meetings are usually scheduled on the second Tuesday of the month beginning at 8 pm and refreshments are available.

General information and details of all our meetings and can be found on our excellent website: <http://swmbks.weebly.com/meetings.html>.



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Did you Know ...

Honeybees and bumblebees prefer feeding on nectar laced with certain neonicotinoid pesticides to uncontaminated food, new research has shown. Far from the predictions of some, that bees would avoid food contaminated with neonicotinoid pesticides if given the choice, a new study has shown that bees did not avoid any of the three most common neonicotinoids: imidacloprid, thiamethoxam or clothianidin. Furthermore, they showed a preference for imidacloprid and thiamethoxam over uncontaminated sugar solutions.

(Extracted from "Science for Environment Policy": European Commission DG, Environment, News Alert Service, edited by SCU, The University of the West of England, Bristol.)

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/integration/research/newsalert/pdf/bees_prefer_feeding_nectar_contaminated_neonicotinoid_pesticides_423na1_en.pdf

Beekeeping for Disabled Project reaches final round of European Social Innovation Competition

APIFORM SIT-IN BEEKEEPING has been selected from over 1,400 applicants as a semi-finalist in the 2015 edition of the European Social Innovation Competition. Along with 29 other semi-finalists, Forgotten Garden Foundation Team will be invited to the social innovation mentoring academy in Vienna this September to progress their ideas with tailored support and workshop sessions.

"Beekeeping is hard work, heavy boxes, long inspections, stinging bees, but it is the most beautiful job in the world. Unfortunately, it is not for everyone. Today's beehives are not designed for people in a wheelchair. There are many examples of people in wheelchairs working with bees, but not without help from other pairs of hands to work with them. Our Foundation made a beehive that can be approached and opened from behind, while sitting. The principle is fairly easy, the beekeeper is sitting, and all of his/her work is done while sitting in one place. You can inspect, feed, even check your bees without even touching them, thus lowering the stinging. Our Foundation already made this beehive (APIFORM beehive), worked with beekeepers in wheelchair, people with back pain, arthritis, even with children, for research purposes. The idea is formed around a well-known princi-

ple of bee space, and innovations in the world of beekeeping, adding all sorts of improvements to the original design.”



Open to applicants across Europe, this year's theme 'New Ways to Grow' saw the judges select entries with the potential to exemplify and implement new models of growth that will sustain not only financial value, but also social progress for citizens, government and enterprises alike.

This year's mentoring academy is to be held in Vienna from 7-9 September at [Magdas Hotel](#), a finalist of the first ever Competition in 2013. Following the academy, ten finalists will be selected by the jury and the three most effective projects will each be

awarded with a prize of €50,000 at the awards ceremony in Brussels in November 2015.

Haris Tahmišćić at Foundation Forgotten Garden said: *“There are 670 million people in the world with disabilities, half of them are people still in their prime, able to work with their minds and their hands. The main disadvantage for them is that they have to sit. We want to remove that obstacle in the world of beekeeping. This competition is a great way to spread the word, to engage as many people as we can. This already feels like a great success, because of the recognition from the competitions jury, and positive feedback we received from our friends across the world.”*

The competition aims to deliver support for creative and tangible ideas that can change the way our economies and societies operate and interact, and give a platform to social innovators across Europe.

For full details please visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/social-innovation-competition>

For your Diary

If you subscribe to Bee Craft Magazine, you might like to join their hangouts/webinars. You will find details of how to join a session in the magazine. The dates and topics for the remainder of 2015 are:

- 16th September Removal of supers/treatment
- 14th October Configuration of winter hives
- 18th November Winter projects DIY ideas
- 16th December Relax - Beekeeper to Beekeeper

Maya the Bee

Premiere screenings of Maya the Bee are to take place on Sunday 11th October at 10.30am at Reading Showcase Cinema! The film goes on national release on 23rd October. The BBKA are partnering with Maya the Bee to raise awareness of honey bees with the younger generation. Showcase Cinemas are providing the BBKA with the cinemas to screen the film to local audiences to raise funds for Friends of the Honey Bee to be shared revenue basis (60/40). You can see the trailer [here](#)

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.

<http://www.lapisonline.it/index.php/en/l-apis-excerpt> A long standing Italian publication which now has an English section.

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.