Bee Talk

Newsletter ofThe Blackburn and East Lancashire Branch of
The Lancashire & North West Beekeepers Association
http://homepage.ntlworld.com/alan.huxley

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What's in this issue of Bee Talk

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Editorial

JUNE 2006

PEOPLE DO READ BEE TALK!

We have received a letter from Dr. Nigel Buckley who is a member of our society. His letter is regarding an item in last months Bee Talk ' loss of immunity' page 13, and very good it is to. Unfortunately it's a bit too long to go in Bee Talk. Give me a call if you would like a copy of the letter.

Basically he says we are right with Ibuprofen, Fenoprofen etc. but the advice on taking Aspirin should be changed to Paracetamol or Co-codamol.

It also looks like there is a miss print 'Avid' should probably read 'Avil'. Thanks Doc.

HEALTH

Whilst we are on the subject of health, as a diabetic, I went for my check up with the nurse. I showed her an ulcer on a peripheral part of my body that had been bothering me for 4 or 5 weeks. This sort of thing causes concern to diabetic nurses. She sent me to the doctor, he made arrangements for me to see a specialist. I treated the ulcer with honey (In a panic) not Manuka honey or medicinal honey just honey from my own hives. 2 days later a big improvement 10 days later all gone. I'll say no more!!

A TORN STRIP

At the last AGM Bob Fulton tore a strip off the committee, for not getting Holden Clough producing queens, as had been the original intention.

He was quite right of course, we never have had queens from there in any numbers, and the quality of the bees at Holden Clough is quite good, and would improve members stocks no end. Anyway it looks like the problem is going to be resolved, our new managers are putting a tremendous amount of effort in to getting the colonies strong so they will be in condition to raise queens and at the time of writing some queen cells have been grafted and we now sit with fingers crossed hoping that some good results will follow.

We seem to be well on the way to producing queens to be sold to members at a subsidised rate. We all hope things work out to our advantage.

WELL DONE

I note in reading The Lancashire and Northwest Beekeepers Association Annual report, that we, in the Blackburn Branch, have five members who have passed the Basic Beekeeping Examination.

There were twenty three people in the whole of Lancashire who passed, that means nearly a quarter of them came from The Blackburn and District, well done us! It was a very low key affair by the Lancs. and Northwest. Next time we should present the awards - a full do, with bells and whistles. They deserve it. A brilliant performance by you all!

HOLDEN CLOUGH

We needed more storage space at Holden Clough and we have been given a hut by a very generous member Chris Gabbutt.The hut turned out to be a proper bee house, made for the job, and brand new. As soon as Paul Aldred saw it he commandeered it for the Queen rearing program that he and David Rayner have in hand. Perfect for going into a queen raising stock no matter what the weather. So it looks as though we need ***another*** hut. I'm sure that the thanks of all the members go out to Chris for his generosity, and hope that David and Paul get the results we need from the use of the hut.

SWARMING

The swarming season is well on us now, so may I remind all members to control swarming as much as possible . It is most distressing to ordinary members of the public to find a swarm has taken possession of their roof space. It does the beekeeping fraternity no good at all. It cannot always be done but if you have made your best attempt, then you can at least rest with a clear conscience..

BASIC BEE GENETICS
PART 3

So far in this introduction to bee genetics, we have looked at the theory of the subject. In this part we take a look at what we can do with this information. Can we breed better bees just as farmers improve cows and other livestock for instance? Given the knowledge that we now possess about the subject, the answer to this must be yes. Remember, this is an introduction to the subject and kept simple so that the editor can understand it and in this short article we only skim the surface to give you an idea of how bee breeders go about their work. For those interested in pursuing the subject further, there are many books on the available.

BETTER TEMPER

Bee breeders have as their objective, the improvement of one or more facets of bee behaviour. Better honey collection, better over-wintering ability, less swarming tendency, better temper and so on. Many of these may be incompatible and so compromises may have to be made, but generally the idea is - ***improvement !***

CHOOSING

Once the breeding goal has been established by describing the desired stock, the bee breeder must choose his stock from the on-site performance of colonies established in apiaries, then test colonies are given numerical scores for the characteristics being evaluated. This procedure can take two years or more and as many colonies as possible should be evaluated. This latter point is one of the most difficult to overcome for the hobbyist with one or two colonies only and it is often equally as difficult for the professional beekeeper with thousands simply because of time constraints.

ADJUST THE SCORES

Once all the colonies have been evaluated, breeder colonies can be chosen. More emphasis can be put on one or another characteristic by adjusting the scores given for that characteristic. For example, honey production may be scored on a scale of 0-20, while temper may be scored on a scale of 0-10. This arrangement would be used if honey production was considered twice as important as temper.

Having assessed your colonies, there are two main methods of breeding your queens and these are line breeding (closed population breeding) and hybrid breeding. Both have merits and either may be preferable depending on which part of the world you live in.

LINE BREEDING

The common method of breeding practised by queen breeders is known as line-breeding. It can be defined as breeding and selecting within a relatively small closed population. The bee breeders' colonies constitute such a large population to the extent that matings with drones outside their stocks do not take place.

Line breeders rear queens from the best colonies, i.e. those that produce the most honey or those that have the best temper or whatever. These queens are both sold as production queens and used to re queen the bee breeder's test colonies. The queens are allowed to mate with the drones present in the bee breeder's outfit at the time the queens are reared.

DRONE CONTROL

Control of drone brood in the majority of colonies, coupled with purposeful propagation of drones in a good number of more exceptional colonies, is part and parcel of a line breeders problems but does improve the selection progress by controlling, to a limited degree, the male parentage of the stock. Of course, this procedure is used with the best success in areas where mating yards can be reasonably isolated.

This ends the series. If you have been encouraged to have a go at improving your stocks, there are many good books on the subject . Ask our librarian or I have some good stuff I'm willing to lend out.

Bill Ainsworth.

HOW TO BUY GOOD HONEY

with peace of mind. and a clear conscience. Never take honey for granted. It's said that one third of all the food we consume could not exist without bees. And bees are under threat. Agricultural pesticides are putting the bee population at risk, and bees could be wiped out by disease. Without bees there's no pollination, so plants disappear, meaning less for both livestock and humans to eat. Beekeepers tend to be old, and the harvesters, of imported honey are chronically underpaid, so you should choose which honey you buy with care.

IS HONEY IMPORTANT

Home produced honey itself makes a small contribution to the economy, about £12.5 million a year, but a Government study concluded that pollination by bees is worth £120 million to agriculture. The same Government is threatening to cut expenditure on essential monitoring of bee disease. Most beekeepers are enthusiasts who work for no profit with honey as a by product. A lack of interest from recent generations means that keepers are as endangered as bees, so Trade Associations are desperate to attract young practitioners.

IF BEES ARE DISEASED, IS THE HONEY SAFE?

Yes. Diseases that kill bees pose no risk to humans. However, honey from bees that have been treated with antibiotics can contain residues of it. Although British and imported honey is checked for this, and honey that exceeds safe levels is not sold, it is not guaranteed to be free from man-made antibiotics. Chinese honey imports were banned for two and-a-half years when high levels of chloramphenical, an antibiotic known to cause cancer, was detected. The ban was lifted in July 2004.

CAN I TELL WHERE IT IS FROM?

New laws say honey should be labelled with the country of origin and, if blended, say whether it hails from inside or outside the EU.

CAN IMPORTS BE GM CONTAMINATED?

Yes, but their sale is banned in Britain. Without regular testing, and bearing in mind that bees travel some distance, a risk remains. The effects of GM , pollen on human health are unknown.

IMPORTED OR BRITISH?

More than 40 per cent of honey sold in Britain is imported and much of it contains blends. Imported is much cheaper, less, traceable and often not Fair Trade.

There is a growing market for Fair Trade honeys, many of which are single variety, they undergo less processing and are delicious.

SHOULD I GIVE IT TO BABIES?

The Food Standards Agency says no, because there is a risk of botulism. But if you trust the honey's source, and know exactly where it was harvested and the health of the hive, the good properties of honey can outweigh the bad

IS IT NATURAL?

That is the impression, but honey can be processed like any other food. It can be heat treated (or pasteurised) to preserve liquidity and destroy pathogens, or homogenised and filtered to remove pollen. Heat treatment diminishes its natural benefits.

WHERE SHOULD I BUY IT?

Go for local, if buying imported, single variety, or honey produced within a defined geographical area is the best choice: approach it as you would buying wine. Farm shops and farmers' markets are good sources of local honey.

TEMPERATURES

Degrees Centigrade

66 Honey starts to darken and take on a cooked taste

62 Wax melts

60 Yeast is killed. Fermentation stopped.

Should prevent granulation for 12 months

Maximum time at this temp. 30 mins.then cool quickly in a water bath, keep caps screwed down

50 For 2 hrs. will kill wax moth

49 ***Honey should not be heated above this temp, unless you have accurate control and have the ability to drop the temp. quickly.***

48 Oil seed rape crystals will melt

48 Soften bulk honey for bottling. Must not be kept at this temp. for more than 4 hrs.

Degrees Centigrade

42 Will kill varroa

41 Wax comb will collapse

35 BLOOD HEAT Normal honey crystals will melt Uncapped honey will ripen with some ventilation

32 Brood rearing temp.

30 Honey will not granulate at this temp.

26 Heat super combs to facilitate extraction

24 Add fine grained honey to bulk at same temp for creaming

21 Will preserve liquid state of honey in storage

17 Bees can be worked down to this temp.

15 Granulation most rapid. Slows down both sides of this temp. Stops at 30º and 0º. Bees start to form Winter cluster

10 Bees should not be disturbed below this temperature

WAGGLING, DANCING AND TREMBLING

When a worker bee finds a source of nectar she informs other bees about it when she returns to the nest. In this way forager bees are recruited to make efficient use of available nectar supplies.

As more bees visit the nectar source and return to the nest, so more bees will be recruited to visit the source. But what will happen if so many bees are leaving the nest for the nectar, that there are insufficient left behind to deal with all the nectar being brought in? Wolfgang Kirchner of the University of Wurzburg in Germany believes that another dance, the ‘tremble dance’ provides a negative feedback. The tremble dance stops workers flying off for more nectar if too much is currently arriving at the nest for the food storing workers to cope with.

The tremble-dancing bees produced vibrations at frequencies of 45- 350 Hz, lasting for 142 milliseconds, which made the comb vibrate.

Kirchner showed that worker bees subjected to these vibrations performed significantly shorter lasting waggle dances, and consequently the number of bees leaving for the feeder decreased.

In this way the colony is able to ensure that it functions most efficiently: there is no point in foragers working to bring nectar which cannot be stored. This research relates to the western hive bee, Apis mellifera.

BEAUTY TIPS

We all know that protecting ourselves from the sun is very important, so here's some good news. Honey may help us in the fight against the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) rays.

Studies have revealed that honey has significant natural antioxidant properties. Antioxidants play a role in protecting the skin from the damage of UV rays and aiding in skin rejuvenation. Prolonged exposure to the sun's UV radiation can cause skin damage, premature ageing, and even skin cancer.

The Cosmetics Toiletries and Fragrance Association says that because chemical and physically opaque sun screens can cause skin irritation, companies are researching the use of antioxidants anti irritants and moisturizers in sun care products. Because of honey's great ability to maintain the skins moisture and not irritate the skin, it has the potential to be used for these products.

According to Janice Cox, author of Natural Beauty at Home, Honeys antimicrobial properties make it useful for the treatment of minor acne flare-ups. Also, unlike some treatments, honey doesn't dry the skin.

Honey is a natural way to care for your skin and hair. Try these home recipes to save the money you spend on expensive beauty products.

HAIR CONDITIONER

Mix 1/2 cup Pure Honey with cup olive oil. Use 2 tablespoons for normal oily hair. Using a small amount at a time, work the mixture through hair until coated. Cover with a shower cap and leave on 30 minutes Shampoo well and rinse; dry as usual.

SOOTHING SKIN CLARIFIER

(For minor acne) Mix 1/2 cup warm water with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Using a cotton ball apply directly to blemishes Maintain pressure with cotton ball for several minutes to soften blemishes. Using a cotton swab, dab Pure Honey on blemishes Leave on 10 minutes; rinse and pat dry.

SKIN SOFTENING BATH

Add 1/4 cup Pure Honey to water for a fragrant ".soaky" bath.

FACE & THROAT

Whisk 1 tablespoon Pure Honey, egg white, 1 teaspoon glycerin (available at chemists and beauty stores), and enough flour to form a paste. Smooth over face and throat. Leave on ten minutes; wash off with warm water.

FACIAL MASK / TONER

In a blender, puree 1 tablespoon pure Honey with 1 peeled, cored apple. Smooth over face. Leave on 10 minutes; rinse with cold water.

FACIAL CLEANSER

1 tablespoon pure Honey with 2 tablespoons finely ground almonds, and 2 teaspoon lemon juice. Rub gently onto face. Rinse with warm water

LETTER FROM BRIDGET

When I got back to Montserrat in November, my American friend Clover Lea, who has been very anxious to keep bees, rang me. We had tried to establish 2 wild colonies in her equipment a couple of years ago but they both absconded. It seems to be a trait with tropical honeybees, often when the weather is too hot.

VOLCANO

Clover is married to David Lea who photographs the volcano and the footage you see of Montserrat erupting was shot by him. Clover is a real Earth Mother type who loves the natural world and its products. and wants to give "Clover's Honey"! to the guests in her B&B.

In the phone call, she said "There seem to be a lot of bees around my empty hive". I went to look; her 16 yr old son, Jesse, told me "I told Mom there were tons of bees around the garden about a month ago but nobody took much notice"; and yes - a swarm had landed.

TRANSFER

Unfortunately the hive had been left with an empty super box on top and no crown board, so the swarm had attached itself to the roof – about four combs. Very hard to look at it from underneath, so we decided to leave it to grow and then transfer to brood frames. I put a box of frames under it, hoping they would move down but they rarely do what you ask them!

We inspected as far as possible for six weeks, observing pollen going in at the entrance, and as it has been so wet here this winter, there haven't been many days when we could transfer the combs anyway.

UNAFRAID

Last Saturday ,February 11th, looked sutable, so armed with string, empty frames and a bucket, we lifted off the roof and propped it on a box. Clover is a natural beekeeper – she was completely unafraid and showed not a jot of nervousness.

BUCKET

The roof was full of combs by then, with quite a bit of honey, so we dropped as much honey as we could into the bucket. Of course the combs were soft and fragile and removing some honey helped to concentrate on transferring the brood. Each section was cut from the point of attachment with a sharp knife, carefully tied into an empty frame and placed into the brood chamber. If you have never tried this operation, it is an interesting experience. Someone has to be nippy with the bucket because bits drop off all over the place.

The brood box was put on the floor with a queen excluder, to discourage the disrupted hive from absconding, checked for sufficient stores, and we left it alone to sort itself out.

CANDLES

Then I showed Clover how to clean and bottle her honey and process the wax for her candles – she is thrilled with it all.

I am thrilled with something else. I work these bees without protection - I wore a beesuit for the transfer and got a few stings from sticky bees which got trapped, but not one attacked in anger. For normal inspections they roll over to have their tummies rubbed! I have never worked with such a quiet colony, and to have them arrive at a beginner's hive is good fortune indeed.

Best wishes to everyone – we will be back in France by March.

Bridget

THE HIVE *WHAT THE BEE NEEDS - WHAT WE NEED*

Where hives are concerned, the requirements of bees and beekeeper do not entirely coincide; indeed, of the two, the beekeeper is the fussier.

FORTY LITRES

Bees certainly thrive in all the hives we currently care to keep them in. Research shows that swarms prefer a cavity of about 40 litres (a little larger than a Modified National brood box), well up off the ground, with a small entrance.

VARIABLE SIZE

This is essentially a space with room enough for a cluster and winter stores, which can be easily defended. Needless to say a wide range is tolerated. Instead of a fixed cavity, the size of a modern hive is variable.

It is split in two parts by the queen excluder which restricts the queen and hence the brood to the lower part, and the honey stores for removal to the top. Boxes can be added as necessary to suit the size of the colony.

ONE BROOD BOX

Normally only one brood box is used with any number of supers as the season and flow require. Arithmetic based on the peak laying rate of the queen alone will not decide the size of brood box. A much better guide will be local experience and advice. Ask the beekeepers what works in the neighbourhood, and avoid the eccentric.

NOT TOO SMALL - NOT TOO BIG

A brood box that is too small will restrict the laying of the queen and the colony will not build up to its potential. On the other hand, putting a type of bee that maintains only a moderate population into a very large hive will not encourage it to expand its brood area, but will only ensure that a large part of the honey crop is stored in the brood frames where it is removable only with difficulty.

So far the question of hive choice has been confined to the requirements of the inhabitants. Now the much more demanding needs of the beekeeper have to be considered, such as the area, cost, looks, the beekeeper's strength, and future plans.

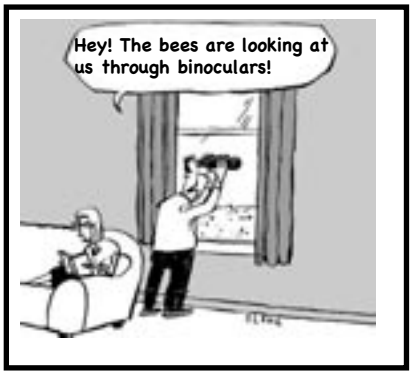
I shall recommend now for the novice the adoption of the Modified National on the grounds that it is common, readily available, cheapish and straightforward. This is not to denigrate any other type - they all have their pros and cons - and their persuasive advocates!

DO BEES RECOGNISE YOU?

THEY ALL LOOK THE SAME

Honeybees may look pretty much all alike to us but it seems we may not all look alike to them. A study has found that they can learn to recognize human faces in photos.

In the bee study, Dyer and two colleagues presented honeybees with photos of human faces taken from a standard human psychology test. The photos had similar lighting, background colours and sizes and included only the face and neck to avoid having the insects make judgments based on the clothing.



SWEET AND SOUR

The researchers, tried to train the bees to realize that a photo of one man had a drop of a sugary liquid next to it. Different photos came with a drop of bitter liquid instead.

Five bees learned to fly toward the photos horizontally in such a way that they could get a good look at it. In fact, these bees tended to hover a few inches in front of the image for a while before deciding where to land. The bees learned to distinguish the correct face from the wrong one with better than 80% accuracy.

Moreover, “Two bees tested two days after the initial training retained the information in long-term memory”. One scored about 94% on the first day and 79% two days later; the second bee’s score dropped from about 87 to 76% during the same time frame.

STRANGE FLOWER

Dyer said in an email. “To the bees the faces were spatial patterns (or strange looking flowers). Bees are famous for their pattern-recognition abilities, which scientists believe evolved in order to discriminate among flowers. As social insects, they can also tell apart their hive mates. But the new study shows that they can recognize human faces better than some humans can—with one-ten thousandth of the brain cells.

WHO ARE YOU?

This raises the question of how bees recognize faces, and if so, whether they do it differently from the way we do it. Studies suggest small children recognize faces by picking out specific features that are easy to recognize, whereas adults see the interrelationships among facial features. Bees seem to show aspects of both strategies depending on the study.

The findings cast doubt on the belief among some researchers that the human brain has a specialized area for face recognition,. Neuroscientists point to an area called the fusiform gyrus, which tends to show increased activity during face-viewing, as serving this purpose. But the bee finding suggests “the human brain may not need to have a visual area specific for the recognition of faces,” Dyer and colleagues wrote. Already, the way that bees navigate is being used to design “autonomous aircraft that can fly in remote areas without the need for radio contact or satellite navigation”.

“We show that the miniature brain can definitely recognize faces, and if in the future we can work out the mechanisms by which this is achieved,” this might suggest ideas for improved face recognition technologies.*Picked up from the internet. Ed.*

READERS TIPS

ELDER FLOWER DRINK

Italian style recipe sent in by Jeni Shelton.

5 elder flower heads (Pick the ones that don't smell of cats)
5-6 Table spoons honey
1 Gallon of cold water.
2 Table spoons white wine vinegar.
1 Lemon chopped up.

Put the above in a bucket with a lid. Give it a stir and leave for 24 hrs. Sieve and bottle. Just wonderful on a hot Summer day.

HONEY BISCUITS

225g	honey
225g	sugar
225g	butter
1/2 cup	water
570g	plain flour
1	heaped teaspoon ground cloves
1/2	teaspoon cinnamon
1	heaped teaspoon carb soda
1	teaspoon ginger

Melt the honey, sugar, butter and water.
Sift the flour, soda and spices into a mixing bowl. Add the melted mixture and stir thoroughly. Let stand overnight. The dough will harden - knead well. Roll out dough onto a floured surface. Cut out biscuits.
Place on greased tray and bake in a moderate oven (180°C) until golden brown.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Anon. Salmon with honey and onions

It has a deliciously unusual taste. Try using a strong tasting honey such as heather or manuka.

Recipe:

2lbs weight of salmon fillets
1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup wine vinegar
1 cup sliced red onions
salt & pepper

Mix the honey and vinegar then marinade the onions in the mix for at least one hour.
Salt and pepper the fillets then add the onion/honey mixture.
Heat the oven at 350 degrees and bake the fish for 20 minutes.

KEEPING RECORDS.

If we have more than two stocks of bees, then records are necessary if we expect to obtain honey from them.

Also a note of what we expect to do at the next inspection can be a big help, ***if*** we look over the record **before** going to the apiary. It is essential to know, with certainty, just when and what happened at the last inspection or the last time we casually observed something whilst in the apiary. All needs to be written down.

WHAT TO WRITE.

Terminology is most important In our record book, also in our heads. Identifying the queen is a matter of an identification tag nailed to the brood box and containing a letter, A, B, C etc. This letter identifies the queen as part of a family or strain. The letter is followed by a number 1, 2, 3 etc. This identifies the individual queen. We now know where she came from, who she is and were she is.

From an identification point of view the stock is not important, a queen can be moved from stock to stock (Uniting: re-queening: swarming etc.) So the important thing is to know her parentage and family tree.

KEEPING TRACK

The stock is there to raise her progeny and produce honey. I have difficulty when a swarm has issued, or with an artificial swarm for that matter. My problem is to keep track of which is the swarm and which is the parent colony. I have to keep firmly fixed in my mind that there is a Swarm and a Parent stock.

COUNTING YOUR CHICKENS

I think the confusion comes from the new Swarm having the old queen and the old stock having the new queen or a potential new queen (Queen cell). I also think it a good idea to identify the new queen in the parent stock even though it may only be a queen cell at this stage. It's counting your chickens I know, but better to be safe than sorry.

BEE - NOTICES

SCHEDULE OF VISITS TO HOLDEN CLOUGH DURING 2006

It is intended to visit the apiary every Sunday morning starting 30th APRIL until the 24th AUGUST 2006

PLEASE RING ONE OF THE APIARY MANAGERS IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND TO MAKE SURE THE VISIT IS AS SCHEDULED. WHICH WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE WEATHER.
STARTING TIME APPROX. 9.30am

APIARY MANAGERS

David Rayner	01200 426898
Paul Aldred	01772 330159

MEMBERS SERVICES

Bayvoral £3. per pack of 4 strips
Thymol crystals £2.20 per100g
Apiguard £3,50 Per Treatment

Beekeepers quarterly Annual subscription from the publisher is £24 - from our treasurer only £16.00 with a slight profit to our society.
Talk to Ken Gaiger phone. 01282 778887.
Library. There is an extensive range of bee books etc. that may be borrowed.
Our librarian, Brian Jackson brings some with him to our meetings. Contact him on 01535 634503 for special requests.

DISCLAIMER
The views expressed in any of the articles in 'Bee Talk' represent the personal opinions of the contributors and in no way should they be regarded as the official opinions or views of the 'Lancashire & NorthWest Beekeepers Association' nor of our local Branch of this association 'The Blackburn & East Lancashire Branch'

FROM THE TREASURER

Subscriptions for the 2006 season are now over due . The new full membership rate will be unchanged, at £14 and £2 for each additional family member. Associate membership is £4.00. This has been achieved even though out goings are increasing.
The rates for Bee Disease Insurance (B.D.I.) Are:-
First 3 hives are covered by subscription

up to 5 hives	£2,00 extra
up to 10 hives	£5.25 extra
up to 15 hives	£7 75 extra
up to 20 hives	£9.50 extra
up to 25 hives	£11.10 extra
Above 25 hives	See Treasurer

Please forward your subscriptions whilst its fresh in your mind, it will save me a lot of trouble. Also early renewal is necessary to assure you have the public liability (third party) insurance which is included in your subscription
Annual subscriptions to THE BEEKEEPER'S QUARTERLY are due so payment of £16 would be appreciated. CHEQUES SHOULD BE MADE PAYABLE TO L. & N.W.B.K.A. AND SENT TO KEN GAIGER, 2 HIGHAM ROAD, PADIHAM, BURNLEY BB12 9AP
Telephone 01282 778887

COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONTACT DETAILS

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Ken Gaiger	Hon. Treas.	01282 778887
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David Rayner	Manager Holden C.	01200 426898
Paul Aldred	Manager Holden C.	01772 330159

DELEGATES TO THE CENTRAL COUNCIL

John Zamorski	Hon. Sec	01200 427661
Ken Gaiger	Hon. Treas.	01282 778887

BEE - NOTICES

INFORMATION ABOUT 'BEETALK'
Planned Publication Dates: March 2006, June 2006, September 2006, December 2006
LATEST TIME FOR COPY - 2 WEEKS BEFORE THE MONTH OF PUBLICATION.
Please contact Bill Ainsworth, 296 Scotland Road Nelson BB9 7YS Telephone 01282 614015 .
Good, crisp photographs or line drawings are always welcome

NEXT THREE MEETINGS

SUN 16TH JULY 2 30 PM

At Mr. & Mrs. D Bush Upbrooks, Clitheroe Working a Bee Hut. Demonstrated by David Bush & John Zamorski There will also be a wine and cheese tasting Provided you bring a bottle of wine John & David reckon they can provide the cheese Have you a prize for the raffle??

Ring 01200 428152 if you cannot find the way. If you have a computer try GOOGLE maps At http://maps.google.com/ Simple and useful.

SUN 20TH AUGUST 2 30 PM

At Mr. Ken Gaiger, 2 Higham Rd., Padiham Talk and may be a demo by our very own Northern Regional Bee Inspector, Ian Molyneux Lets give him a good audience!

SUN 17TH SEPTEMBER 2 30 PM

At Mr. & Mrs. R Moyle, Twiston, Clitheroe Annual Barbecue It's always "a right good do" shame it is not better attended I know it is a bit difficult to find but it is well worth it Again try Google. The phone number Is 01200 445398 We are again asking for raffle prizes!!

"Please can you ask people to contact me for the wine and cheese and the BBQ so that I can get the grub for the correct number. Thanks, John Zamorski Phone 01200 427661"

LETTER FROM THE HON TREASURER.

As an alternative to Bayvorol/Apistan I have purchased some Apiguard to treat for varroa. The cost per treatment for one hive will be £3.50

Apigaurd is a thymol based product. The treatment consists of two foil trays filled with a thymol impregnated gel. Each try contains 50g of gel which is equivalent to 12.5g of thymol.

Apiguard is best applied in late Summer after the supers have been removed. (Similar timing as Apistan /Bayvorol. However it can be used in Spring time, provided that the temperature is above 15ºc. note a maximum of only two treatments per year should be applied.

To apply, pull back the foil lid on the first tray and place it on top of the brood frames over the brood nest, gel side upermost. Ensure a minimum clearance of a bee space exists above the tray, use an eke or empty super.After two weeks, replace with the second tray and leave for a further two weeks. When you have removed the second tray the treatment is complete.

Ken Gaiger.

HISTORICAL NOTE.

THE HARVEST OF THE HIVES

Written by the Rev Gerald W Banks MA.

An extract from the Amble Church Monthly February 1897 this article found by Tom Crozier as a result of his interest in local history and gives us an insight into honey use over 100 years ago and how little has changed.

If everyone understood the properties of honey, and how useful and wholesome a food it really is it is quite certain that it would be much more generally used and in many more different ways.

Sugar is one of the necessary constituents of our food and in honey we have it in the best possible form.

BREAKFAST

Without butter the breakfast table is not. considered properly furnished. Pure honey

contains that which is quite as necessary an article of food and it is far more wholesome, and yet how seldom comparatively speaking is it to be seen.

If everybody could be taught the truth about it, there is no doubt that it would be found regularly in every household.

SWEETENER

The time was when honey was the only sweetening agent in general use; but cane sugar has now almost taken its place. Cheaper it certainly is, but a very poor substitute it is, honey contains a number of valuable properties which it is impossible to replace now many people are beginning to understand, So it seems possible that this product of the busy bees labours, may once again come into general use.

But if the wholesome and beneficial qualities of honey are to be properly enjoyed, it is necessary that it be absolutely pure. It is unfortunately a fact that large quantities of glucose, containing injurious acids and other substitutes for pure honey are constantly placed on the market. These, it need hardly be said, are the reverse of wholesome and are besides the occasion of much unjust, but reasonable, prejudice against genuine honey.

IMPORTS

Again, apart from the question of adulteration there are many wide differences in quality. Vast quantities of flavourless and unpalatable honey are every year imported into Great Britain from countries which do not produce pasturage calculated to impart the delicate and delicious flavours and aromas of that gathered in our own country. Let me, then, advise honey consumers to see that they get, not only pure, but British honey.

Those who are familiar with that gathered from English clover, raspberry, Scotch heather, etc, will need no warning; but many there are who have yet to learn that there is honey and honey.

WHAT IS HONEY?

Now let us see what honey really is. A sweet liquid, as many people know, is Secreted by flowering plants which is called nectar. This the honeybee by means of its long tongue wonderfully and beautifully adapted for the purpose is able to extract from the nectar of the flower and convey into the honey-sac. In this curious little bag which Is situated in the thorax it undergoes a certain chemical change which turns it into honey.

If later on after it has been allowed properly to ripen in the cells of the honey comb we take some of this and analyse it , of what do we find that it consists? (Cont)

(Cont)

FOUR FIFTHS

Well in the first place, about four fifths of the whole is a saccharine substance formed of two kinds of sugar-grape, or invert sugar, as the dual compound is called, and which unlike cane sugar, is in just the best possible form for assimilation. We have besides about 20% of water and also small proportions of pollen, mineral matter and certain essential oils. All these differing according to the source from which the nectar is gathered, and thus accounting for the diversity in quality, flavour, and aroma, of different kinds of honey.

CANE SUGAR

It is thus very easy to understand why honey is such a wholesome and valuable food. We see that It contains one of the essential constituents of nutrition-sugar in the best possible form in which we can take it; in such a form, indeed, that it may be safely taken by those persons with whom cane sugar is found to disagree.

VIRTUES

When we remember, too, that the nectar gathered from the flower may reasonably expected to contain some of the virtues of the plant which produced it, and there is also present a small quantity of pollen, and certain useful acids, we can easily understand the remarkable medicinal properties which it undoubtedly contains.

SUGAR SUBSTITUTE

Not only then as an adjunct to the breakfast table would, I advocate the use of honey, many and various are the ways in which it may be employed. In the first place it can be used in cooking whenever sugar would be used, great improvement being often effected by substitution, especially in fruit pies and puddings etc.

A delicate and pleasant flavour is imparted to tea and coffee, if sweetened with it, and to home made lemonade it is a very agreeable addition. In the making of cakes there is a great advantage in the use of honey, for it has the effect of keeping them fresh and moist for a considerable time.

BEES AS SYMBOLS

These famous humans used bees as their personal symbols:

- Egyptian pharaohs in Lower Egypt used bees as the royal symbol from 3000 to 350 BC.
- The Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte used the bee as a symbol of immortality and resurrection. Napoleon's red cape is famous for its bee print. Some say the fleur-de-lis was actually a bee.

- Pope Urban III in 1626 (Rome)
- St. Ambrose is the patron saint of beekeepers.
- Virgil, the Roman poet was a beekeeper.
- Many tribes in Africa use the bee as their totem.
- It is rumored that Alexander the Great was buried in honey.
- Burying the dead (especially nobility) in or with honey was common practice in Egypt, Assyria, and other regions. Honey was also used to embalm the dead.
- Many famous poets and writers such as Virgil, Sophocles, and Plato were associated with the bee.
- A common story was that infants whose lips were touched by bees would become great speakers, poets, storytellers, and philosophers. Thus, bees were often called "birds of the muses".

THE ITALIAN CONNECTION

JENI'S JOTTINGS FEB. 2006

Snow still laying. Very cold start to the Month. No sign of a let up in the icy conditions until the end of the Month.

WINTER DAMAGE

A couple of warmish days and the bees - well some of them - came back to life. I decided to do a quick check to see what damage the winter had done.

Very disheartened at the number of dead stocks. Closed them up to prevent any robbing and possible spread of disease. I also put on some 'Api-Life Var' which had gone past its 'sell by date' on the top frames of the live hives in the hope it might help with the varroa problem. I don't think it will have done much good as the temperature has been to low. Api-life Var needs higher temperatures to work. The cold weather returned until April but I was able to make a start on clearing the Winter damage.

MARCH

Continued to be cold and nasty with not a decent good day for the bees, just an odd hour now and again. More concern on my part for the bees, so continued to put feeders on small stocks. The ones I thought would benefit. What they really needed was to get out and about for pollen. At last came some sunshine at the end of March. This enabled me to start a proper inspection and spring clean. All bees put into a clean hive and all the old dirty frames replaced and a lot of the end frames that were full of honey taken away. Why I had bothered to feed I don't Know! I think only one hive possibly benefited from some extra help. Most hives were so full they had no room to move!! One very noticeable thing in nearly all the hives was that the brood nest was situated in the Southeast corner of the hive. Presumably because of the extreme conditions of last Winter, something I had never seen before.

APRIL

A welcome continuation too, the better weather which put the bees into the "priority" slot, Along with wood clearing for next years fuel supply, getting the seed potatoes in, dealing with the lambing etc-etc. It's always a very hectic time of the year, as every thing needs doing at once.

A helping hand from Michael Costello was most welcome with the big heavy 12 frame hives.

(For new readers of this news letter Michael and his wife went to stay with Jeni some two or three years ago. When they came home they immediately sold up and bought a place out there near to Jeni.) If you read this Michael how about a letter/note? Ed.

BACK TO JENI.

I still favour these old hives as the bees seem to fair better in harsh Winters, but they are very heavy and cumbersome.

With the better weather came the Spring blossom, apricot almond, cherry and then apple. Hopefully a good year for fruit. The fields became a vivid green and yellow as the dandelions appeared. As for the pollen it was in abundance as all the different types of willow got going. The first cuckoo arrived on April fool's day. (I did wonder as it was a cold morning)

The promising good start to the Month didn't continue, by the middle of April it had gone back to Winter, but at least every thing had a chance to come out of hibernation, (including Me) And the bees had got off to a good clean start.

MAY

The weather picking up now. Warmer days First snake sighting on May 1st. Poor thing was too cold to uncoil as the dogs and I stepped hastily over it, as it lay in our path. I resisted giving it a poke with my stick!

Now is the time for the prized mushrooms called spinaroto or prugnolo very tasty and an added treat to a meal. That is if you can find them before the wild boar!! They also think they're great.

The swarming Season has begun and Spring has really sprung. The start of a new season.

Best wishes to you all.

Tante Salute Jeni.

OPENING A BEE HIVE.

Seven Questions to be asked on opening a hive.

SUFFICIENT ROOM?

This question is based upon reading the size of the colony and the super requirement. The general rule of thumb is that when all except the two outside frames of the brood box or super are filled with bees you should put on the next super. If the next super is composed of foundation put it under the existing supers, if it contains drawn out comb it can go on top

IS THE QUEEN PRESENT?

To find if the queen is present all you have to see is eggs. An egg in an upright position was laid in the last 24 hours. An egg at 45° was laid two days ago and an egg flat or just hatched is three days old. This will indicate that your queen is present. A check should be made that your queen is in good order and laying well. (Are the eggs laid in a good pattern) Queens should only be kept for two years, after this her egg laying will decline and the colony will be prone to swarming. She will lose control over her colony as her production of queen substance from her mandibular glands is halved each year of her life. So young queens cause fewer problems.

IS THE COLONY BUILDING UP ?

If the colony is not building up then this must be a sign of a failing queen, i.e. one unable to lay sufficient eggs to maintain a brood nest due to age, poor mating or physical problem. The second, and more common cause of poor build up is Nosema apis a spore forming protozoa. This affects the bee's ability to digest pollen and thereby reduces the colony's ability to produce brood food to feed the larvae.

ARE QUEEN CELLS PRESENT?

'Queen cells are divided into 3 categories

Eggs in queen cups A).

Larvae in queen cells B).

Sealed queen cells C).

With a nine day inspection routine, action needs to be taken immediately with category C). With Category A) this can be left without action until the next visit. Category B) should be dealt with as soon as possible within a day or so..

SIGNS OF DISEASE?

During all routine inspections any signs of disease should be looked for. If disease is found it should be treated or the colony destroyed in accordance with good practice (Note Brood diseases must be notified). One inspection per year should be for diseases alone shaking all the bees from the frame for best results.

SUFFICIENT STORES?

The colony should have at least 5kg of stores to maintain it for the next 10 days in case of inclement weather. The equivalent of 5kg of stores is two National frames filled on both sides. Ideally the colony should have more than this amount. Are any of the old black combs in need of changing?

TEMPERAMENT ?

Do they follow, do they run on the comb, are they aggressive? Questions especially important to BBKA Members where a large number of members have kept bees for less than 3 years.

To get the best use of this information a record card should be kept with each hive to help jog your memory of your last visit and to help shorten your inspection time The record should be kept with your other beekeeping equipment.

Keeping it in the hive will result in either a chewed card or a soggy one. Any style of Recording will suffice as long as it can be read and understood by the beekeeper, shorthand records are Fine but must be readily remembered.

For very new beginners the above my be too much to carry in the head at one time. So with the help of the notes taken previously you should have some idea what reason you have for opening the hive. Keep the one or two reasons firmly in the front of your mind, and go for it. At the same time having the other things at the back of your mind.

WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT

BY EATING HONEY? A NEW BOOK TELLS YOU HOW

LOSE WEIGHT AT NIGHT

You may be unaware that on January 1st 2006 a book was published by Souvenir Press (London), called The Hibernation Diet. This book is having a dramatic impact on sales of honey in the UK and beyond. The book, which advocates taking honey before bed, to optimise fat loss during sleep, was already causing unprecedented levels of interest from the media prior to publication.

EMPTY SHELVES

This information has leaked out into the athletic community nationally and has already impacted on honey sales nationally, in 2005. In January 2005, a few articles in the press about this approach to weight loss, before the book was written, caused some supermarkets in Scotland to have their shelves cleared of honey.

The book arose out of the authors' work in sports nutrition, whereby they have been advising athletes for some years to take honey prior to bed to optimise recovery. Recovery biology is exclusively fat burning biology and arising from this, the authors developed a strategy for optimising fat burning during sleep by fuelling the liver prior to bed, culminating in the book (The Hibernation Diet). Honey, which contains fructose, is ideal for this purpose.

PUBLICITY

The publicity agents for this revolutionary book are Midas, the company who handled publicity for the Atkins Diet. The authors can testify that, not only does the diet work, but the public love the strategy and tune in immediately and enthusiastically, whenever the theory is explained to them.

FUELLED LIVER

Simply, if the liver is fuelled prior to bed, recovery hormones are released to do repair, regeneration and construction of new tissue. These hormones are exclusively fat burning hormones. For this to occur, blood glucose must be stable, and for this to occur, the liver must be fuelled prior to bed.

Up to now, few do this, the liver depletes, blood glucose falls and adrenal stress hormones, which do not burn, fat are released.

The book is based on several years of research into recover biology and although the theory and the biological principles it unilises are quite simple, they have been ignored up to now, not only by the medical profession, but also by those who offer advice to would-be dieters. For this reason the impact will be all the greater.

IMPACT ON SALES

It is important therefore that the honey industry, at each level, production, supply and retail, are aware of this in advance, so that they can maximise the potential impact on sales in 2006 and prepare for a quite amazing and dramatic year ahead.

As authors of the book we very much want the book to be discussed at every level within the honey industry, so that a mutually beneficial dynamic may develop whereby sales of the book drive forward sales of honey and sales of honey drive forward sales of the book.

Mike and Stuart McInnes (authors)
Hibernation Diet.

PATHOGENS AND VARROA

News from the USA regarding attacking varroa mites with FUNGI

STOPPING THE MITE

Since 2000, scientists in the ARS Beneficial Insects Research Unit (BIRU) at Weslaco, Texas, have been looking for a disease-causing agent, or pathogen, that can stop Varroa mites.

The mite has developed resistance to the only approved chemicals, fluvalinate and coumaphos now used for control, and coumaphos is on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "hit list" for possible removal from the market. So the researchers have looked at various disease agents, tried different dosages and application methods, and conducted toxicity tests. Finally, they selected a strain of the fungus Metarhizium anisopliae that was highly pathogenic to Varroa mites.

SPREADING THE SPORES

This potent fungus, which also kills termites, doesn't harm bees or affect their queen's production. To test it, the scientists coated plastic strips with dry fungal spores and placed them inside the hives. Since bees naturally attack anything entering their hives, they tried to chew up the strips, spreading the spores throughout the colony.

In field trials, once the strips were inside the hives, several bees quickly made contact with the spores. Within 5 to 10 minutes, all the bees in the hive were exposed to the fungus, and most of the mites on them died within 3 to 5 days. The fungus provided excellent control of Varroa without impeding colony development or population size.

NATURAL CONTROL

"We tried to find a pathogen of Varroa, and we did it!" Says ARS entomologist Walker A. Jones, research leader of the BIRU. Tests showed that Metarhizium was as effective as fluvalinate, even 42 days after application. "Commercial beekeepers are very edgy about using fluvalinate and coumaphos and are eager to see this natural control get to market," Jones says.

NOT AS QUICK

This research was begun by Rosalind James, formerly with the Weslaco unit. Lambert H.B. Kanga, former BIRU research associate and now chair of the Entomology Department at Florida A&M University at Tallahassee, She continues to collaborate on the project. "While Metarhizium doesn't kill as fast as fluvalinate and coumaphos, the result is the same," Kanga says. "Metarhizium gets the job done, and we won't have to worry about Varroa becoming resistant to the fungus."

The scientific team is now fine-tuning the strategy for transfer to producers.

This research is part of Crop Production, an ARS National Program described on the World Wide Web at www.nps.ars.usda.gov.

This article was sent in by Michael Birt to whom we send thanks.

MASONIC SYMBOL

The bee in all ages and nations has been a symbol of masonry. For this

reason the kings of France, both pagans and Christians, always eminent Free-Masons, carried three bees for their arms. The bee for a mason is a symbol of being industrious and the beehive is an emblem and symbol of industry given in the Third Degree of Masonry.

THE BIODYNAMIC SYSTEM

A talk by a biodynamic bee keeper.

The following are some of the relevant points he expressed,

In contrast to the more general approach to teaching beekeeping, he stressed the importance of learning about the nature of bees, before learning how to handle and cultivate them. He considered bees to be more important to agriculture than any other species because of their vital work in pollinating crops.

NO FOUNDATION

His fellow biodynamic beekeepers use modern rectangular wooden hives with moveable frames, they do not fit the frames with wax foundation according to general practice.

THE NEED TO BUILD

He considers that building wax comb is an important natural function of the honeybee and that suppressing this function, by

providing ready-made foundation sheets embossed with honeycomb pattern, causes the bees unnecessary stress.

There is also the danger inherent in the common practice of recycling wax into new foundation whereby lipophilic substances from anti-parasite treatments will tend to concentrate in the wax, leading to a build-up of toxins that could damage bees.

As well as encouragement to development of mites resistant to such treatments. In the biodynamic system, bees are allowed to build their own comb according to their needs, thus acknowledging that the bees know better than we do what is best for them.

It was noted that the common objection from beekeepers was that left to their own devices, bees will build comb containing many more large drone-sized cells than they would if provided with smaller sized foundation, thus potentially reducing the space for raising worker brood.

On the face of it, a reduction in the working population ought to result in lower honey yields, but in practice this appears not to be the case.

One of the speakers friends was a commercial beekeeper with 500 hives, who makes a good living using the biodynamic system and has excellent honey crops.
It is considered that allowing the bees to decide on the male/female balance in the hive gives them more control and thus the results in a less stressed colony.

NOT ALL MALES ARE USELESS

Although it is generally considered that the drone bees only function is to mate with the queen (something that only a tiny proportion of drones actually achieve in practice) there may be other secondary functions of which we are unaware, possibly including helping to keep the brood warm.

Another advantage of having large numbers of drones around the apiary is that our queens are more likely to mate with our own drones, thus helping to maintain our blood lines.

How about this for saving on the cost of foundation Ed.

ALBERT KNEW A THING OR TWO

Albert Eeinstein considered bees to be so vital that he predicted an early end to human life on earth should the honeybee become extinct.

STORING HONEY

One of the finest foods we can store is pure, raw local honey. Honey stored under proper conditions will last for years, and can be used for cooking, and general health maintenance. But the secret to success is in those first two sentences.

Often, the honey sold in shops and supermarkets is NOT pure, raw honey. It is blended, heated, and generally not of origin in this country, let alone local.

RUNNY HUNNY

In the USA, to maintain honey in the liquid or 'Runny' state for a long shelf life in retail stores, it must be heated to 181F for 24 hours, which destroys most of the inherent good qualities of honey. Indeed, the heating produces the chemical hydroxymethyfurfural (HMF), which in Europe is considered an unwanted adulterant, and heated American honey is therefore illegal to sell in Europe due to their pure food laws.

It has been said that "honey is honey, so you might as well buy it from a discount store." Nothing could be further from the truth. Studies in Canada found that Chinese "honey" was at least 40% corn syrup, contained caramel coloring, and Canada joined Europe in banning its importation.

BETTER THAN SENNA PODS

Unfiltered, unheated honey contains active glucose oxidase which supplies oxygen to the digestive tract. Such natural honey is reputed to prevent botulism poisoning, relieve constipation and prevent congestion in the intestinal tract and that heating and pressure filtering will destroy and/or remove the valuable enzymes in the honey.

HOMEOPATHIC

Studies since 1978 have shown that pure, raw local honey is excellent in the prevention and cure of various allergies, as it contains minute trace amounts of pollen and mold spores, and acts as a homeopathic medicine. One allergy clinic in the USA (employing 22 physicians!) uses pure, raw local honey in its treatments, and arranges for their patients to obtain local honey, which they defined as being obtained from floral sources within 5 miles of the patient's home.

TEMPERATURE

Raw honey can be expected to granulate or crystallize rapidly, the actual rate depending upon the floral source - anything from two weeks to three months. Honey granulates quickest at 15F, and slower at temperatures above or below 15F. Proper storage, then, would be at temperatures as close to 15F as possible.

If your honey should crystallize, place it in boiling water for 2-3 minutes until it returns to liquid. You can also microwave 1 jar (250 ml) of honey in a microwave safe container on high 2 to 3 minutes or until crystals dissolve. Stir every 30 seconds, and do not boil or scorch.

Honey darkens with age but retains its flavour. it is best to consume honey within one year of opening the container.

ANTIBIOTICS FOR ANIMALS

From the Independent

Traces of an antibiotic were found in honey sold in the UK, according to a Which? report. Tests showed residues of tylosin in three out of 20 jars. The antibiotic is licensed to treat animals but not bees. The consumer organisation said the antibiotic posed no health threat but that honey should be a pure food.

THE ASSOCIATIONS HONEY EXTRACTOR

The extractor is avalable for hire at £5.

It must be returned in the condition it was received - - clean and tidy and all in one piece

All breakages must be paid for by the hirer

Michael Birt is in charge of the extractor

Ring him at 01706 222849

A HONEY EXTRACTOR