



Bee Talk

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

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Registered Charity

What's in this issue of Bee Talk

EDITORIAL

PAGE 1

The Association website, email addresses and Bill talks about the Beginner's Beekeeping Course and British bees

BEGINNERS PAGES

PAGE 2 & 3

The start of a three part series entitled 'Beekeeping in a Nutshell'. Also a short article about Breeding basics

NEW ZEALAND

PAGE 4

David Rayner explains about commercial beekeeping in New Zealand. How about kicking the lids off your hives?

NON FOOD USES FOR HONEY

PAGE 5

There's even talk of it for embalming and, would you believe, contraception!

A WORD FROM THE SECRETARY

PAGE 5

John talks about things to come during 2007 and hopes we shall meet during the Winter

CREAMED HONEY

PAGE 6

Go on! have a go, but you must have your starter before you start!

FROM MOTHER TO OFFSPRING

PAGE 6

Queens might be passing down virus. A new idea worth looking at.

BEEES AND BOMBS

PAGE 7

Just imagine - sniffer bees at the airport! Looking out for explosives

WHAT THE FRENCH THINK

PAGE 8

This time a French perspective on queen losses

19TH CENTURY MANUAL

PAGE 8

Beekeeping in 1883. How much of it holds good today?

TRADING STANDARDS

PAGE 9

Bill's in trouble with the law - but only slightly. Do you think you would be in the clear?

READ THESE PAGES FIRST

PAGE 10 & 11

Notices which are there just for YOU. Please take a look and check to see if you have paid your subs

FROM MICHAEL BIRT

PAGE 12

He visits Vietnam and enjoys the sunshine. He'll be back in April

ITALIAN CONNECTION

PAGE 13

Jeni talks about the weather and a new way of dealing with varroa.

DRONE BROOD REMOVAL

PAGE 14

The writer says 'Don't think about - DO IT!'

THE POLICE AGAIN

PAGE 15

How the bees police themselves - especially egg laying workers.

ROBOT BEES

PAGE 16 & 17

Robot bees who can do the waggle dance and lead the others to food.

THE SOAP BOX

PAGE 19

Arthur has a good old grouse about money (again) and the price of honey

SCRAPINGS

PAGE 19

Thymol and apideas amongst other things.

Editorial

EMAIL

We have the email address of forty-five members. If you have an email address which we may not know about, please send it to Arthur at arfur3mac.com

AN ELECTRONIC COPY OF BEETALK

This particular copy of Beetalk is being printed on the computer - which means it is in glorious colour. Normally, Michael Birt, very kindly, photocopies it for us and you receive it in black and white.

If you have a computer, you can download a colour copy, just open

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/alan.huxley>

This is OUR Association website and if you click on the 'Resources' button you will see a full list of BeeTalk magazines, past and present. These are in the form of PDF documents which are, at least in theory, universal documents which can be opened on any PC. It can be printed out on your printer or you can read it on the screen of your computer.

SUNSHINE

As I write this (24th Feb.) the sun is shining and the day is warm. All my stocks have been flying and all are bringing pollen in with the exception of one, I will have to keep a eye out on this one. One stock alone not bringing in pollen is a very bad sign it suggests that the Queen is not producing brood that needs the pollen, but it may just mean she is a bit behind the rest in getting cracking.

Regarding getting cracking I, "The perfect person that I am", have all my spare equipment clean, repaired, disinfected and ready for use. How are you doing?? Seriously it's going too be to late in another week or two. When Spring comes every thing will need doing all at once.

The bees need feeding now. It's not too early to feed with Syrup now we are well into March, and if the Queen is doing her

MARCH 2007

stuff there should be some brood in the nest that need feeding and pollen going in is a sure sign that all is well.

IT'S GOT TO BE YELLOW

The big yellow banner on the front cover of this issue is to remind us that yellow is this year's Queen marking colour and it is hope that we all have some big fat Queens this year that we can dab a blob of yellow paint on.

BRITISH BLACK

Just read the following from the Shropshire bee keepers News letter, it's from their Regional Bee Inspector. "In 2006 there were 1192 Queens imported from Hawaii and 740 from New Zealand, that is apart from bees brought in from the EEC

As a British Black Bee enthusiast, it grieves me to see Queens brought in from climates and situations that are total foreign to us in the British Isles, it is unlikely that they will survive very long in our climate even though it is getting warmer, it is still very wet. In the short time they are with us their drones will be mating with our British Blacks and diluting the adaptation to our climate that our home grown bees have achieved over thousands and thousands of years

I hear that Holden Clough have imported some new Queens. They are from Ireland "Michael Mac Giolla Coda's" so not only are they British Blacks but are of a very good strain.

BEGINNER'S BEEKEEPING COURSE

David Rayner has started a beginner's Beekeeping Course at West Bradford Village Hall and, so far, has eight members. By early Summer the course will be completed, except for the practical side. Initial reactions are positive.

If others are interested, perhaps we could run another course starting in May.

Give David a ring on 01200 426898 if you would like to know more



BEEKEEPING IN A NUTSHELL STARTING OUT PART 1

In 1994 the death occurred of a well-known beekeeper in Hampshire. Right through his last summer, his enthusiasm was unabated, and he was able to show the finest comb honey his bees had ever produced in his 77 years of beekeeping. Of all his tales his favourite was how he started at the age of 7 - the thrill of starting was still tangible.

Whether one's first bees are obtained after a ten year preparation or on the spur of the moment with a swarm or a gift, the first moments are memorable. The excitement is usually mixed with some trepidation. Will I manage? Will the colony survive? Will the cat get stung? No matter how much theory is learned in advance, it is still a question of 'In at the deep end' the day that the first hive is set up and inhabited and the owner has to get a veil on and undergo the metamorphosis to beekeeper.

UNIVERSE OF INSECTS

The change will take the beekeeper into the universe of the insects, where sight, sound, smell, all the senses we have and then some extra, are different and strange; where social organisation is spectacular, and where extraordinary feats of communication, navigation and survival can be observed every day.

Few of us will be fortunate enough to enjoy 77 years of this pleasure, but most beekeepers display the fascination which grows through the years and decades. The aim of these articles, is to assist the starting beekeeper over some of the stepping stones into the craft, and to learn the basic skills which will lead to proficiency.

PLANNED OR NOT PLANNED

If the start into beekeeping has been planned, then it is possible to consider aspects like the type of hive used, the type of bee, the location of the apiary, the time of year to start and the method of harvesting the honey crop. On the other hand if a swarm is taken, or a colony received or inherited without warning, then few of these matters can be controlled. In general if an opportunity to get started presents itself, seize it, providing you can get an experienced hand to give an assessment of the health and temper of the bees. More on these points later.

WHAT SORT OF HIVE

There are two topics which are guaranteed to cause battle lines to be drawn in any association. The first of these is the type of hive which is "best". A quick flick through a beekeeping equipment catalogue will reveal the following at least:- National, Commercial, WBC, Langstroth, Smith, Dadant, Jumbo, Wormit and we can be thankful that these are only the remnants of a much wider range. Some hives - beautiful and obscure - crop up at auctions and



'HIVE' GOT AN OLD ONE

sales. Buy these by all means for painting white and storing your tools in the garden - a lovely curio is much more satisfying than a non-standard hive where the frames have to be jemmied out in a frenzy of bees.

The variety of hives is a legacy from the largely amateur history of beekeeping in this country. Different hives tend to be favoured in different parts of the country, sometimes for climatic reasons,

sometimes because an authoritative or respected beekeeper promoted one particular type. Examples are the Glen and Gale hives which still crop up on occasions.

Continued on Page 3

SWARMING

While discussing brood boxes, it is worth referring to swarming. A common misapprehension among beginners is that a large brood box will delay, reduce or even eliminate swarming.

When crowding is given as one of the causes of swarming, it is the room available to the whole colony that is relevant. Giving supers in plenty of time is good advice. Paradoxically, it may be the case that a smaller brood box which slows up the growth of the colony in spring, is later in swarming than a large one.

KEEPING WARM AND DRY

One winter's night when the temperature was at -27°C I saw two WBC hives by the high road out of Braemar. In the spring they appeared to be flying strongly and thriving despite their Arctic experience. It is not coincidence that in the remotest of glens double-walled hives like the WBC can be seen. Experience has shown that bees survive in these. The outer wall or lifts shed the rain and keep the inner boxes dry, reducing the chilling effect of wind or evaporative cooling on the colony. In an exposed or very wet or maritime location a colony in a WBC or similar will have the edge in terms of survival, honey yield, build-up and health over a colony in a single-walled hive.

In more moderate conditions the advantage will be much less marked. The other factor which maintains the appeal of the WBC is the traditional appearance, which makes it a real showpiece in the garden. There are some drawbacks to the WBC. The cost is greater, since the construction of the inner and outer add to materials and production time. It is less easy to handle. Not only do the lifts have to be removed to get at the hive proper but it is also onerous indeed to move. If you want to move bees to honey crops or for pollination this is not the one for you.

All other hives on sale today are single-walled. They are usually made from timber, either western red cedar or pine, or increasingly, plastic. Western red cedar is remarkably durable. Even without treating

with preservative, it is resistant to rot and hives made from it do get handed down from generation to generation. I have worked sixty year old hives which had many years life left in them. Pine is cheaper, needs timber preservative (regularly) and doesn't last as long. Plastic hives, which are much more common on the continent, are made from high-density expanded polystyrene or polyurethane. Their thermal properties make them ideal for wintering in difficult situations or for weak colonies, nuclei or Queen-rearing. Unavailable so far in British standard sizes, they have been slow to catch on in the UK.

By Matthew Allan

To be continued in the next issue.

BREEDING BASICS

It is important to emphasise that those responsible for the breeding programme have succeeded in improving our strain of mellifera. For obvious reasons selection for breeding is based on the FIVE following easily identifiable characters:

- Docility. (non-jumping, non-stinging, non-following).
- Steadiness on the comb. (absence of running).
- Brood Pattern. (compactness of brood, absence of empty cells).
- Pollen Storage. (pollen packed over, around, and under the brood nest).
- Comb Building. (speed in occupying supers, drawing foundation, honey storage and quality of comb capping).

WELL I NEVER!

The Australian record for honey production is held by a western Australian beekeeper who harvested an average of 375 kg of honey from each of his 400 hives in one year. That's about 150 tonnes of honey.

FROM NEW ZEALAND

KIWI

September is a special month in N.Z. as it marks the start of the kiwi fruit season and a period of hard work and long hours. Hives are brought out from their wintering sites and checked over for vitality and strength, the colonies are all Langstroth double brood boxes with last years Queens. They must consist of at least eight frames of brood in all stages in the lower box and five frames in the upper one and the bees must 'gush' out when you lift the hive lid off.



MILD WINTERS

The reason they can be in this state so early in the NZ year is that the winters are so mild, so there is brood nearly all year round. After the hives have been checked, we return at night, (bees don't fly at night, but they do crawl), to collect them, with a truck with a hydraulic crane fitted, and install them on sites, 8-20 per site depending on size of the orchard. The colonies are four to a pallet and are fed with syrup usually in a poly bag with a few pinholes in to trickle feed fitted under the lid, this keeps them fed until they locate the kiwi fruit pollen.

KICK THE LIDS OFF

Kiwi fruit provides pollen but no nectar, so we have to return every five days or so to feed the bees with syrup, this is done using a truck with a large tank of syrup mounted and a petrol pump. This is best done with a two man crew, where the first man jumps out of the truck and runs down the line of hives and literally kicks the lids off, it's the easiest and quickest way, the second man, who is the truck driver, tops up the 1 gallon frame feeder, by this time, the first man is ready to refit the lids and away.

BEE STINGS

Sometimes you have to do this on your own, and being slower, it gives a few thousand bees chance to find you, and find you they do, especially if its raining, their stings go right through gloves and overalls. We usually end up going to five to six sites a day. This activity along with farm based duties goes on until Christmas when we have a cracking barbecue at work and a well earned rest! The early pollination is for Golden kiwi fruit and then progresses onto the Green ones, so the kiwi fruit you see in the supermarkets now, if they are from the Southern Hemisphere, are perhaps last seasons crop, and if they are New Zealand kiwi fruit, my bees may have pollinated them.

This article by David Rainer was written whilst he was working for professional beekeepers in New Zealand



I photographed these during a trip to NZ at the time Dave was working here. Is it possible that he placed these hives? (Arthur)

ELEVEN NON-FOOD USES FOR HONEY

We tend to take honey for granted as just another sweetener choice, but in fact there is much more to this sticky treat than meets the eye. Honey has been used as a folk remedy in cultures around the world for millennia, and has been prescribed informally as a cure for smallpox, baldness, eye diseases, and indigestion. It's even been used as a contraceptive.

Now researchers are turning up new evidence of honey's medicinal benefits left and right, mostly due to its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. I don't think Winnie the Pooh would approve, but honey can be used for many other things besides food. Here are a few of those uses:

1. Anti-scarring agent
2. Anti-inflammatory: Effectively treats wounds, burns, and surgical incisions
3. Moisturizer: A useful treatment for sunburn as well as a general-purpose skin softener
4. Eye care: Effectively treats inflammation of the eyelid, some types of conjunctivitis, and keratitis (along with other forms of corneal damage)
5. Anti-fungal: Used to treat athlete's foot and other fungal infections
6. Sore throat treatment: Can also kill the bacteria that sometimes causes sore throats
7. Dental care: Used to reduce tooth decay—all that sticky sugar notwithstanding
8. Anti-ulcer agent: Helps to heal ulcers and upset stomachs
9. Digestive aid: Can regulate intestinal function, alleviating both constipation and diarrhea
10. Sleep aid: Used as a sleep aid and to increase alertness
11. Embalming material: Once used in Ancient Egyptian and Middle Eastern cultures to embalm the dead

A WORD FROM THE SECRETARY

Here we are into another year. Lots of things planned for this year. The Lancashire Convention is going to be held in our area at West Bradford Village Hall in October. Also at West Bradford, the County Honey Show, which this year is being sponsored by our own society - Blackburn & District Beekeepers. This will be the week after we have our own show at Castle Cement. I hope we can show a good turn out and win some prizes. One of the meetings will be preparing for the show so come and learn and have a go.

We intend to have some meetings during the winter months in future instead of the long gap from November to March. Usually our first is the Annual Dinner. This year the numbers to the dinner will be limited so get booking if you want to come. There will be a Queen rearing day in June at the Ormskirk Apiary and numbers to that will be limited also. If you want details ring me ASAP. Elsewhere in this issue there is a reminder about paying Subs early. Late paying can result in a problem with insurance and also if your name doesn't go in the Handbook you don't get your BBKA membership card which gives you discount into BBKA events. We still have low subs compared to other branches thanks to Ken so please support him.

If you want to subscribe to Beekeepers Quarterly or Beecraft Magazine contact Ken for details and a discount. Looking forward to seeing lots of you at the monthly meetings.

John Zamorski

BASIC STEPS TO MAKING CREAMED HONEY

IT'S EASY

Making creamed honey is easier than many people think. Before we explain how to make creamed honey, it is important to understand what it actually is and what it is not. Creamed honey is not whipped honey. There shouldn't be any air in your creamed honey. Creamed honey is controlled granulation of honey which results in extremely small sugar crystals. The smaller the crystals the better the creamed honey. A good creamed honey should be smooth, not grainy, like velvet on the tongue.

BASIC STEPS

Here are the basic steps to making creamed honey. The first rule of making creamed honey is to have a good starter. A starter is simply creamed honey that is added to the liquid honey and serves as a template for the granulation. Your final product will only be as good as what you start with, so start with a creamed honey you like. To begin, the liquid honey should be void of any prior granulation. It can be either freshly extracted or warmed slightly to be sure it is completely liquified. With the honey at room temperature, blend in the starter at a ratio of about 10 parts liquid honey to 1 part starter. Thoroughly mix until the starter is evenly distributed, but take care not to mix in air. Let this set overnight to allow any small amounts of air to rise to the surface. The following day bottle into containers of your choosing; however, a wide mouthed container is preferred so the creamed honey can be scooped out easily. Once the mixture is in your containers, store in a cool place, ideally 57 F., until the honey has creamed. If it is too warm the honey will not cream properly. I have made some at home in my unheated garage in the Autumn when the temperature ranges from 45'-65' and had very good success.

IN A NUTSHELL

That's it in a nutshell. Of course, the process can be more complicated, but a quality product can be produced by following the above steps. One last thing, be sure to save 1 or 2 containers to use as the starter for your next batch. *Thanks to Betterbee mc, USA*

QUEEN'S SHOWN TO PASS VIRUSES TO OFFSPRING FROM MOTHER

Scientists have discovered the first evidence that viruses can be transmitted vertically from mother queens to their offspring in honeybee colonies.

Entomologists Yanping Chen, Jeff Pettis, Jay Evans, Anita Collins and Mark Feldlaufer in Beltsville made the discovery by testing individual queen bees and their offspring for deformed wing virus, sac brood virus and black queen cell virus. They examined queen faeces and various tissues some of which were found to carry viral infections.

EGGS LARVAE & ADULTS

In a separate study, the virus status of queens and their offspring was examined

simultaneously. Once viruses in the queen bees were identified, the same viruses were found in their offspring, including eggs, larvae and adult workers. According to the researchers, this information is invaluable for improving understanding of the epidemiology of virus infections in honeybees. It could be used to predict bee colonies at risk of virus infection, which, in turn, would contribute to the development of effective disease-control strategies. The health of honeybee colonies is continuously threatened by various pathogens, with viruses posing an unknown risk because of lack of information concerning transmission and outbreaks.

From. Notts. Beekeeping Mag.

BEES AND BOMBS

Last year we first reported on *Inscentinel's* new device which uses bees held in a box to detect explosives. The device has now been tested by American scientists and has proved



so successful that the small British company is set to cash in when its box full of computer technology that turns honeybees into bomb detectors goes into mass production. The boxes

could be on duty at airports, train stations and other terror targets within a year, say the scientists. Los Alamos sniffer squad trainer Tim Haartman, an entomologist - insect specialist - at the lab, said: "The technology is there. It's just a case of putting it into production."

SMELLING

Inscentinel's managing director Stephen James thought this could be harnessed to monitor food in warehouses and detect when it is going bad, but then discovered that as well as food and flowers, bees recognise just about anything that has the slightest smell, raising the prospect of detecting explosives. They trained the bees to only extend the proboscis when smelling a particular explosive, conditioning them by giving them a reward of sugared water when they responded correctly.

Inscentinel showed the US scientists that the bees can be trained to sniff out anything from home-made fertilizer bombs, through demolition dynamite to C-4 plastic explosives and unlike sniffer dogs which require three months training, it takes 10 minutes to train the bees.

SMELLER BOX

After training, three or four bees are put in a shoe box-sized "sniffer box", held in position on plastic mountings. Air is sucked by a fan into the box via plastic tubes and wafts gently over the bees. If they detect explosives in the air, the trained bees all stick out their proboscises together.

FALSE ALARMS

A miniature video camera in the box is trained on them and is connected to a computer programmed with movement recognition software. As soon as the movement of the proboscises is detected, an alarm sounds to alert the security operator. To avoid false alarms from rogue results, a single bee sticking out its tongue does not set the system off.

The idea would be to use the box at a security checkpoint, waving it around a person being checked, in the same way electric wands are used as security scanners at airports.

DRY ROT

Now Inscentinel and Los Alamos researchers are looking into other uses for sniffer bees, like detecting dry rot in old buildings, and drugs smugglers at airports. Interestingly, the scientists have discovered that feeding them caffeine improves their memory, and using this discovery, they want to breed an explosive sniffing super-bee. Inscentinel Managing Director Stephen James said: "Bees are incredibly versatile and their potential uses are enormous."

From Apis UK

JONAH

A LITTLE GIRL was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal its throat was very small.

The little girl insisted that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher repeated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible.

The little girl said, "When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah". The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?"

The little girl replied, "Then you ask him".

THE FRENCH VIEW ON COLONY LOSS

Many of you will have heard that there have been considerable losses of colonies over recent years throughout France, Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

The French Beekeepers believe that the problem is related to the use of Gaucho (active ingredient Imidiclorpid), a systemic insecticide used to protect seeds during their early growth. There is no conclusive evidence to suggest this is true but the French Government banned the use of Imidiclorpid four years ago. Interestingly, the loss of colonies continues.

A consortium comprising research institutes and agrochemical companies in France and Germany have decided to investigate the large losses and try to determine what is going on. They have selected about one hundred colonies throughout the area that will be monitored carefully with records being kept on performance and management. Samples of bees will be taken for analysis to see what pathogens, including viruses, are present and detailed analysis will be done on colonies that die. It is called a multi factorial study because the team are measuring many influences on the bees. There is a body of opinion that the losses are yet another consequence of varroosis, whether it be due to the effects of the varroa mite or the treatments that are used for control.

The BBKA have already asked if the study could be extended to the UK as we have different conditions here and also a regime of beekeeping that might highlight differences in mortality. We have been asked to wait another year whilst the team get the protocols of the project operating effectively.

There is no doubt that the honey bee is under threat from many sides and a well regulated project like this one will help us to understand what is happening and how we can better manage bee colonies with the ever present dangers of varroa, viruses and intensive farming
Ivor Davis Courtesy of Bees

MANUAL OF THE APIARY (1883)

A.J. Cook offers some timeless advice on what successful beekeeping requires: enthusiasm, or an ardent love of its duties, is a very desirable, if not an absolute, requisite to successful apiculture. To be sure, this is a quality whose growth, with only slight opportunity, is almost sure. It only demands perseverance. The beginner, without either experience or knowledge, may meet with discouragement -- unquestionably will.

Swarms will be lost, colonies will fail to winter, and the young apiarist will become nervous, which fact will be noted by the bees with great disfavour, and, if opportunity permits, will meet reproof more sharp than pleasant.

Yet, with persistence, all these difficulties quickly vanish. Every contingency will be foreseen and provided against, and the myriad of little

workers will become as manageable and may be fondled as safely as a pet dog or cat, and the apiarist will minister to their needs with the same fearlessness and self possession that he does to his gentlest cow or favourite horse.

Persistence, in the fact of all these discouragement which are so sure to confront inexperience, will surely triumph. In soothe, he who appreciates the beautiful and the marvellous will soon grow to love his companions of the hive, and the labour attendant upon their care and management. Nor will this love abate until it has been kindled into enthusiasm. True, there may be successful apiarists who are impelled by no warmth of feeling, whose superior intelligence, system and promptitude, stand in lieu of, and make amends for, absence of enthusiasm. Yet, I believe such are rare, and certainly they work at great disadvantage.
From Notts. Beekeeping Mag.

HELLO, HELLO HELLO ! WHO ME, OFFICER?

I sell some of my honey to a stall holder in Burnley Market Hall. The store owner rang me way back in June 2006 to say



It's amazing what you can do with a Computer! (Arthur)

that a Trading Standard Officer had taken a jar of my honey to be sent to the county labourites to be analysed.

I was fairly confident it would be OK and as time went on I became certain my honey must have passed with flying colours.

TWICE IN A WEEK !

Last week a phone call from Preston Trading Standard Office, made me sit down quick! A perky secretary's voice said "I have a Mr. Turtington a Senior Trading Standard Officer to speak to you"

To give the man his due his first words were "Don't panic there is nothing desperately wrong I would just like to have a talk with you". Whew! I've just been done last week for a speeding offence. 36 m.p.h in a 30 m.p.h. zone when there was only me and the camera on the road.

"A VERY NICE MAN!"

He sounded like a nice man - a very nice man and we agreed that he would come to my house in four days time.

**There was a
problem with my
jar label and a
problem with my
honey**

TWO PROBLEMS

There was a problem with my jar label and a problem with my honey "Cor blimey!". The label said Best Before 2008 it should have said Best Before End 2008, The honey was 4 grams under weight. There was no great offence committed but we need to get it right.

"RULES IS RULES"

He gave me **TWENTY** A4 sheets of regulations. Reading them later I found them not too easy to understand. However Mr. Tertington spoke to me for about half an hour, and very instructive it was. He has been doing this job for 40 years and of course he knew what he was talking about and I found him a very sound and sensible chap. He explained simply all that I needed to know about the legal side of bottling honey.

GETTING OUR ACT TOGETHER

The reason that I'm writing this is that every one who sells honey through a retail outlet or some other third party. (This does not apply to what you sell from your own home) is very likely to get a visit from Trading Standards at some time in the near future so you might as well get your act together

right now. We could always talk about it when we meet, or if there is sufficient interest perhaps a half hour talk a one of our monthly meetings would do?

All though it is all fairly simple if I was to include it all in BeeTalk, it would

take about four pages of great big slabs of text! (I would never get that past Arthur Bickerstaffe, he **hates** slabs of text) so I will stop now.

Bill Ainsworth.

PS. Thinking about all this, it doesn't matter what the powers in EC decide to make law, its the way the officer on the ground interprets the law that matters to you and me.



Notices

DOWN
WITH
VARROA

INFORMATION ABOUT 'BEETALK'

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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, David Rayner brings some with him to
our meetings. Contact him on 01200 426898 for special
requests.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONTACT DETAILS

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David Bush	01200 427661
John Zamorski	
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Bill Ainsworth	
Colne & Barnoldswick	01282 870147
Tom Jarvis	01282 862129
Helen Howarth	
Burnley & Padiham	01282 778887
Ken Gaiger	

**For all swarm collectors in the County,
ring John Zamorski who has the list
01200 427661**

Payments for THE BEE-KEEPER'S QUARTERLY are due so £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



NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Subscriptions for the 2007 season were due in November. The new full membership rate will be £15 and £2 for each additional family member. Associate membership is £5.00. At the 2006 AGM it was agreed that the basic subscription will be increased to £16 in 2008. Prompt payment would be a big help and reduce the number of reminders.

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

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

Apiguard is a thymol based product. The treatment consists of two foil trays filled with a thymol impregnated gel. Each tray 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 15°C. 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 uppermost. 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.**

FUTURE MEETINGS

WED 28TH MARCH 7 30 PM ANNUAL DINNER

At THE HILLCREST TEA ROOMS, MITTON.

If you haven't been before, do put your name down - it's a real good do. We will try to remind you nearer the date but just in case, why not ring John Zamorski now and reserve a place and get a menu. You can contact John on 01200 427661

SUN 22ND APRIL 2 30 PM PREPARATION FOR THE SEASON

at Mr & Mrs Wrigley's, Holden Clough

SUN 20TH MAY 2 30 PM SWARMS AND CATCHING THEM

at Mr & Mrs Jackson's, Crosshills

SUN 17TH JUNE 2 30 PM BLACK BEES - MY WAY

at Bob Fulton's, The Mount, Pole Lane, Darwen

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Everything is changing. In the immediate past, membership lists etc at county and national levels have been running 12 months in arrears. [Except, for the addition of new members] This is no longer acceptable, due mainly to the requirements of the insurers. They require up to date membership lists.

To meet these new demands, numerous administrative changes have and are occurring.

The main changes are listed below:

- [a] Membership lists for the current year need to be submitted at the beginning of the calendar year.
- [b] Membership cards will be issued based on these lists.

These changes unavoidably increase the workload on myself and the County's membership secretary. To make the system work, subscriptions need to be paid before the 31st December each year. [Note, Our beekeeping year starts on the 1 November] Late payment will seriously inconvenience myself and other officials, so please show some compassion.

Summarising, what is required, is payment of subscriptions no later than December 31st each year.

Regarding this year, any member with subscription outstanding, early payment is vital. I need to submit this list soon, it's already late.

Ken Gaiger Feb 2007-02-10

A MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL

Hope you are all OK in Lancashire and that the wind that I have been hearing about has not caused member too much damage. It's a different picture over here in Thailand with temperatures in the low 30s and not a cloud in the sky.

VIETNAM

Been over to Vietnam a couple of times which I like very much. Lovely people who have suffered so much and yet are a very happy and cheerful people. Been to just one bee farm over there and have attached a photo of a Vietnamese beekeeper. She



keeps about 20 hives in a small allotment on the Mekong Delta. Very different from the UK. We are going again in a couple of weeks this time to Hanoi. Last time we went to Saigon which although a nice place is a very large and busy city with motorbikes all over the place. The last count had it at 3 million so trying to cross a busy road is quite an adventure.

Apart from that its just a matter of travelling a little to the various parts of the country and doing a bit of sun bathing on some of the lovely beaches we have near home

You all take care and we'll see you in April
Michael and Saipin

*What do you call a bee born in May?
A maybe!!!*

THE ITALIAN CONNECTION

JENI'S JOTTINGS MARCH 07

Firstly happy new Beekeeping Season to All! and may it be a good one despite climate change.

GLOBAL WARMING?

Here Winter (if you can call it that after this year) has been extremely mild, cold frosty nights, but so far only a week of snow and some fairly strong winds. In Jan. some days have been 26°C and I have to dispense with my thermals!

Every thing has gone Spring like, Hellebores and Primroses in flower, even before Christmas. The birds, mainly Great Tits and Sparrows have been singing for a while and the Woodpeckers have started drumming.

Last week I even had a fledgling Sparrow waiting for some breakfast on a dish for the chicken feed (it did look a bit chilly poor thing)

‘DON’T CAST A CLOUT . . .’

As for the bees they have been flying and fetching pollen back mainly from the Catkins I think. The Catkins are always a good early favourite for the bees. I just keep hoping that Winter doesn't come with a vengeance late, as this will cause a lot of damage. This sort of thing has happened in the past which has meant the first brood cycle has died. There is not a lot we can do about the weather , or is there??-----.

The vaporisation of oxalic acid went well last Autumn apart from the fact that the “gadget” didn't fit into my old type hives, the entrances being too narrow. But it turned out to be a good experiment in some ways. The old hives had to be treated with the tickle method which fortunately was still possible due to the mild weather. Result, both methods worked just as well as one another the only advantage to this very expensive bit of equipment is that it can be used in the late Autumn/Winter and it does not disturb the bees too much.

VARROA COUNT

I didn't have time to count the dead varroa but Michael Costello did and he produced a graph on his four hives. Jake did a similar study ,years ago when we first used oxalic acid and his findings were that the highest knock- down of varroa occurred on the second day after treatment.

QUEEN EXCLUDERS

Another thing worthy of note at the end of last season the warm weather enabled me to put the queen excluders in the solar wax extractor and have them all cleaned and presumably sterilised. as they were too

hot to handle when I took them out - easy just like that! last Winter I spent hours on the job, so I was very pleased with this method of cleaning them up ready for this year.

RESTORATION

This year my main objects have been to continue to restore the old part of the house which needed to be finished. Again the mild weather has helped me to get on with a lot of the work which was impossible last Winter, due to the

severe weather.

FAMILY ADDITION

Also there has been an addition to the family here in the way of a Bardigiano foal, another destined for the butchers, but rescued to keep Iccaro company. It's his half - sister after all, and she is doing fine.

So with that I will say, Tante Salute. *Jeni.*



Why do bees hum?

Because they don't know the words!

DRONE BROOD REMOVAL RESEARCH

Andrew Matheson asked in the Beekeepers' Quarterly (Autumn 1991) during his time as Director of IBRA, why isn't bee research taken up by beekeepers? This is still the case today even with the topics he reviewed. In Bee World (Vol.83 No.3, 2003) there was an original article about recent research into the removal of capped drone brood as an effective means of reducing the infestation of honeybee colonies with Varroa, conducted at the Swiss Bee Research Centre near Berne.

RESULTS

The results were conclusive in stating that:

- The removal of drone brood is an efficient means of slowing the development of Varroa populations.
- It is not possible to calculate the size of the Varroa population in a hive by examining the infestation rate of drone brood.
- Varroa mites do not adapt themselves to this biotechnical control. The research reminds us that, even during the summer, there will always be more Varroa in worker cells simply because there is usually ten times more worker brood in a normal colony than the number of drone brood.

This method allows the deferral of acaricide treatments until the end of the summer. Removal of drone brood has no negative effect on the development of colonies and honey production.

The research resulted in some guidelines for beekeepers:

- Introduce the drone frame to the brood nest at the end of March/early April.
- Insert the drone frame at the edge of the brood nest where the comb can be quickly built up and eggs laid in it.
- Do not allow the drone to emerge as the emerging Varroa will only swell the existing Varroa population.

UNDER CONTROL

This method alone for controlling Varroa during the summer will not keep Varroa under control.

Earlier research studies showed that Varroa preferred drone brood for reproduction by a ratio of 8:1.

Dispose of the comb containing the larvae and Varroa. With pyrethroid resistance already here, drone brood removal is a valuable technique.

Perhaps beekeepers not already doing this can make part of their New Year resolutions. It may also lead to more regular brood nest inspections and prevent the loss of swarms. *by Maurice Field, Reigate BKA*

FLIPPIN' KIDS! IDENTITY CARD

A KINDERGARTEN TEACHER was observing her classroom of children while they were drawing. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was.

The girl replied, "I'm drawing God. "The teacher paused and said, "But no one knows what God looks like." Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, They will in a minute."

APPLE A DAY

THE CHILDREN were marched into the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note and posted it on the apple tray. It read: "Take only ONE. God is watching."

Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate cakes. On it was a note written by one of the children that read:

"Take all you want. God is watching the apples."

WORKER POLICING IN HONEYBEES

OVARIES

in a queen right honey bee colony, the workers have ovaries but are rarely fertile (only about one *Apis mellifera* worker in ten thousand has fully activated ovaries and this is similar in other Apidae within the Hymenoptera order.

The queen is normally the only egg producer in the colony, and this condition is maintained by a pheromonal “feedback” system, whereby worker ovary development is inhibited. The queen and the brood both produce pheromones that inhibit worker ovary development, which prevents individual workers from exploiting the system.

WORKER EGGS

However when a honey bee colony becomes queenless, some workers that have intact, but undeveloped, ovaries may develop them and thus become capable of laying male eggs, whose genes reflect the parentage of the worker concerned. After seven or more days with no queen, around 10% of the workers will have fully formed eggs in their ovaries, and many eggs will actually be laid. This laying worker feature allows social insects to use different reproductive strategies according to the colony structure at the time. Such strategies favour those patrilineages that exhibit larger percentages of laying workers and can result in individual behaviours becoming colony traits.

PERSPECTIVE

From the queen's point of view, individual workers must be prevented from laying eggs and having them raised using resources that could have been used for raising her own offspring. From Nature's point of view, there may be diversification benefits in allowing a small number of workers to lay a few drones, as it allows more speedy changes than pure mutation. However, from the beekeeper's perspective, especially those of us breeders that are attempting to undo some of the gross hybridisation that has gone on for the last century or more, this may be a dangerous source of genetic pollution.

REDUCED SUPPRESSION

When populations are large and the nest is physically widespread, the distribution of pheromones declines at the outer edges, simply because of distance from the queen and brood, as well as the larger area of the outer periphery of the nest. This gives rise to a condition of reduced suppression of ovary production, but not as severe as in the queenless case. It does give rise to an increase in worker-laid eggs, but the numbers of drones arising from them is a very small fraction of those that are laid.

“Worker policing” is the mechanism that causes adult workers to eat worker-laid eggs, which are identified by other workers. It is speculated that normal queen-laid eggs are marked with a pheromone that is produced by the queen and is coated on the eggs as they pass over the sting sheath. Worker laid eggs are thought to lack this pheromone and are thus identified as such and eaten by the workers.

AGGRESSION

It has been suggested that aggression towards workers with activated ovaries is another potential mechanism of worker policing, but I am unsure whether this applies to workers being hoisted out of cells as they attempt to lay an egg or whether the aggression goes further and results in the fertile worker being damaged or stung.

Dave Cushman Irish bee Journal Jun. 06

IN SPRING, A YOUNG MAN'S . . .

I know Valentines Day was last month



but this picture of a swarm was too good to leave out

ROBOT BEE

Historic discoveries are being made in a shed near Wurzburg, West Germany. There



a team of scientists has tested a tiny mechanical honeybee that, communicating like a food-finding scout bee, directs followers to distant locations.

LANGUAGE

Among all the means by which animals communicate it is the dance of the “lowly” honeybee that

most scientists view as genuinely unique. Honeybees, like people, can exchange information about things remote in space and time. A bee, by dancing, informs her nest mates of the location, type, and quality of food she has found. She comes intriguingly close to using true language.

This fact has been known for years. As a student, I recall watching honeybees dance. Armed with a book by Karl von Frisch, who discovered that bees use dance to communicate, I deduced that my bees were telling nest mates about a spot 300 metres to the southeast. Then I surprised myself by finding an isolated bed of flowers humming with bees at that exact location.

I was thrilled by my correct reading of the dance, yet my feelings could hardly compare to those of Danish and West German scientists when, in August 1988, they first put an imitation bee on a comb in a darkened hive, directed it by computer, and realised they were ‘talking’ to real bees.

REGURGITATION

Knowing that the bees would beg for a sample of nectar, the scientists were able to deliver. They released a drop of peppermint scented sugar water through a tube above the brass robot’s head, simulating regurgitation by a real bee

Although the robot is anatomically incorrect bees don’t see this in the dark. The robot had been smeared with wax and placed in the colony overnight to absorb local odour. Wings vibrating, hindquarters wagging, a bee dancing on the side of the honeycomb directs followers to nectar or pollen found on a recent journey. She dances a figure 8 that tells distance and direction. A few bees stay with her for several dance circuits. As they get the message they fly out to duplicate her journey, their places are quickly taken by others.

THE DANCE

The angle between the dance direction and the vertical is known to indicate the direction from the hive to food in relation to the sun. At the centre of the figure 8 the bee waggles her abdomen and quivers her wings, indicating the distance. The intensity of the dance plus the samples offered and the lingering odours on the bee’s body suggest the type of food and its quality. But many details are still unclear. In the dark the follower bees apparently “hear” the message of the dancer. Her

When amplified, the sound reminded me of the flutter of a dove on take off.

whirring wings produce strong currents of air, according to experiments conducted by Axel Michelsen, an expert on animal hearing he used tiny microphone probes with tips a few millimetres apart to record

and measure these minute air-particle oscillations. When amplified, the sound reminded me of the flutter of a dove on take off. The waves fade so fast that follower bees must be close to the quivering wings to sense them. The rapidly dissipating sound does not seem to disturb nearby hive inhabitants that may be following other dancers.

ARE BEES DEAF?

The bees seem to perceive the sound with their antennae. Experiments by Wolfgang Kirchner of Wurzburg University overturned previous opinion that bees are deaf. In addition Michelsen and Kirchner, using a laser beam to measure vibrations, showed that followers beg for samples by pressing their bodies down and transmitting a burst of vibration through the honeycomb.

Despite such scientific advances, many uncertainties remained about the significance of certain aspects of the dance as communication. The ideal solution was to build a robot that conformed with a real dancer in as many ways as possible. The robot had to dance a figure 8, give out samples, and broadcast sound in the proper way. Previous bee models duplicated other parts of the dance, but not the correct sound.

SUPERMAN'S CAPE

The key was the single wing, made from part of a razor blade in the shape of a letter "S" and lying across the robot's back, it reminded the team of Superman's cape. The front edge of the wing was glued to an axle rotating on two bearings that resemble beady eyes. A wire attached to the razor wing reached an electromagnet that vibrated it to mimic the sound patterns produced by real dancers. Michelsen programmed the computer to describe a location to which the robot would direct its followers; the motors were then set in motion.

The computer automatically adjusted the angle of the dance every 10 minutes as the sun moved across the sky. Occasionally Michelsen put a tiny microphone close to the buzzing model. A glance at an oscilloscope assured him that the robot continued to produce the correct sound. Although he cannot perceive vibration messages from followers that are seeking a food sample, the operator periodically granted a sugar-water sample.

TRACKING

Live bees were paying close attention to the little robot. But were they following its directions with accuracy? To find out, observers had to track food gatherers after they left the hive. To learn the destination of the bees, volunteers sat beside peppermint-scented bait to count arrivals during a 3-6 hour period while the robot danced. Bait was placed at regular intervals in a straight line as far away as 1500 metres to test the bees' reckoning of distance, or at a set

distance but in various directions from the hive to test direction-finding skills.

RESULTS

During the experiments 200-300 bees arrived at a site when instructed by a live bee. The dancing robot sent from 20-100 bees to their goal, yet fewer than 10 bees located the site when the robot offered samples but did not dance.

We now know that both the waggle and the correct sound pattern are necessary for communication: when either is omitted, recruitment to observer stations doesn't occur.

Since subtle distinctions in the dance can be programmed into the robot, bee researchers for the first time are able to do tightly controlled communications experiments. At last we have a powerful tool with which to tease apart the details of an elegant insect language.

(National Geographic)



FROM POSH CRACKERS

"He who joyfully marches to music in rank and file, has already earned my contempt. He has been given a large brain by mistake, since for him the spinal cord would suffice."

Albert Einstein

Though an old man I am but a young beekeeper. Thomas Jefferson.

Here lays the body of Michael 'O' Day
Who died maintaining his right of way
He was right, dead right as he drove along
But he's just as dead as if he'd been wrong

St. Bartholomew's day is the 24th of August. It is also the traditional day to take the honey crop..

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LIFT ME ONTO MY SOAP BOX

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY . . .



I have just read that honey in the 1930s sold for about 11p a pound (2/3d in old money). the current worth according to RPI would be £4.65 but wages have increased at a much greater rate and if we took that 2/3d as part of a wage, today's figure price of a jar of honey would be £17.65 !

I have some difficulty in getting my head round this but I think it means that if, today, we paid £4.65 for our honey we would have an extra £13 in our pocket.

I have also been reading the diaries of five or six 'Ordinary' civilians who lived through the period 1938 to 1946.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

The strongest impression for me, was how peoples lives were changed by the quiet social revolution which took place and which, it appears to me, changed things for ever. The impression one gets of life in the late 1930s is of a huge section of the population (The so called 'Working class') with very limited aspirations; living on or below the bread line and, in a strange way, more or less content with their lot.

£3 A WEEK

This layer in our society was also divided into layers. The lowest layer were probably the city slums dwellers, Then there would have been the coal miners, labourers, factory workers, nurses, policemen etc etc. who would have been earning around £3 a week, or the equivalent in today's terms of about £7,000 a year.

KNOWING YOUR PLACE

I was brought up in this layer and there was an unspoken tradition that we 'Knew our place'. As a kid the equivalent of designer labels was to have trousers or jacket that

hadn't been handed down from an older brother. A top holiday would be a week at Blackpool or Southport in 'Digs' where Mum provided all the food and the landlady provided the beds and cooking facilities.

"I WANT SOME OF THAT!"

When the war came, children from the slums were evacuated to families in towns and villages where there was probably less poverty and where they were introduced to different living standards and patterns of behaviour. Men joined the forces and rubbed shoulders with other classes and cultures. People suddenly became aware of other ways of living and aspirations grew.

After the war it seems many people looked at the class above and said, or at least thought, "I want some of that!".

£480 A WEEK

But back to £3 a week. Not a great wage but one which allowed my Dad to provide what the family needed. A roof over our heads, food, clothing and an occasional treat.

These days, for the same job, he would receive something like £480 a week. His needs would still be met but his wants and expectations would much greater. They would no doubt include a car (or two), a better house, holidays abroad, meals in restaurants, wine with his meals, a University education for his three kids, and all the trimmings of modern life which we now take for granted.

Without entering into the rights and wrongs I wonder if the fact that society no longer has this huge lower class working for low wages to keep the wheels turning means that we can no longer afford free health care, an effective police force, a strong military presence, a proper pension scheme and all the other social services we have come to expect. Maybe we are going to have to make sacrifices and accept a bit less - either in wages or in all those things we expect to receive without paying 'Up front'.

Scrapings

OLIVE OIL AND THYMOL

Alternative, cheaper and easier methods of controlling varroa are always being sought out and a new effective method of organic treatment involving the use of thymol crystals, has been developed in Spain. Scientists at Cordoba University found that pure thymol (99%) was an effective method of control but when it came into contact with bees it could cause retardation of the development of the colony and in some cases caused its decline. After some research they suggested that 8 gm of thymol (99% pure) should be added to 12 gm of olive oil. This is then warmed and stirred until all the crystals have been dissolved and the mixture is allowed to soak into a 9 cm x 5 cm x 0.8 cm piece of oasis (the green sponge-like material used by florists). The oasis is broken into two pieces and these are equally spaced over the brood frames. They should be left in place for two weeks, then removed and the treatment repeated.

With thanks to David Cramp of APIS UK

UNCAPPING TOOLS

Assuming that you do not have an uncapping machine there are four methods you could employ. Using an uncapping knife is probably the most common one but it takes practice before you can work quickly and accurately. An electric uncapping knife sounds wonderful but I have found that it takes even more practice and in untrained hands it has the potential to cause a lot of damage to the combs. An uncapping fork is probably the best option for mechanical removal of cappings by a beginner with a few frames to do. The technique involves wagging the fork slightly whilst working it along just under the cappings. Thanks to Brian Goodwin's advice, my preferred uncapping tool is now a Black and Decker hot air paint stripping gun. You pass it quickly over the comb and the cappings melt away. It's as simple as that. It takes less than 10 seconds to do one frame. Hollows and other irregularities in the comb do not affect the job, as with knives and forks, there is very little mess and spillage.

Bill Downie Via Apis U

INSERTING FOUNDATION IN APIDEAS.

Maybe I am all fingers and thumbs but one area I have had a problem with in the past was inserting a small piece of foundation into Apidea frames. I melted wax and poured some along the top bar, and the piece of wax looked fine and secure. That is until the bees clustered on it. Then several of them fell down. The bees were then free to build as they wished, and they did not always respect the frames. Then, I discovered a far quicker and easier way of doing the job. Simply use a squeeze of PVA glue along the top bar between the two ridges. Insert the wax and leave it to dry. No melting and possible spilling of wax. The glue dries to an almost invisible line, and the bees have no objection to it. Later, when it comes to salvaging the comb, the thread of PVA will just pull off from the wax or the frame. It is far quicker and involves much less mess than using melted wax.

Jim Ryan From Galtee bee Breeding Group Courtesy of BEEs



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Ask Bob !

All of us get stuck at some time or another and need a bit of information or advice about our bees or beekeeping in General.

Bob Fulton who is a very experienced beekeeper is more than willing to help you in any way he can.

Give him ring; go and see him at his apiary or he will even try to come to see you.

Bob has ordered twelve new Black Queens for 2007 and says he is happy for anyone to take their new virgin queens (In nucs) to his apiary for mating.

Bob lives at The Mound, Pole Lane, Darwen, Blackburn BB3 3LD and you can contact him by phone on 01254 772780

