



Bee Talk

Newsletter of The Blackburn and East Lancashire Branch of
The Lancashire & North West Beekeepers Association
<http://www.kimberim.freeserve.co.uk>

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Registered Charity

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Editorial

December 2003

DON'T GET EXCITED

You will notice that this issue is printed in glorious Technicolor (Well at least bits of it are). It won't be a regular thing but Michael Birt, who very kindly prints Bee Talk for us, is away and we are having to use an alternative but rather expensive method of printing. It will be back to good old black and white for the next issue.

SAD NEWS

You probably all now by now, of the deaths in our beekeeping 'family'. We have to report that Jake Windle, Albert Morris and Cecil Tonsley have passed away since our last issue. Jake and Albert were very well known subscribers to BeeTalk, Cecil Tonsley was perhaps a bit more remote. Proper respects and obituaries are to be found elsewhere in this publication. Bee Talk just wishes to pay tribute to their many contributions to beekeeping, and offer our condolences to the loved ones left behind.

BBKA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Lancashire branch of the BBKA held its annual conference at a very strange conference place with 'Olde Worlde' buildings, bars, and restaurants etc., just up the A6 from Broughton North of Preston. Four members of our branch attended. One was a beginner and three were more advanced, a reasonable cross section of our membership. After a few days contemplation we all agreed the venue was a bit queer.

The talk on the British black bee was splendid. The presentation on 'Supering' was very good but a bit drawn out, the rest was thumbs down. One or two things that took my fancy at the conference were:

Beekeeping inspections, in our part of the country, should not begin until into March when the wax on the top bars is soft.

Bees **start** to cluster at temperatures around 14°C.

Fit an empty super under the brood box in Winter to allow the bees to cluster on the bottom of the combs.

Un-wired frames intended to be used for cut comb, should be drawn out and filled in the second super, not next to the brood box where there is a tendency for the bees to put pollen in there, and spoil it.

COME TO CUMBRIA

At the conference we met with some of the Cumbrian beekeepers particularly their chairman a nice fellow, who invited our branch to a talk and demonstration by a team of experts from BIBBA, who they have booked to come up and talk and demonstrate the art of grafting lava into queen cups, probably June 3rd. Some of our members have expressed their intention to go. We will keep you posted.

The AGM was attended by about 17 members (we should get more as there is always free beer!). More members would have been welcome, but it was a very successful meeting anyway. There was a lot of camaraderie (the beer again!) and the business was carried out with full and frank discussion and more - over 100% agreement.

A new list of officers and members including phone numbers can be found on page 18. Contact any of them for help or information.

HONEY SHOW

Why is our honey show so poorly supported. Pauline puts a lot of effort in to it, and she's got it down to a fine art. Neither Pauleen nor our judges are heavy handed. The judging would seem to be fair and with classes for beginners and the more advanced there is room for every one. What does get shown is of the very best quality, and indeed, would have a good chance of winning even in bigger competitions. For Pauline's sake, lets make a better show of it next year. Put some of your best honey away now, to be shown as set honey next year. I'll just go and do that myself - right now Ed.

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 & North West Beekeepers Association' nor of our local Branch of this association 'The Blackburn & East Lancashire Branch'

MAD HONEY

WITH JOHNNY MORRIS

You look a bit spaced out. Are you okay!

I've just been trying a little Turkish honey and it has gone straight to my head.

I thought honey was supposed to be healthy?

It is, but this one has hallucinogenic properties that can send your brain whirling like a dervish.

Really, where do you get it?

The misty mountains of the Turkish Black Sea coast, close to the Georgian border, where it is known as 'deli bali' mad honey.

What a refreshing change from coarse-cut marmalade. How can I get a jar!

Take a trek to the South-East of Trabzon and ask in one of the hill town grocery stores. Along with the normal local honey they may have a little 'deli bali' tucked away under the counter. The shopkeepers can be wary of selling it to strangers, as I found when I asked for it in the village of Camlihemsin. There was a lot of giggling then they produced an enormous jar of frothy semi-crystallised honey, poured me a pint and gave me a strict warning not to eat too much.

Why!

That's what I said, and with a fixed grin the shopkeeper explained: "Because it will kill you."

Golly But how!

'Deli bali' is a mono-crop honey made from the spring flowers of the rhododendron (*R. ponticum*) that thrive on the humid Black Sea mountains. The nectar of the bloom contains andromedotoxin, a substance that can cause all sorts of weird effects in humans.

Sounds like a normal Friday night out for me.

It gets worse. Too much of the stuff and your symptoms progress to psychedelic fireworks, nausea, respiratory difficulty and a very low pulse rate. Eventually your skin turns the colour of Stilton. Scoffing Pooh Bear quantities of mad honey can lead to muscle paralysis, unconscious-ness and even death.

But it looks so natural and wholesome.

Don't be fooled. This honey has even been used as a chemical weapon

When!

You may recall the events, more than 2,000 years ago, of the Third Mithridatic War...

I'm still getting to grips with the first two, but go on.

Trabzon locals placed tempting pots of 'deli bali' along the route of the invading Roman army. Strabo, the Roman historian, described the result: "The men tasted the honey and lost their senses. They were attacked and easily dispatched." In all, three squadrons, or about 1,200 men, were killed by guerrillas.

The stuff should be banned; it's a weapon of mass destruction.

Calm down. The funny honey can be very good for you as long as you take it in moderation. In the 17th century, European landlords imported it and added small amounts to their ale to give it a little lift. Nowadays, apitherapy is very popular in Turkey and 'deli bali' is one of the star medicines. You just have to remember to keep to small sweet doses.

Okay, how can I spot the real thing!

A lot of it is down to trust and listening to the advice of the local beekeepers and shop owners - though they will sometimes refer to the local chestnut blossom honey 'kestane bali' - as 'deli bali'. A sure way of getting the right stuff is to visit the main honey shop in the old part of Trabzon. The owner, Avni Haliloglu, is an experienced beekeeper and stocks everything for the apiarist. He also sells various types of clearly labelled Turkish honey by the gram. He describes his 'deli bali' as "rman komar bali" rose-of-the-forest honey - and sells it for 12 million Turkish lira (£5) a kilogram.

It may make your toes curl, but is it any good?

It's divine. His mad honey is a gorgeous glowing amber colour with an intense sweet flavour of steamed treacle pudding. The taste lingers as it slides down your throat and the whole experience is dangerously moreish. Knowing that you have to ration yourself to a few teaspoons seems to add to the pleasure.

With kind permission of Johnny Morris and the Saturday Telegraph.

THE ITALIAN CONNECTION

Early November 2003.

Most of you will know Jake died suddenly in late August. Something that started with a facial nerve problem two years ago, to this tragic outcome, has been a terrific blow to me. Losing one's partner, best-mate and someone very special, not only to me but to many, many people has been hard to bear and still is. I keep reminding myself that he would not want us to mope about but to be getting on with life. So I'm doing my best.

FAMILY HELP

Thank you to all who have been supportive and sent their condolences and also to all those family members I roped in to help at extracting time. What a good job they did! And all of them without previous beekeeping experience. I just hope it hasn't put them off beekeeping for life! (I might need some help next year!).



Jeni's Hives in Winter

CAMPING OUT

End result was a very pleasing 430kgs of dark, good honey. So with the previous extraction of 300kgs of spring honey which was very yellow (probably lots of dandelions) the total amount was 730kgs. this year. Many beekeepers in Italy are not so pleased as the late frost in Spring put paid to all the early fruit blossom, then the drought and high temperature made it a very short season in many areas. The official loss is 30% which accordingly has pushed the prices up. Here in Geminiano despite the lack of rain, the fields have not died off completely and the alfalfa has managed to come again after the first cut of hay. This has helped to keep the bees quite busy all Summer. With the terrific heat, they camped out at night and hung off the landing boards in great numbers. Some hives have a liking for "camping out" more than others and it doesn't seem to be anything to do with position or size of hive.

CALLABRANI

After extracting there's always a lot of cleaning up to do as you all know. My main problem was with the clearer boards not working very well, this will have to be looked into before I need them again. It might just mean they want a good clean off of propolis and wax. These Italian bees do like their propolis and certainly stick every thing down very well! Anyway getting wet supers cleaned and clear of bees was a bit of a nightmare.

I resorted to dumping some supers in the field some way from the hives for the bees to sort out, which they did very effectively and quickly. The only problem I can see with this method is it encourages the huge "Callabrani", enormous wasps that are feared by all.

VARROA

Late September, early October came, time to treat the bees for varroa. I was fortunate in having a helping hand by way of Michael

Costello and we got the bees treated in two sessions. I hope that his observations of the effectiveness of oxalic acid will help spread the news and stop some of the more nasty chemical use.

WAX MOTH

While going through the bees it was noticed that two stocks seemed weak, and another stock that had died out in Spring was full of wax moth! Which I knew about but hadn't had, or made time to sort out. The two weak stocks I reinspected a few days later, only to find one perfectly normal and one completely empty apart from bees clearing the honey stores, so I let them carry on as it looked like Queen loss and nothing more nasty. The hive full of wax moth has bean dealt with too, all the old comb burnt and the hive blow lamped thoroughly.

OCTOBER SNOW

Next on the job list was to tie the hives down. A job always put off until there is urgent need. Same again this year! The 27th Oct. brought

3ins. of snow in the night which was a bit of a surprise as the trees still had their leaves although the day before I had noticed the walnut trees dropping their still green leaves like mad, so much so that next time I see this I'll take note. Strange trees the walnuts, there is a lot of Italian folk-lore about them. One of the sayings is, a swarm will never go in one and in all the time here there has been only one swarm in a walnut tree and that was due to a strong wind rather than choice I think. Anyway back to not tying the hives down. The 30th Oct. brought storms, driving rain, and hurricane force winds (I think it was trying to make up for the dry Summer all in one go!)

HAVOC REIGNED

It blew the hive roofs off, the house inside out, soot down all the chimneys, and havoc reigned laterally for 24 hr. I knew I'd only myself to blame as regards the bees, so I braved the elements and managed to get the top row of hives (the most vulnerable) lashed down to the stands before nightfall and exhaustion set in. Hence a very disturbed night listening to the wind and rain and other crashes and bangs, wondering how the other bees are fairing. Dawn broke and I hastened in the pouring rain but slightly less windy conditions to inspect. Thankfully only one hive without a roof one with a good solid crown board. Temperatures not low so I don't think the bees will have suffered too much, like every thing else they'd be rather damp!

A FEW SLATES OFF

I then rescued five pullets who were extremely wet, having lost the roof of their house in the night. I surveyed the rest of the damage - nothing too serious. A few slates off next door and just a lot of clearing up to do as every thing had been rather rearranged. Needless to say I got the remaining row of hives secured the very next day! I thought about another treatment with oxalic acid but as things are, the bees are secure now for what-ever Winter throws this way so I'll call it a day for this season, leaving well alone.

After all it will only be a short while and it will all start again. So finally a thank you to the bees, without them where would we be more especially were would I be.

The very best wishes to you all. I hope it has been a good bee keeping year for you and next year may be better. *Jeni*

REPORT OF THE 2003 HONEY SHOW

This was held at Castle Cement on Sunday 5th October. John Zamorski liaised with Castle Cement to provide us with our venue in their newly refurbished education block.

Disappointingly, the number of entrants was only 14, so grateful thanks to the few who made the effort that gave us a creditable showing of 54 entries in the 13 classes.

Mr. Dennis Atkinson was our judge and our guest judge was Mrs. Lynne Zamorski - they both did an excellent job, and our thanks go out to them.

It was very noticable that our stalwart Jack Armistead, was not able to enter this year due to ill health- all good wishes to him.

May I thank Ken Gaiger for helping me on the day and to John for arranging the venue.

Pauleen Roberts Honey Show Sec.

FIRST PRIZE WINNERS

Light honey	M Costello
Dark/Medium	M Costello
Heather	W Ainsworth
Grannulated/Set	D Barrett
Novice	J Leeming
Frame	J Leeming
Cake of bees wax	K Gaiger
Honey cake	Mrs. W Ainsworth
Honey fudge	K Gaiger
Honey Dessert	Mrs. J Leeming
Mead	D Barrett
Photographic print	D Barrett
Wax craft exhibit	J Zamorski

The challenge cup Mr. & Mrs. J Leeming.
The Ken Preedy memorial Cup M Costello

The association sent an inscribed hive tool to Jeni Shelton, partner of Jake Windle. Here is her reply.

"Thank you very much to you all who contributed to the hive tool I'm very touched. In no way will it be stuck on the mantel shelf! It's just what I need and I look forward to using it in the near future. Not only will it remind me of Jake but also of all his good beekeeping friends in England. I can't thank you enough and I'm glad that sending of flowers did not work out".

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BACK

This month I shall suggest ways in which you can improve back care in the apiary. Wherever bees are kept, it is important that access to the apiary is unobstructed so that equipment can be easily moved in and out. There should be no need to negotiate steps, fences or other obstacles.

The garden apiary should have a hard path and the out apiary should have a hard all-weather vehicle track so that it is possible to move equipment especially heavy items, right into the



apiary with the aid of a set of wheels (barrow, trolley or vehicle). This is especially important when taking out full supers. A level apiary makes work easier. Grass should be mown and the ground surface should be kept tidy to reduce the risk of stumbling or tripping, especially while handling loads.

LAYOUT Layout of the hives and storage within the apiary should allow adequate, unobstructed space for all activities. Hooper says that whether colonies are sited singly or in pairs, there should be sufficient space to walk between the stands while carrying a hive or supers and to manoeuvre a grass cutter. He advises a distance of 6-8 feet (1.8-2.4 m).

WORKING HEIGHT It is typical to see beekeepers bending forwards during inspection of their colonies. Observation shows that this repetitive and static bending usually occurs because the working height is too low. The working height during an inspection (the height of the top of the brood box) is determined by the sum of the height of the hive-stand and the depth of the brood chamber. The ideal arrangement of hives is a U- shape. Working from, and across, a central point reduces the distance that you have to carry equipment. It also reduces the problem of drifting! In the out-apiary the 'U' should be large enough to accommodate a vehicle in the centre.

From Bee Craft - June 2002

EDITORIAL From Apis-uk September.

September usually brings with it a quickening of pace after the heat of the summer. Some of you will be clearing up after what I hope was a successful harvest and others will be about to commence your harvest.

Local Associations will be preparing their winter programme of activities and talks, annual Christmas dinners at some fine restaurant or pub, and perhaps some excursions to events of interest such as the National Honey Show in November.

In their associations, the UK beekeeping scene is most fortunate and although I know well that most are somewhat taken for granted and some are badly supported, when you look at it all from where I stand, beekeepers in the UK have a national treasure in these busy local organisations. They advise, instruct, educate, entertain and form a bedrock of good intention in an increasingly less well intentioned world. So it is with pleasure that I see the report of the West Sussex BKA describing their innovative and successful West Sussex Honey Show. And other UK organisations, I suspect all running on a shoe string.

This is such a good article that I thought we should reproduce it. Apis-uk is a news letter, free of charge on the net at www.beedata.com/apis-uk/newsletters/apis-uk0903.htm Ed.

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE!

The metal bit is about four inches long and attached to a quite long, looped cord.



We'll give you a clue. It was used about the time of the First World War or perhaps a bit before. Men would have had no use for one of these

See Page 14 for the answer

THE WILLOWHERB

USEFUL BEE PLANTS

Epilobium angustifolium, the Rosebay Willowherb, is one of the best wild bee plants in Britain and regularly provides a considerable yield of nectar and pollen for beekeepers who



have the plant in their locality. It is capable of growing in extensive stands along roadsides, on typical Devon banks which lie beside many lanes in the county, by hedges, in heath and woodland where felling and

burning has taken place, and even on the edges surrounding rubbish tips.

FIRE WEED

It was once known as the 'cursed fire weed', as it appeared where fires had recently taken place, even on bombed sites in the city of London during the 1939-45 conflict, when it was one of the first plants to appear after the devastation.

A SOURCE OF NECTAR

Its tall spikes of magenta flowers appear from July to September when they are seen at their most conspicuous against other foliage. The first flowers open at the bottom of the tall flowering spike or other secondary flowering shoots growing from the main stem. By the time the flowers at the top are ready to bloom, seed pods will have formed on the bottom flowers, thus the plant can be a source of nectar and pollen over an extended period. The seeds are extremely light and may be borne by the wind over considerable distances. The plants' creeping underground stems are capable of travelling ten metres or more throwing out shoots as they grow, thus making attractive stands for the bees to visit as they forage for stores.

HIGH SUGAR CONTENT

The honey resulting from *E. angustifolium* is very pale in colour, but has high sugar content, providing the bees with an excellent reward for their services. It blends well with other wild flowers to make a very acceptable wild flower honey, which eventually produces a fine-grained product.

BLUE POLLEN

Bees returning to the hive after working Rose bay Willowherb can be easily identified by the distinctive blue pollen loads they are carrying in their corbiculae. For those beekeepers using a microscope to identify the pollen loads, the grains from this species are usually bound together by threads of viscin, which are clearly identifiable.

There are other wild species of *Epilobium* that attract bees, but they are not usually sufficiently common to attract the bees with perhaps the exception of one, *E. hirsutum*, the Hairy (or Great) willowherb. This species appears to be appearing at an increasing number of sites in Devon, frequently by streams, along bankings and in hedge bottoms, although it does not challenge the supremacy of its more commonly found relative.

Bob Ogden From Devon BKA

*Wishing You
A
Merry Christmas
And A
Happy & Peaceful
New Year*

ITALIAN HOLIDAY 2003

We saw the advert from Jake and Jeni in Bee Talk at the beginning of the year for their farmhouse accommodation and decided we would give it a try. We are not too keen on soaking up the sun' on a Spanish beach and thought this would be a good way to get away from it all. We booked a week with them for the end of September.

As we all now know, sadly, Jake passed away in August so we were not too sure what would happen. We had never met Jake or Jeni before and were looking forward to meeting them both. However, after confirming with Jeni that it was still OK we decided to go.

MINISTRONE

When we arrived, Jeni was there to greet us along with Brig the Border Collie. We had the accommodation to ourselves and as we entered, an old fashioned log-burning stove was blazing away and a bottle of wine stood on the table just waiting for the cork to be drawn. We needed no persuading as Jeni offered us a meal. A large pot of minestrone, along with some home made bread was washed down with a couple of bottles of Barbera wine.

The dogs began barking outside at one stage. Apparently it was only the wild boar (cinghali) sneaking around and 'not to worry'. So we retired to bed having got to know one another quite well.

FINDING THE LOO

We live on a main road in Leyland and there is always a certain amount of light and noise coming through the windows and we are accustomed to it. We found ourselves in a completely different situation at Jeni's. When the lights went out the darkness was absolute and the stillness quite eerie. It was most noticeable when I got up at 4.00am. (Too much wine) to go to the toilet to discover there was a power cut.

That was fun in a strange house in pitch dark but I found it (the toilet) just in time.

We slept quite well until about 7.30am and by that time the power had been restored and we enjoyed a light breakfast and admired the view down the valley. Truly breath taking. It was a sunny fresh morning with a few patches of mountain mist burning off so we took a walk in the hills. There are some really good footpaths, which Jeni advised us to keep to, as Sundays and Thursdays are the days that the hunters are allowed to shoot the cinghali. Jeni calls them 'Dad's Army' as they are not very good shots and there have been quite a few human trophies in the past.



JENI'S HOUSE

LEANING TOWER

On Monday we decided to have a sightseeing day and set off to Pisa to see the leaning tower. Trying to find somewhere to park in Pisa was a bit of a nightmare because of the very heavy traffic but by this time we were learning the art of Italian driving (close your eyes and go for it).

Since the start of our holiday I had been troubled with a sore tooth and it really flared up during the night of Monday/Tuesday. In the morning Jeni gave me the address of a dentist in Bardi and I hastened there. He agreed to see me immediately, leaving a waiting room full of locals.

Unfortunately his English was about as good as my Italian i.e. non-existent. So he enlisted the aid of an elderly lady who had been given an injection in the mouth prior to treatment and was waiting for it to take effect. The dentist diagnosed an infection and prescribed some antibiotics and painkillers, which she managed to convey to me. She was then given the job of telling me how and when to take the tablets, and by this time her mouth was becoming less and less controllable because of the anaesthetic. The scene was quite funny and I still don't know if I overdosed.

On return to Jeni's the first pain killer was beginning to have some effect so we began giving her bees the oxalic acid treatment against varroa. We treated twenty hives by lunchtime, after which a cool breeze got up and some clouds appeared so we decided to leave the rest till later.

MARKET DAY

There is certainly no rush or sense of urgency in this part of the world, so to put something off till later is quite the norm. I was glad the dentist had a different attitude though!!! For the rest of the day we just dossed around playing with the dogs, reading and relaxing until my painkillers were having little impression and I had an early night. Thursday morning is market day in Bardi so after breakfast we all went into town. It is only a small place so the market is not very big but it was very helpful having Jeni with us to explain the different cheeses and meats etc. We bought some parmigiani and some pecorino to take home and some really fat sausages for the evening meal. In the afternoon I went round the apiary with the strimmer and that livened a few of them up, but on the whole they were pretty good.

BEANS DOESN'T MEAN HEINZ

In the evening we sat outside and enjoyed a meal of Italian bangers and mash with Jeni's home-made baked beans (Heinz hasn't reached Bardi yet). The sky had cleared up by 9.00pm, having been a rather cloudy day and we all went to bed in the hope of seeing plenty of sunshine on our last full day.

JENI'S PIZZA

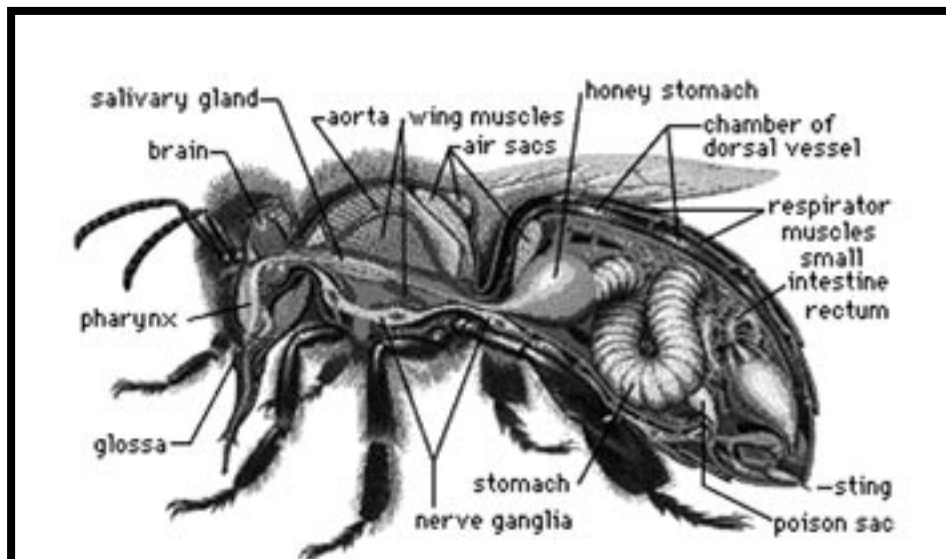
Jeni flashed up the pizza oven and baked some bread. She never seems to stop doing things! We shared a bottle of wine in the afternoon before having a final walkabout in the valley. The final meal was of course Jeni's pizza and it was delicious as were the surroundings (candlelight, starlit sky - Oh! and the cinghali sniffing around).

The final morning dawned clear and bright (it seemed the weather was improving as we were leaving- typical.) After saying our goodbyes and promising to come again we made our way over the hills, taking the scenic route back to Milan instead of the motorway.

A BIT DIFFERENT

So if you were looking for something a bit different for a break we would strongly recommend going to Jeni's. The location of the place is stunning and the quality of life is exceptional. It's just a pity that Jake only had about ten years of it but one week of it is something we were grateful for.

*Thank you Jeni from Michael and Lynda.
(See the advert on page 9 Ed.)*



**THIS WAS IN ONE OF OUR EARLY EDITIONS
WE THOUGHT IT WAS WORTH ANOTHER AIRING.**

TIRED WITH NOISE, POLLUTION,
AND THE SAME OLD COSTA HOLIDAY?
WHY NOT TRY A DIFFERENT COSTA?

COME TO COSTA GEMINIANO.

AN ITALIAN RUSTIC FARMHOUSE
TO LET FOR HOLIDAYS IN THE
MOUNTAINS OF EMILIA-ROMAGNA
PROVINCE OF PARMA.

THE PROPERTY IS SITUATED AT
620 METRES ABOVE SEA-LEVEL
ON THE EDGE OF A SMALL QUIET
VILLAGE AMIDST BEAUTIFUL UNspoilt
COUNTRY-SIDE. THE NEAREST TOWN
BARDI IS 12 Kms.



ACCOMMODATION COMPRISES OF THREE DOUBLE BEDROOMS + ONE SINGLE.
SELF-CATERING (MEALS CAN BE ARRANGED BY REQUEST)
GUARANTEED NO INTERNET, NO TELEVISION, NO ON-SUITE BATHROOMS,
NO DISCOS OR FRILLY SUNSET COVERS - JUST THE SOUND OF THE BIRDS
(COCKATRIAL ALARM CALLS) AND BEES (PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN VEIL)

WALKING BOOTS AMUST FOR EXPLORING THE COUNTRY-SIDE.

PRICE PER WEEK 650 EUROS. SHORT STAY B&B ALSO AVAILABLE AT 30 EUROS PER
PERSON A NIGHT. INTERESTED? NEED TO KNOW MORE? RING 0039 0525 76169.

Michael and Lynda were so taken with the lifestyle in Italy that they have decided to sell up and go to live there. We wish them all the luck in the World. In the meantime, Michael has listed beekeeping equipment he needs to sell.

Jumbo National brood box with full set of 14' x 12' frames with foundation	£40
Jumbo National brood box with full set of 14' x 12' frames	£30
5 Frame standard National nucleus hive with solid floor	£25
5 Frame jumbo National nucleus hive with varroa floor	£35
5 Frame combination jumbo or standard nucleus	£40
Division board for Curry method of swarm prevention	£5
Large straw skep hive with bottom entrance.	£35
Hoffman 14' x 12' frames (per pack of ten)	£7
Metal frame runners for nationals (per pack of ten)	£2
8oz. Cut comb containers (per pack of 100)	£7
8oz. Stainless steel cut comb cutter	£10
Apistan (per pack of ten strips, treats five hives)	£1

Contact Michael Costello

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DRUNKEN BEES

Research by scientists at the Ohio State University in the USA finds that honey bees can be heavy drinkers when tempted and they believe that this trait could be used in research into treating alcoholism.

TEN LITRES OF WINE

Charles Abramson, one of the scientists involved stated that whilst most animals have



to be tricked into drinking alcohol, honey bees will happily drink the human equivalent of 10 litres of wine at one sitting. He added that he can even get them to drink pure ethanol, and no organism does that - even college students!

JUST LIKE HUMANS

He suggests that the affect of alcohol on bees is similar to that on humans and his experiments indicate that the bees are susceptible to the effects of Antabuse, a drug that induces vomiting and which is designed to deter people from drinking alcohol. He believes that bees could be used to screen new compounds to see whether they show promise as potential medicinal drugs. Certainly it appeared that Antabuse appeared to slow down and in some cases stop bees from drinking an ethanol solution.

During free flight experiments, it appeared that even low levels of alcohol affect the bees' learning ability, and previous research brought out the interesting fact that bees preferred to forage on artificial flowers containing a 5% ethanol solution rather than flowers with a pure sucrose solution.

NORTHERN BEE BOOKS

Over the past fifteen years or so we beekeepers have had tremendous support from Northern Bee Books. We would like to thank them by publicising their Website www.beedata.com

The postal address is:

NORTHERN BEE BOOKS
SCOUT BOTTOM FARM
MYTHOLMROYD
HEBDEN BRIDGE HX7 5JS
'PHONE 01422 882751

By the way, their publication BEEKEEPER'S QUARTERLY can be obtained from our treasurer at a concessionary rate

CALLING ALL EXPERIENCED BEEKEEPERS.

Are you prepared to help a beginner during their first couple of seasons?

The idea was mooted again at the AGM that it would be of great assistance to beginners to have a 'mentor' or someone more experienced to call upon for advice. Obviously it would be easier if both parties lived reasonably close to each other although often all that is wanted is simply someone to talk over problems on the telephone.

If you would like to assist new beekeepers in this way, please give your name and phone number to Bill Ainsworth on 01282 614015. He can then flag it up in Bee Talk

This idea is not new, but it would be nice to get it up and running. If you are a beginner, here are one or two names for starters:

Michael Birt	01706 222849 (Rossendale area)
Bob Fulton	01254 772780 (Blackburn area)
John Zamorski	01200 427661 (Clitheroe area)
Ken Gaiger	01282 778887 (Burnley area)
Bill Ainsworth	01282 614015 (Nelson area)



The best treatment for despair swarms is to destroy them.

Lost Swarm A lost swarm is any swarm that cannot be recovered. They are a significant loss of bees and productive effort to the beekeeper. At best they represent the loss of about half the hive's recent production. At worst they could jeopardise the hive's total seasonal production. Closer and more regular attention to hive status during the productive season will reduce the number of lost swarms.

SWARMING PART 3

Emergency swarms When a hive or nest is subject to storm or other damage and no longer tenable the colony will swarm away looking for a new place. However, the colony's adherence to its brood is such that emergency swarms are rare and the colony will often live in the most extraordinary circumstances rather than form an emergency swarm.

Emergency swarms seldom move far from the damaged hive. Hence they can often be identified by the damaged, empty hive nearby. Emergency swarms can be re-hived and restored to a viable unit.

Despair (Hunger) Swarms When a colony becomes so seriously affected by disease or starvation it may swarm out in search of a better domicile. It is an act of despair, hence the name.

Despair swarms are fairly easily identified. They are very small, seldom go more than a few metres from their hive so the empty diseased hive can be found nearby.

Despair swarms will often try to enter and blend in with other colonies. This is taken as an act of aggression by the new hive which fights to repel them although inevitably some bees will succeed.

Despair swarms have three major problems

- If they succeed in making a new colony elsewhere they carry their disease with them.
- They are most often so small and demoralised that recovery is almost impossible assuming the disease could be overcome.
- Bees from despair swarms who do make it into established colonies will take their diseases with them.

The question of who owns a lost swarm has been raised on countless occasions. Many decisions have been handed down in courts which favour either the beekeeper, the person who owns the land or the person who captures the swarm.

Most cases appear to favour the person who captures the swarm provided no trespass is committed. These cases appear to be based on the concept of *fenae naturae* - bees are natural or wild animals, belonging to no one except the person who successfully captures and houses them.

THE PUBLIC AND THE SWARM.

Industry norms indicate that while beekeepers in urban areas ought to have the satisfaction of a honey yield they are not financially dependent on bees, otherwise they would have far more hives than the average back yard can accommodate and would probably live in a rural situation.



This brings us to the reality that beekeeping in urban areas must be done low key. No need to be secretive or worse still ashamed, but definitely low key.

The public at large used to be a fairly tolerant society. But recent generations have not inherited this tolerant attitude which is interesting in view of the "new age philosophy" which is supposed to cultivate universal peace and goodwill, tolerance and caring towards everyone. (See Page 12 **BORING!** Ed.)

The real problem is that one of the intolerances that unfortunately has become a part of society today and actively fostered by the environmental movement is a marked intolerance to anything which is perceived, rightly or wrongly, as harming their habitat. Bees are seen in that light by people who for their own selfish or ill-informed reasons are far less tolerant of nature than they should be. So the message is clear

“CONTROLLING SWARMS IS ESSENTIAL IN URBAN AREAS”.

After all, part of the pleasure of having bees is to examine them regularly and making swarm control part of that pleasure has its own rewards.

One problem with bees is that you can't bring the colony into the house and have them curl up in front of the fire like the family cat. Although having a glass hive inside living like the budgie is an option that has both advantages and disadvantages.

CONCLUSION

There has been a huge reappraisal of the overall habits and behaviour of bees during the last few decades. Much of this has been directly aimed at swarming while much more has been aimed at general bee behaviour and had carry-over effects into swarming. In the process many cherished beliefs have been shown to be unsustainable and many established practices have been shown to be not worthy of the attention previously paid to them.

Just how these concepts will be accepted by practising beekeepers will be up to them or to the generations which follow. In all this one thing still remains. There is still a lot to be learnt about swarming and its control.

Australasian Beekeeper via BEES.

Plutarch, the celebrated Greek biographer and philosopher, who travelled the length and breadth of Britain in the second century AD, remarked that “These Britons only begin to grow old at 120 years of age” and connected their long life to the amount of mead they drank.

BORING!

(BUT VERY IMPORTANT)

Very few people are aware of the problems associated with Public Liability Insurance from the difficulties of obtaining cover to the problem of escalating premiums.

The situation has been aggravated through the eagerness of some to sue for what they see as easy money by some people. Unfortunately this attitude is actively encouraged by certain sections of the legal profession.

Insurance for beekeepers is no exception as recent articles in B.B.K.A. show.

After lengthy correspondence with B.B.K.A., some clarity has emerged. The details, as I understand them are as follows:

1. Cover is only available to full members registered with B.B.K.A
2. Junior, family or associate members are NOT covered if operating bees on their own. This includes collecting swarms.
3. However, if such members are assisting a full member then protection is extended.

To summarise. In the present climate, working bees without proper insurance protection would be foolhardy. It is strongly recommended that every member who is likely to work bees on their own should be full members - thereby automatically gaining the necessary Public Liability Insurance.

For further clarification, please contact Ken Gaiger

KEEPING IN TOUCH BY ALBERT J MORRIS

CONTINUED FROM SEPT. 2003 BEETALK

Continuation of the old article by The Rev. Eric Milner which Albert sent to us.

These discoveries are, we hope, only the beginning of a new era in British beekeeping. About a century ago breeders in Austria began to select bees for better temper and productivity. Later, scientific methods of selection and breeding were applied in Germany under the influence of Dr. Goetz and forwarded by the scientific institutes, in simple forms that can be applied by ordinary beekeepers. Records show that many strains of these selectively bred bees have doubled the annual honey yield. The quietness of the Carniolan bee is well known. Consequently, visitors to Germany are so impressed that they advocate the importation of Carniolan bees. This is a mistake. We certainly ought to learn from our continental neighbours, but what we should do is to copy their methods, not repeat the mistakes of the years after the "IOW" epidemic.

It should be noted that the beekeepers who obtained "eggs from a black queen" have also learned the essentials of selective breeding. Some bees however black they are will have faults, swarminess, or irritability or the like. These will have to be bred out of them.

THOSE VICTORIANS!

I do not know of any photographs of Victorian beekeepers. I have my own recollections of beekeepers' meetings from 1928 onwards, at which only one beekeeper wore a veil, Mr. F C Myers, a prison officer in Wakefield, who said that the BBKA regulations required an examiner to wear a veil. He wore his over his bowler. I wondered if he had borrowed it from his wife, as it rested on his nose, chin, ears and the back of his neck. In those pre-war days W Herrod-Hempsall came to us every year, wearing his ordinary clothes, and no veil. About 1920 some leading beekeepers of the YBKA

made a series of instructional slides, with a half plate camera, showing all the activities of a beekeeper throughout the year. Many of the photographs were taken at ordinary meetings, with no bee suit, gloves or veil in sight. Bees handled without a veil or gloves, I can recall Mr. Booth, a millowner of Rawdon, Leeds, who had 100 hives, taking off his jacket, rolling up his sleeves, and then examining his hives.

The survival of pure strains of bees "sounds incredible". These bees have been adapting to the weather here since the last Ice Age. They can survive a hard winter, which can kill foreign bees. More strikingly, they can survive our variable springs and summers, and produce a surplus, when other bees starve. Common observation shows that they can, and do, fly in temperatures which keep foreign bees at home. Studies of Carniolan and Italian bees in Germany have shown that some degree of selective mating takes place even when these are kept on the same sites. No such study seems to have been made of our native bees, but the existence of pure strains in areas where imported bees abound seems to indicate that selective mating does occur, when the conditions favour the native bee. In summers such as 1989 and 1990, when there were long spells of hot, settled weather it is our experience that cross matings with Italian drones is more likely to take place, resulting in the inevitable bad-tempered offspring of otherwise gentle bees.

If the principles developed from work in Russia and Germany, (expounded in Breeding Techniques and Selection for Breeding, Ruttner, pub BIBBA, and set out in a simplified form in a booklet now in preparation by BIBBA) are put into practice in this country the problem of bad tempered, low productive, swarmy bees can be solved.

The Rev. Eric Milner

We were all saddened to hear of the death of our old friend Albert Morris. I personally had know Albert for over fifty years. He was always good natured, had an endless fund of stories and information on subjects ranging from Local History to Bee keeping; from Photography to natural history. This, and the little bit on Bumble Bees on the following page, was his last contribution to BeeTalk and his widow has agreed that we should publish it as a sort of tribute to someone who will be greatly missed.

AB Asst Ed

NEWS FROM THE BUMBLEBEE WORLD

I reported some few months ago that a bumble-bee not observed for nearly a century, had been re-discovered, *Bombus*



hypnorum is alive and well. This last couple of weeks, two either extremely rare species have been discovered after a century. *Bombus rudratus*, a common sight a hundred years ago, saw its numbers drop by 95% after Comfrey and Trefoil plants became scarce they along with another rare species, *Bombus harrisellus* have been seen in wild flower areas, reintroduced in south Warwickshire.

Best Wishes to All, Albert Morris

CECIL TONSLEY BEM FRES 1915-2003

Cecil died after a long illness on Saturday 26th July 2003. Well know internationally he was Vice-President of Apimondia (1985 - 1987) and President of the British Beekeepers Association (1983 - 84) after serving the Association as its general Secretary 1954 - 1960 and on its National Executive thereafter. He joined William and Joseph Herrod Hemsall on the staff of the British Bee Journal in 1951 taking over from them as Editor in 1953 until the Journal ceased publication in 1998. Cecil was most loyally supported by his wife Nora to whom we extend our condolences - she has a special place in the hearts of beekeepers.

Karl Showler

SHOOK SWARMING

On Sunday 18th May Ian Molyneux demonstrated Shook Swarming on one of Brian Jackson's hives. We have been asked several times as to what happened to this hive during the following weeks.

Here is a report from Brian:

- May 18th The demonstration
- May 24th All frames fully drawn out and a patch of sealed brood, palm sized, on centre frame
- May 31st Queen very active. Capped worker cells; eggs on all frames.
- June 9th Put on second brood box (I wanted more bees in order to make splits)
- June 21st Second brood box well drawn out
- June 24th Three Queen cells, Two sealed one open. Made up two nucs.
- June 25th Swarm! Then ten minutes later, back in hive.
- June 29th Found three uncapped Queen cells in main hive.
- July 12th From this date I have now four hives all with Queens and hopefully all doing OK

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE . . .

It sounds a bit rude because it was known as a skirt lifter. The cord went round the lady's neck and the metal bit clipped on to the hem of her skirt. She could then make sure that her skirt was lifted clear of the mud.

I believe Edwardian shop girls also used it when climbing ladders in the stock room to lift the skirt clear of her feet on the rungs on the steps.

FOR ALL YOUR BEEKEEPING SUPPLIES

Contact

Judith David

agent for

Thornes Beekeeping Equipment

Hoarstones, Fence

BURNLEY BB1 2 9EA

'phone 01282 693330

**Always telephone first - early morning or teatime
are the best times to find us available.**

Since we took on the job of editing BeeTalk in May 1999 We have produced twenty-two editions and BeeTalk has gone from a tiny eight page booklet to the current twenty page heavy-weight. We are not fishing for compliments but really would like feedback as to what you like and what you don't like in Bee Talk. Could we ask you to spend a couple of minutes to let us know? All you need to do is tick a few boxes and stick the completed form in an envelope and post it to Bill. We will do our best to change BeeTalk to suit the ideas of the majority.

Technical Articles about beekeeping	More	☐	Fewer	☐	Don't change	☐
'Folksy' articles about beekeeping	More	☐	Fewer	☐	Don't change	☐
Recipes and uses for honey etc	More	☐	Fewer	☐	Don't change	☐
Stories about fellow beekeepers	More	☐	Fewer	☐	Don't change	☐
Facts about bees and beekeeping	More	☐	Fewer	☐	Don't change	☐
Articles for beginners	More	☐	Fewer	☐	Don't change	☐
Non-beekeeping articles	More	☐	Fewer	☐	Don't change	☐
Articles by our members	More	☐	Fewer	☐	Don't change	☐
Articles culled from other sources	More	☐	Fewer	☐	Don't change	☐
Illustrations	More	☐	Fewer	☐	Don't change	☐

Other comments ☐

.....☐

.....☐

.....☐

Post the form to :- Bill Ainsworth, 296 Scotland Road, Nelson BB9 7VS

HOW MUCH SUGER?

A strong colony requires c. 35lb to see it through to the spring without feeding in the early months of the new year, the time when stores are used up very quickly. To illustrate the simplicity of the calculation, assume the colony has 25lb of stores after the inspection. The colony requires 35 - 25 = 10lb of additional stores or the honey equivalent thereof.

How much sugar must be fed in syrup form to provide the equivalent of 10lb of honey? 1lb of honey contains c. 0.8lb of sugar; therefore, 8lb of sugar should be fed in syrup form. If the colony required 15lb of additional stores then the amount of sugar = $15 \times 0.8 = 12\text{lb}$ sugar. It is as simple as that and yet very few beekeepers take the trouble to do the job properly and many colonies starve to death each winter.

GOOD LOOKING WASPS

An animal behaviourist at Cornell University in the USA has discovered that certain types of paper wasps can recognise from facial features and abdominal markings. This is believed to be the first study to show that wasps can recognise kin through markings and will visually reject unfamiliar wasps.

Elizabeth Tibbets found that queens and workers form a power structure that determines how food is distributed, how work tasks are assigned and who will be allowed to lay eggs. Such a stable hierarchy would be more easily organised if individuals of different ranks had some sort of visual identity.

She interrupted the rankings by altering the markings and appearance of wasps with paint and found that these wasps were the subject of aggression and fights broke out amongst former friends. She added that the wasps also use chemical cues and because of these nest mates were ultimately able to distinguish between friend and foe and aggression declined.

DUNG BEETLES USE POLARISED MOONLIGHT TO NAVIGATE

We all know that when necessary, honey bees will use the polarised pattern of sunlight as a navigational device, but can this use of polarised patterns be extended to those from moonlight. It has only recently been demonstrated by scientists at the University of Zurich, and because the moon is so much dimmer than the sun, scientists were not sure whether animals could detect and use these patterns. Dung beetles may have shown us the answer.

In a recent report in the journal Nature (Nature Vol 424, p33), researchers have found that



dung beetles use the polarised pattern of moonlight to make a rapid straight line departure from the dung pile out of which they made their ball of dung. They need to escape rapidly because other beetles will attempt to steal the already created dung ball rather than

go through the effort of making their own. Once the beetle is at a safe distance with its dung ball, it will bury it.

When researchers shaded the beetles with a polarising light filter that changed the direction of polarisation by 90%, the dung beetles turned right, and on moonless or completely overcast nights, they roll their ball around in circles. Using the polarised light of the moon rather than the moon itself is an advantage because of course even just a small piece of cloudless sky will provide the necessary light pattern, if not a glimpse of the moon itself.

The scientists believe that this sheds light on other species of nocturnal bees and wasps which may use polarised light from the moon to navigate.

LETTER FROM ECUADOR

As many of you know, I'm working in Ecuador as a volunteer teacher of English. As well as being interested in bees, I grow orchids as a hobby, and the greatest diversity of orchid species in the world exists in the Andes Mountains of Ecuador, Peru and Colombia. How did I end up here in orchid heaven?

I was looking on the web for tours in the Andes when I came across the website for an Ecuadorian orchid nursery, where I saw an advertisement for teachers of English. The idea of being a volunteer in return for living with orchids in Ecuador sounded just tailor made for me, as John and I had talked about working overseas again - so here I am!

I arrived in September and spent 10 days acquiring some Spanish before term began. There's nothing like total immersion for accelerated language learning. The school where I work was started as a philanthropic project to help local children get a good education, regardless of economic status. We have 280 students from ages 4 to 15 - and 24 teachers. They have a smart school uniform - I was rather taken aback to discover that the teachers also wear a uniform - smart suits in navy and grey - but at least it saves my own clothes! My husband has joined me and we have accommodation here at Ecuagenera in one of the rooms usually occupied by visitors to the nursery for their tours. It's an apartment with a beautiful view of the surrounding mountains and is all we need, only 200 metres from the school.

John will teach tennis after school when the courts are ready, and joins the teachers of the nursery classes to give correct English pronunciation, but he isn't an official teacher. He also helps out at the orchid nursery during the day, uncomplaining when he sits for hours cleaning sphagnum moss and potting up seedlings - but he is learning Spanish at the same time, and teaching English to the employees with whom he works.

Oh yes - the orchid nursery! We have the run of the greenhouses stuffed full of wonderful plants and an impressive modern laboratory! I have already had training in seed sowing, medium preparation and meristem culture, in addition to learning how to re-plate and de-flask. There are 21 huge greenhouses, or rather shadehouses, and 45 employees. We estimate over four hundred thousand plants are under

cultivation.

In the greenhouses, all known species from Ecuador may be found and among them are some that have not yet been described. Anyone entering the greenhouses cannot help but be impressed with the expertise, love and care with which the orchids are cultivated and there is always something wonderful in flower.

The town of Gualaceo is very pleasant. There are good hotels, friendly people and a lively market. People come from miles around on Sunday to attend Mass in the beautiful church that dominates the main square, and bring their fresh fruits and vegetables. Traditional Quechua costume is still worn by many of the women and these colourful dirndl skirts add an atmosphere of carnival to the scene - but it is by no means a tourist spectacle, this is the real thing.

At Mass on my first Sunday, it was startling when I first stood up, after the service started, to find that the rest of the congregation came somewhere between waist and shoulder height! About 3ft 6in!

After Mass we sometimes have breakfast in the market - ground maize steamed in a leaf, which looks like mashed potato but tastes of sweetest sweetcorn. There are also tortillas, which are cornbread pancakes, all cooked in the open in spotless containers.

This is a beautiful country and I have met only kindness from everyone. It can be a culture shock if you haven't travelled much outside your own country - but being here and feeling we are contributing something to a people less fortunate than ourselves makes me very glad we came. The school needs more teachers of English next academic year. I hope more people will take this opportunity to give something back and in return your rewards of living in orchid paradise and learning a new language will be more than adequate compensation! I can't promise any beekeeping although there is honey in the markets.....

To Ian McLean and Ian Molyneux who very kindly took my bees into care while I'm away - a very heartfelt thank you!

Merry Christmas and happy beekeeping in 2004.

Bridget Beattie Nov. 2003 Gualaceo, Ecuador.

ARE YOUR HIVES VARROA FREE?

Scrapings from hive floors can be sent to :-
Diagnostic Services
National Bee Unit
Sand Hutton
YORK
North Yorkshire
YO4 1YW

They will send you a report and the service is free of charge

MEMBERS SERVICES

Bayvoral £3.10 per pack
Thymol crystals £2.20 per 100 g

Beekeepers quarterly Annual subscription of £14.00 instead of normal £18.00.

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.

From The Treasurer

Subscriptions for 2004 were due 1st November
The new full membership rate will be £14.00 and £2 for each additional family member.
Associate membership remains at £4.00.

The rates for Bee Disease Insurance (B.D.I.) are:-

First 2 hives £1.50 covered by subscription
up to 5 hives £2.25
up to 10 hives £5.25
up to 15 hives £7.50
up to 20 hives £9.00
up to 25 hives £9.75

Above 25 hives see Treasurer.

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

Michael Birt	Chair	01706 222849
Bill Ainsworth	Vice Chair	01282 614015
John Zamorski	Hon. Sec	01200 427661
Ken Gaiger	Hon. Treas.	01282 778887
Pauline Roberts	Honey Show Sec	01282 438615
Brian Jackson	Librarian	01535 634503
Brian Jackson	Education Officer	01535 634503
Robert Bradshaw	Member	01254 261216
Angela Moyle	Member	01200 445398
Joe Wrigley	Member	01200 447621
John Tracy	Member	01204 888650

DELEGATES TO THE CENTRAL COUNCIL

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

SCHEDULE OF VISITS TO HOLDEN CLOUGH DURING 2004

DATE	DUTY MANAGER
March 28	Michael Birt
April 11	Bill Ainsworth
April 25	Ken Gaiger
May 9	John Zamorski
May 23	Michael Birt
June 6	Bill Ainsworth
June 20	Ken Gaiger
July 4	John Zamorski
July 18	Michael Birt
August 1	Bill Ainsworth
August 15	Ken Gaiger
August 29	John Zamorski
September 12	Michael Birt

**PLEASE RING THE DUTY MANAGER
IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND TO MAKE
SURE THE VISIT IS AS SCHEDULED**

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Michael Birt	01706 222849
Bill Ainsworth	01282 614015
Ken Gaiger	01282 778887
John Zamorski	01200 437661

DLC (Disease Liaison Contacts)

A DLC course is again going to be held in 2004. Should you be interested then please contact Ian Molyneux (Northern Regional Bee Inspector) on 01204 381186 or 07815 872604.

Members who are doing the education modules should be interested. I have done the course and found it very instructive and an interesting day out (ED.)

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE !! Place an advert in BeeTalk
 and contact beekeepers World Wide (Well!, there's at least one reader in Italy,
 another in Ecuador and a couple in Clitheroe)
 Full Page £14 Half Page £8 Quarter Page £5
 (It helps to pay the postage on BeeTalk)

INFORMATION ABOUT 'BEETALK'

Planned Publication Dates: March 2004, June 2004, September 2004 & December 2004

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

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

DATE	TIME	VENUE	SPEAKER	SUBJECT
Wed 24th Mar	7.30pm	Samlesbury	Dennis Atkinson	Prep for Honey Show
Sun 25th Apr	2.30pm	Holden Clough	To be advised	
Sun 16th May	2.30pm	Brian Jackson's	Ian Molyneux	Swarm Preparation

NOTES ABOUT THE EVENTS

Our first meeting on March 24th is at Samlesbury Brewery where the speaker will be Dennis Atkinson. Dennis has judged our honey shows for the last two years and will be advising (And encouraging!) us to prepare for future Honey Shows.

On April 25th. we shall meet at Holden Clough. John Zamorski has plans for this event but is keeping us in suspense for the time being.

Brian Jackson has invited us to his place at Lower House Farm, Cowling (Telephone 01535 634503). Ian Molyneux will be the speaker and will talk about the importance of preparing for swarms

ARE YOU COMING TO DINNER?

If so, get on the phone right now and ring Angela Moyle. We know it's a long time until March but there's no time like the present. The dinner is on Wednesday 31st March at Hill Crest Tea Rooms, Mitton, Whalley at 7.30pm for 8pm Cost approximately £15

Scrapings

HEFTING THE HIVE

February is the time of year when stores can be in short supply in the hive especially if the colony did not get sufficient autumn feeding for one reason or another. The beekeeper needs to maintain a constant check by hefting both sides of the hive and so get an accurate assessment of weight level. Each nucleus should also be checked.

February is a pick-up period when brood rearing is commencing and this results in more severe inroads into the bread basket. If stores are found to be low then feed should be given and so avoid starvation, which on average accounts for 10% of Winter losses. Sugar syrup is not recommended at this time of year. Syrup fed in winter excites the bees and they come out to look for nectar at a period when there is none to be found and either fail to return or suffer wear and tear at a critical period. The alternative is to feed candy - icing sugar and honey or baker's fondant. They have about the same water content as the natural stores in the cells, and do not excite the bees.

GRANNY'S CURES

THE BEE'S KNEES



An 80 year old bee-keeper cured a painfully arthritic knee by extracting propolis from his hives. He then made a tincture with it and took ten drops in mineral water, morning and evening. A few months later he realised he was pain-free. He still is and can walk, run and climb.

HONEY RECIPE

Take a good sized aubergine. Slice it thin. Coat the thin slices in a light batter. Drop them into a pan of boiling oil (a light oil such as girasol or maize) for a very short time until the batter very lightly browns. Bring them out and shake off any oil and serve hot or cold. (Best hot). At this stage, these things are fairly tasteless but come alive when honey is lightly poured over them. ie, Don't drown the aubergine in honey. The best honey by far for this dish should have a strong taste such as chestnut. This dish which is called 'berejenas a la miel' is eaten as an aperitif. I can't claim to be the best cook in the world but this one worked.

IT'S A LONG TIME SINCE WE HAD A JOKE

A man starts his new job at the zoo and is given three tasks. The first is to clear the exotic fish pool of weeds. As he does this a huge fish jumps out and bites him. To show who is boss he beats it to death with a spade. Realising his employer won't be best pleased he disposes of the fish by feeding it to the lions, as lions will eat anything.



Moving on to the second job of clearing out the Chimp house, he is attacked by the chimps who pelt him with coconuts. He swipes at two chimps with a spade killing them both. What can he do? Feed them to the lions, he says to himself, because lions eat anything. He hurls the corpses into the lion enclosure. He moves on to the last job which is to collect honey from the South American Bees. As soon as he starts he is attacked by the bees. He grabs the spade and smashes the bees to a pulp. By now he knows what to do and throws them into the lions cage because lions eat anything.

Later that day a new lion arrives at the zoo. He wanders up to another lion and says "What's the food like here?" The lions say: "Absolutely brilliant, today we had Fish and Chimps with Mushy Bees."

Well, Bill thought it was funny! Go on then - send us a better one Asst. Ed.



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