



Bee Talk

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

Vol. 10 No.1

March 2004

Registered Charity

What's in this issue of Bee Talk

EDITORIAL	PAGE 1
Bill buzzes on about Spring, selling bees and paying subs	
APIGUARD	PAGE 2
A natural way of dealing with varroa	
OPEN MESH FLOORS	PAGE 2
A reminder about insulation	
BAYVAROL STRIPS	PAGE 3
Another reminder and some useful information	
ARGENTINA	PAGE 4 & 5
A country going through an environmental crisis	
A POEM FROM PAULINE	PAGE 4
Pauline's eating habits	
FACTS FOR FRIENDS	PAGE 5
Little snippets you can use to impress your friends.	
SUGAR OR SYRUP	PAGE 6
More fuel for this on going debate	
SUMMER STARVATION	PAGE 6
Your bees can still starve in Summer	
WE HAD ONE OF THOSE ...	PAGE 6
I wonder if your granny had one of these	
WAS SHE BOTHERED?	PAGE 7 & 8
Little girls and bees	
JENNI'S JOTTINGS	PAGE 9 & 10
Jenni's bees eat rabbit food and she has an unwanted visitor	
EARLY DAYS WITH BEES	PAGE 10
Making a start with beekeeping.	
BEGINNER'S PAGE	PAGE 11
Swarm control	
BEE STINGS	PAGE 11
Scrape it don't pinch it	

PORTRAIT OF A BEEKEEPER	PAGE 12
Ian talks about early days and Guinness	
BEE RIDDLE SOLVED	PAGE 12
Drones don't have dads	
A STICKY END FOR GERMS	PAGE 13
What to do if you get an arrow in your face and a possible cure for the super bug	
HONEY BEE FACTS	PAGE 13
More fascinating facts	
BAD TEMPERED - WHO ME !?	PAGE 14
Do your bees have mood swings? It could be that electricity pylon.	
TRAP THAT VARROA	PAGE 14
Bill is going to try trapping. Watch this space to see if it works	
POLLEN, WATER & PROPOLIS	PAGE 15
What the bees do with 'em	
THE GOOD OLD DAYS	PAGE 16
Or perhaps not so good	
A MICROPHOTOGRAPH	PAGE 16
The bee crawls up the window ...	
SUGAR IN NATURE	PAGE 17
Where it comes from and do bees have a 'sweet tooth'?	
EMAIL ADDRESSES	PAGE 17
If you have one, please let John Zamorski know	
NOTICES	PAGE 18
Please read through them to see if there is anything new	
MORE NOTICES	PAGE 19
All sorts of things are happening - they have been planned for YOU	
SCRAPINGS	PAGE 20
Bits the editor couldn't fit in anywhere else.	

Editor: Bill Ainsworth 296 Scotland Road Nelson phone 01282 614015

e.mail:- bill@scotland.free-online.co.uk

Assistant: Arthur Bickerstaffe phone 01282 695560 e.mail:- arthurbick@btinternet.com

Editorial

MARCH 2004

TECHNICOLOR BEE TALK

Michael Birt is still away (see his letter on page 16) So the editors can still play pretty and use some colour. He will probably play pop when he get's back but when the cat's away etc. The colour **green** is to match this year's queen marking colour.

IF WINTER COMES . . .

Thank God the Winter looks to be behind us. Wet Wet Wet! Today (Feb 11th) has felt like the first Spring day and my bees were actually collecting pollen.

BARRY MELLERS

Sadly, I have to report the death of one of our members, Barry Mellers. He passed away in Hospital Saturday 7th of February after a long illness.

His funeral was on February 11th and the association was well represented.

Barry came to us from the North Yorkshire Beekeepers Association some four years ago. He had been chairman of one of the branches up there and gave us his expertise as a member of our committee. A quiet, pleasant man I liked him very much, I'm sure we all did. He will be missed as a valuable member of our society. His wife told me as soon as the weather was fit to go into the garden she would "tell the bees".

We understand that Barry's bees are to be handed over to The Camphill Trust, Farndale, Kirby, YORK This was an organisation very dear to Barry's heart

THE BEES ARE OUT AND ABOUT

All my bees have been flying in the last week but it is a dangerous time with a real risk of starvation. Do make sure they have stores. In a desperate situation a bag of sugar soaked in water and paced over the cluster is better than nothing, but should not be necessary if fed properly in Autumn.

HOORAY FOR APIGUARD

I see that Apiguard has now been registered as a authorized treatment for varroa. So you can now use it with impunity. In the same paper I see that our bee inspector Ian Molynuex requires me to tell you that varroa is "A Condition and not a disease". An important distinction to a bee *disease* inspector I suppose.

JENI'S JOTTINGS

We are very happy to have Jeni Shelton on board pages 9 & 10 . With all her problems and distress after the death of Jake, we are delighted that she has agreed to write us a letter each quarter as long as she is able. Thank you Jeni, from us all.

TAKING PART

Take a look at the notices on pages 18 and 19. There are various activities which have been arranged and we need your help to make them a success.

The dinner is always very enjoyable and the Towneley Hall event depends on as many members as possible taking part in order to make it successful.

GO ON - - PAY UP !

Our treasurer, Ken Gaiger, has been giving me a hard time but it's all my own fault. Subs were due long before Christmas but like many of you I have a tendency to forget.

So can I remind you - - if you haven't paid your subs do it right now. It will save Ken a lot of hard work chasing things up.

BY THE WAY

I find myself in the position of having too many stocks. The queens are too good to unite with other stocks, so they are up for sale, I suggest £30.

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'

CONTROLLING VARROA USING APIGUARD

AN AFFECTIVE, NATURAL, SAFE AND EASY WAY

Weather conditions this autumn (2003) were ideal for the effective use of Apiguard (Thymol) in controlling Varroa. The temperature level needs to exceed 15 degrees Centigrade so that the concentration of the thymol vapour from the gel gradually increases to a set level. At lower temperatures Apiguard takes longer to evaporate and the lower activity of the bees means the gel

is not distributed as effectively. The second way it works is by contact as the worker bees climb into the tray and begin to remove the gel, as a hive cleaning behaviour. The gel adheres

to the bees' body hairs and as the workers run through the hive they distribute the product to the colony. The third possible mode of action is systemic - when the workers are cleaning the gel from the tray it is likely that they ingest some of the product - if taken internally this could have a systemic effect.

Under normal conditions the average effectiveness of Apiguard is around 95%. It has also achieved good results (90%) in combating Acarine mites.

Thymol is a naturally occurring substance found in both thyme and lime honey and, if used correctly, when honey supers are not on the hive, then there will be no adulteration to the taste of honey.

RESISTANCE

The development of resistant varroa mites through using Apiguard is highly improbable. The presence of thymol in nature; its low aptitude to leave resistant strains and its "multi-site" action, means that thymol attacks varroa mites in several areas of their nervous system, distinguishing it radically from classical acaricides. The latter act on a single area, which encourages the development of resistant varroa mites.

1. Apiguard can be bought in boxes of 10 sealed aluminium trays, each tray containing 50gm enough for the first half of the treatment for a colony.
2. Apiguard is extremely easy to use. It is simply a matter of 'peeling and placing' the tray face upwards on the top of brood frames, preferably centred over the colony, ensuring there is a free space of 5mm between the top of the tray and the crownboard (an eke or a spare super could be used to achieve this).

3. After 14 days place a second tray beside the first one.

4. Leave in place for four weeks, but no more than six weeks. For smaller colonies and nuclei, use 25gm doses (half a tray).

Beekeepers who have large numbers of colonies may prefer to buy Apiguard in bulk: in 1kg or 3kg sealed tubs. In this case the colonies should be treated in the same way as above though the application of the gel should be as follows

1. Place a piece of wax sheet, cardboard or plastic (approximately 150mm by 100mm) in the centre of the top bars of the brood box.
2. Using the dosing tools (a scoop and spatula), which come with the tubs, apply the first dose of 50gm of gel from the tub onto the tray . Ensure that the scoop is filled to the top and that the excess is cleared before applying the gel evenly with the spatula over the area of the tray.

OPEN MESH FLOOR

Beekeepers who changed to the Open Mesh Floors during the Summer are reminded to fit top insulation in the roof of the hive. This task can easily be done by fitting a sheet of 2" aero-board into the roof and covering same with a sheet of light ply board (4mm). This prevents bees having access to the aero-board as they are likely to break it down in time. A 6mm air space over the crown-board should be allowed for in the roof. This can be done by fixing 6mm timber laths along the inside edge of the roof.

Apart from the claim that 30% of live varroa mites are lost the OMF has many other advantages, there is additional bottom ventilation to counter Winter dampness, wax moths have no where to breed undisturbed and also the Spring build-up in the colony is likely to be slower due to a cooler environment and this results in a low mite population going into the Summer and a less chance of having to treat during the honey flow.

BAYVAROL STRIPS

This is a reminder to beekeepers who used Bayvarol as a control method for varroa, to take out the strips after the six week, time period. The effect of the treatment must be assessed afterwards, since it is the number of mites that survive the treatment that is important, not the number that are killed.

A check on the Daily Natural Mite Mortality using the varroa screen and insert should be maintained throughout the year, say March - June - August and November, as the key to successful varroa control is knowing how many mites are present in a colony and when to take appropriate action.

TWO TREATMENTS

A general guide is to keep the natural mite mortality per day figure below 10, otherwise treatment is required using either Bayvarol or Apiguard - the two treatments registered for use in England. It has been calculated in Britain that colony collapse is likely before the end of the season if the average daily mite mortality exceeds the following figures: Winter-Spring - 0.5 mites, May - 6 mites, June -10 mites, July -16 mites, August - 33 mites, and September - 20 mites.

COLLAPSE LEVELS

Collapse levels can vary considerably. Research has shown that one colony can happily live with 12,000 varroa mites, yet another will collapse with 1,000 mites. Current understanding shows that these differences are invariably caused by the presence of other factors, often being the presence of other bee disease such as various virus conditions or acarine - acarapis woodi - a tracheal mite.

RAPID BUILD UP

It also has been found that colonies that have given high yields of honey often succumb to varroa in the following Winter. The reason for this is a rapid build up of varroa mites due to more brood being available within the colony and more brood cycles occurring. The beekeeper fails to notice the problem and the colony collapses. It is therefore a key element in any varroa control system to be aware of mite levels in order that appropriate action can be taken at the right time. Just because a colony appears to be healthy and strong does not mean that it is not at risk from varroa infestation. If you have a lot of hives check a representative sample.

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 AMONG BEAUTIFUL UNspoiled
COUNTRY-SIDE. THE NEAREST TOWN
BARDI IS 12 Kms.

ACCOMMODATION CONSPICES 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 DUVET COVERS - JUST THE SOUND OF THE BIRDS
(COCKATRIL ALARM CALLS) AND BEES (PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN VEIL)
WALKING BOOTS AMIST 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.



WHY ARGENTINA CAN'T FEED ITSELF

HOW GM SOYA IS DESTROYING LIVELIHOODS

Our brief history of submission to the world big-technology giants has been so disastrous that we fervently hope other Latin American nations will take it as an example of what not to do.” So says Jorge Eduardo Rulli, one of Argentina’s leading agronomists, only six years after the country decided to embrace GM technology. When Monsanto arrived in Argentina in 1996 with the first of its GM crops, Round-Up Ready (RR) soya beans, it made attractive promises to Argentine farmers.

The RR soya bean has a special gene making it resistant to Monsanto’s powerful Round-Up pesticide. The latter kills virtually everything else that grows.

Monsanto said its GM technology would make soya farming cheaper and easier. Farmers would only have to use the one pesticide, and they could apply it at any stage in the plant’s development. Yields would be higher and costs lower.

Argentine farmers were captivated by the sales talk. About 90 per cent agreed to adopt the technology, which gave Monsanto an even higher take-up rate in Argentina than in the US.

WHAT HAS GONE WRONG?

At first sight, nothing at all. Since the adoption of GM, Argentina’s soya crop has doubled to 27 million tons, making the country the third largest producer of the commodity (after the US and Brazil) in the world. Exports have increased rapidly. But a closer look reveals a different story.

The growth in output is exclusively the result of an increase in the area of land under soya bean cultivation. Despite the early promises, RR soya beans have had five-six per cent lower yields than conventional soya. Nor has there been the much-heralded decline in pesticide application. Because of the evolution of vicious new weeds, farmers have had to use two or three times more pesticides than previously.

Overall, total costs have risen by 14 per cent. Soya prices have dropped as a result of increased global production and most farmers are actually worse off.

FARMING WITHOUT FARMERS

There are other less obvious, but even more serious consequences. The only undisputed advantage to RR soya is that it saves time. Farmers do not have to carry out all the traditional tasks of ploughing and harrowing the land. Instead, through so-called ‘direct drilling’ they can sow soya seed directly on the land after applying pesticide.

This means a single farmer can be responsible for a much larger area - something that has become necessary with the fall in world soya prices.

No longer able to compete, smallscale Argentine farmers are going bankrupt. Greenpeace Argentina says the number of the country’s farmers has fallen by about a third over the last decade. Some 500 market towns, once bustling with activity, have become completely empty.

“We’re moving into the age of farming without farmers,” despairs Rulli. Even more alarming is the ecological damage. Native woods have disappeared as the soya front has advanced.

Sales figures suggest that each year farmers are deluging the 10 million hectares of land under GM cultivation with 80 million litres of herbicide. This is killing off all forms of life except RR soya and is interrupting the normal biological cycles of growth.

SEVERE FLOODING

The soil is turning into a kind of cinder or sand - neither of which, says Rulli, can retain moisture. Not surprisingly, the country is suffering from severe flooding. In the past farmers used to grow soya in the summer and wheat in the winter. The non-GM soya used to capture nitrogen from the air, helping to retain the fertility of the soil.

*This is a email sent by your honey show sec.
Pauleen Roberts.*

"I saw this and thought of you!"

I eat my peas with honey
I've done it all my life
They do taste kind of funny,
But it keeps them on the knife.

Thomas Nashe 1567 - 1601
*Isn't it nice to have friends (Ed.)
16th century?!! Gerout of it! (Asst. Ed)*

RUPTURED ECOSYSTEM

The rotation reduced the prevalence of weeds. But today the RR soya, which does not have the ability to capture nitrogen, is grown all the year round. "The ecosystem has been ruptured and new resistant weeds are appearing," says agronomist Adolfo Boy. "We have not created a self-regulating, sustainable system, but one that requires larger and larger volumes of pesticide, which the farmers deliver. They know it won't kill the RR soya.

It has become a vicious circle. Soya is not bringing wealth to Argentina. We are being occupied by the seed multinationals that have patented life and are forcing us to pay tribute to them," says Rulli. "The more we produce the poorer we become."

SERIOUS CRISIS

The people forced off the land by the changes migrate to the cities. They have little hope of finding a job, for Argentina is engulfed in the most serious crisis in its history. Economic output is predicted to fall by at least 15 per cent this year. Rulli believes there is only one real solution. "We have to change the rural model, re-populate the countryside and start producing healthy food," he says. As yet, there is little sign of this happening.

FOOD FROM ABROAD

President Duhalde is trying to hold the country together until elections in March 2003. To prevent widescale rioting the government is providing the most needy with free food baskets. One might have thought that it would have purchased the food being given out from Argentina's hard-pressed small farmers. Not a chance. It is importing cheap food from abroad, and, the final humiliation, encouraging impoverished families, brought up on beef steaks, to eat the very RR soya which is doing so much damage to their country.

From The Ecologist by SUE BRANFORD, October 2002 - Sent by John Salt

Sue Branford is the co-author with Jan Rocha of 'Cutting the Wire', the story of the landless movement in Brazil, Latin American Bureau. 20021.

FACTS FOR YOUR NON-BEEKEEPING FRIENDS

- Agriculture depends greatly on the honeybee for pollination. Honeybees account for 80% of all insect pollination.
- Bees collect 66 lbs of pollen per year, per hive.
- Honey is used by the bees for food all year round.
- Beeswax is secreted from glands, beeswax is used by the honeybee to build honey comb. It is used by humans in drugs, cosmetics, artists' materials, furniture polish and candles.
- Propolis is collected by honeybees from trees, the sticky resin is mixed with wax to make a sticky glue. The bees use this to seal cracks and repair their hive. It is used by humans as a health aid, and as the basis for fine wood varnishes.
- Royal Jelly is the powerful, milky substance that turns an ordinary bee into a Queen Bee.
- Bee Venom is the "ouch" part of the honeybee. Sharp pain and some swelling and itching are natural reactions to a honeybee sting.
- Honeybees are not native to the USA. They are European in origin, and were brought to North America by the early settlers.
- Honeybees represent a highly organized society, with various bees having very specific roles during their lifetime: e.g., nurses, guards, housekeepers, construction workers, royal attendants, undertakers, foragers, etc.
- The queen bee can live for several years. Worker bees live for 6 weeks during the busy summer, and for 4-9 months during the winter months.
- The practice of honey collection and beekeeping dates back to the stone-age, as evidenced by cave paintings.
- There is only one queen per hive. A queen bee can live for 3-5 years. She lays up to 2000 eggs per day. Fertilized eggs become female (worker bees) and unfertilized eggs become male (drone bees). When she dies or becomes unproductive, the other bees will "make" a new queen by selecting a young larva and feeding it a diet of "royal jelly". For queen bees, it takes 16 days from egg to emergence.

SUGAR OR SYRUP

The debate on whether sugar syrup is better than honey will long go on. However I believe that winter survivability and early spring build up is much more influenced by the amount of pollen which the bees manage to pack away in autumn.

LING HEATHER

Here in Scotland we have a late nectar and pollen source called Ling Heather which produces a much sought after honey which is characterised by being strong tasted and high in protein. It has a very thixotropic consistency. The bees are normally moved to hilly moorland areas for the heather.

Even when there is no great surplus the bees fill the brood frames and provide themselves with a good amount of winter stores.

COLONY DEATH

However on occasion I have taken surplus frames of heather honey and fed it to colonies which were not put to the heather and this has always led to trouble with dysentery and on occasion colony death. It seems that heather honey is OK as a winter feed but only for bees which have gathered heather in the autumn and gradually become used to it. In this special case honey seems to be not better than sugar. Has any other heather area beekeepers noticed this? Naturally I no longer feed heather honey to "non heather gatherers"

*Alan Riach
Edinburgh Via BEES*

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE!



Made from earthenware and about 9 inches in diameter.

It has a brown, treacle like glaze and the decoration round the

edge is shaped like cockles - does that give you a clue?

SEE PAGE 15 FOR THE ANSWER

HUNGRY BEES IN SUMMER

This article was written some years ago about starvation in Summer but the message is the same this year and every year. Ed.

A couple of weeks ago, I got an E-mail from Ian Molyneux, our Regional Bee Inspector, warning about the risk of starvation. Apparently, several colonies in the county have died out because they've run out of food. The shortage of food has also been evident during regular apiary visits.

The weather in June has been so bad in many areas that the bees have been consuming much more honey than they could collect. If they didn't have sufficient surplus stores to start with, they would simply starve to death. And it doesn't take very long!

The colonies most at risk are those where you have taken the honey off early for extraction. Similarly, artificial swarms set up during May can rapidly run short of stores. However, even colonies that had a full super of honey earlier in the year can succumb.

In the later stages of starvation, the bees will take the brood food from uncapped cells. Then they will uncap the sealed brood and consume that too. Finally, the bees will all die in the characteristic posture of lying headfirst in the cells in which they have been desperately trying to find traces of food to keep them alive.

In the early part of this process, the queen stops laying and, because she is not being constantly fed by her attendants, she is slimmer and much more mobile than usual. In this condition, she's very difficult to find unless she's marked, so it's easy to assume in the early stages that a stalling colony has become queen less. However, in most cases, after a good dose of sugar syrup from a rapid feeder, the queen will start laying again and patches of eggs can be found in the brood chamber.

VIGILANCE

It's too late to do anything about any endangered colonies this year because they will have either already perished or have recovered thanks to July's warmer weather and increased nectar flows. However, it should serve as a reminder that constant vigilance is required, even in midsummer.

I CAN ASSURE YOU SHE WAS BOTHERED!

WALL TO WALL SUNSHINE

For the first time in nearly thirty years I could count the number of swarms I had been called up about, on the fingers of one hand. No. One finger! However, I may lack stories to tell of precarious ways of collecting swarms, but my goodness I can still tell a good tale on this one!

It was the warmest day of the year so far, a day that our TV weather girls call 'Wall to wall sunshine'. The phone rang at 4.30pm, 'Hello Mr. Clarke, do you still keep bees? My son has seen a swarm lying in the grass. They were there when he boarded the bus this morning and he has just arrived home and they were still there. Are you interested in collecting them?' I thanked her for ringing and said I would go immediately. Just what I needed for the Wandlebury observation hive.

A SMALL GIRL

Through Little Shelford I pulled into a side road and walked back to search. Sure enough a decent swarm lay in the grass just a couple of steps from the road edge. As I returned to the car I noticed a small girl hovering shyly near one of the houses; I called to ask if it were her mother who had phoned about the bees - yes it was - and asked her to thank her mother, and say that I had found them.

I parked on the verge by the swarm and opened the boot, took out my box containing some old



brood combs with some honey and turned to find the little girl was now beside me. I guessed she was all of six summers, and thought it best to ask if her mother was OK about her being with me. She assured me that her mother had agreed she could stay, just so long as I didn't mind. I then asked her to stand by the safe side of my car, in

regard both to the passing traffic and the bees. I also asked her not to wave her arms about if any bees flew near her, but to get quietly into the car and I left the passenger door open for her to stand behind.

THE BEES WERE QUIET

I could see the bees were quiet and if I did have to stir them up I would put her in the car, even before I donned my veil, and she could see what was going on through the windscreen. It was the quietest and most obedient swarm ever! I pressed the box into the grass, close to the small end of the oval spread of bees, a shiver went over the surface, heads turned towards the entrance and the grand march began immediately. I turned to call the girl, only to find she was squatting beside me.

I explained that I was worried that the queen bee may have been hit by a car, and that was why I was teasing the little knot of bees apart with my fingers, expecting to find a dead or damaged queen.

QUESTIONS

The questions came thick and fast for over an hour; I was probably all through our CBKA Beginners' course and starting on an Improvers' course! Each time I deemed I had covered all that a little girl of her tender years need know - or could take in, I was asked to explain something else she had just noticed, such as 'Why is the scout bee over there doing a different dance to the one there that you just showed me?' or 'Why is that bee bothering to fly round and round to mark the exact spot when you just said that those bees there with their bums in the air - are fanning out a scent to guide them in?' and 'Why can't I touch them? They're not stinging you so why should they sting me? But you're a stranger to them too!'

TIME TO RETIRE

I thought it was time I retired whilst I still had some feeling of superiority left, and advised that, as the best part of the spectacle was now over it must be time for tea. Too late. Two more children arrived. 'What is happening?' Before I could open my mouth my new friend took charge. The two - even younger - children were told to stand a little further away than the experts, of course.

LET'S MOVE

What to do, and what not to do, in the presence of bees. And then they were taken through all the happenings they had missed. And, by the finish, all three were squatting just to the side of the box. With the odd bee now investigating I thought it prudent to intervene. 'I think you should now move further away. We are not watching a swarm any more. They are now a honeybee colony, with guard bees starting to protect their new home.' I was perfunctorily told that 'As long as we don't wave our arms about - and we are certainly not showing any fear - we are quite safe'!

IT'S QUITE SAFE

Thankfully at that moment, from the other side of the road, a horrified voice called out 'What on earth are you doing standing there? Come away at once, you will be stung'. 'Oh, don't be silly mummy, we are quite safe. Come on over, this is all very interesting.' Mother advanced within ten steps or so. 'Oh mummy, you can't see from there. Look I can put my hand quite close.' I put out a restraining hand or she would probably have picked up a few stragglers! Mummy came closer. Mummy received the full history of bees and swarming. Mummy's eyes got even wider, as she too squatted down by the hive. 'I didn't know you knew all about bees' she said and, turning to me 'It is absolutely amazing what they get taught in school now, isn't it? But there, it is absolutely fascinating.' The little girl snorted 'Oh don't be so silly mummy, it was the bee man that told me

ARMS WAVING

At that moment the smallest girl screamed and waved her arms madly. I made a grab and pulled her away, the mother snatched her up however I had noticed the sting protruding from the very end of her nose.

I again made a grab and quickly whipped out the sting, leaving the lady to run off with her. Even when they were out of sight I could still make out their progress by the screams! I turned to my two companions, sting in hand; they were still unconcernedly watching the bees. 'Well, your friend now knows how much this bee sting hurts' I ventured. 'Yes' said my expert 'I expect it is the first time she has been stung. But what else could she expect, silly girl, waving her arms about like that'!

DAD ARRIVES

I insisted that we should all move away, in fact that tea could wait no longer. Reluctantly my companions left. I would have too, but for the fact that my nice antique swarm box was on a roadside. I sat listening to the car radio, it would be a long wait if I was going to take all the bees away from the school bus stop.

Then I heard a call, my friend was back, accompanied by a man who introduced himself as her father. Looking a little embarrassed, he proffered a cup and a flask, saying that the family were not being allowed to start tea until this had been done! I asked how the other little girl was, he only knew that his wife was still there, which left me feeling a mite anxious.

A SHORT HISTORY

Whilst I drank two cups of tea, father had to listen to a short history of beekeeping and swarming; only interrupting from time to time to ask me if this or that were really true. I thanked them for the tea, and as they walked back I saw a smiling mother meet them and have a brief word. Immediately I walked towards her. 'I thought I should let you know the little girl is alright. Some antihistamine cream and a couple of squares of chocolate did the trick.' I thanked her, but still felt very guilty.

THANK YOU

I started to re-cross the road. 'Mr. Bee-man,' I turned to see my tea bearing friend returning with the smaller of her two neighbours, who had no sign of a tear-stained face, not even a red nose. No, I thought, this must be a twin sister. She spoke 'I have come to say thank you. My mummy said it was because you took the sting out so quickly that it doesn't hurt any more.' 'My goodness,' I exclaimed, 'The sting hasn't bothered you at all. You could become a bee-keeper.' My expert looked seriously at the little girl's face, then back to mine. 'I can assure you she was bothered, Mr. Bee-man. And she still is bothered, very much!'

Bill Clarke CBKA Via BEES.

JENI'S JOTTINGS

26 Jan '04

Firstly, a happy New Beekeeping year! last year was a good year for the bees, let's hope it continues. After tying the hives down for the winter, the weather calmed down for a while and I was able to get on with outdoor jobs and make ready for Winter. I planted onion sets and garlic in the garden near the house for next year, they do well planted in the autumn, something to do with growing in the dark. The quiet spell didn't last long however and the first week in November brought very wet, heavy snow causing long power cuts, due to lines being brought down. Then true to form it passed and all through November and December it remained very changeable. The bees were still able to get out on the better days, although there was nothing for them.



JENI'S HIVES

HUNTERS

These months are the hunting season which curtails my walks somewhat as my female Border Collie will not go down in the woods if she hears hunters, she's not daft! The hunters who come for the wild-boar are local people who generally respect their neighbourhood, and also the wild-boar are not usually found near habitation. Although one year there was one that used to hide in the hedges near to the village while the dogs and hunters ran around the woods, I don't think they are stupid for one moment.

This year, the day after the hunting season had finished, a huge boar trotted past me in the field below the bee hives in broad daylight and quite unconcerned. Apparently they are an introduced species and some people say crossed with pigs. The original wild-boar were smaller and timid. This new strain are very prolific and they are doing a lot of damage to the fields. Many fields look like some one has gone mad with a plough!

Hares and pheasants are also introduced, usually in the Spring for the hunters to shoot at in the

Autumn. By the time the hunting season comes round most have been eaten by the foxes or buzzards, shame the same can't be said for the hunters.

THE END OF THE GREAT BARN

At the end of November, the great hay barn nearby demolished itself due to the wind and rain. The noise sounded like thunder. I had always expected heavy snow to be its demise, so

it was rather a surprise.

A great shame as it was a magnificent building. We had tried to buy it on numerous occasions with a view to saving it, as it was in obvious need of attention, plus we used it for a hay and bailer store. When it collapsed the bailer was still in the annex lean-to and after cleaning a lot of debris I was able to extricate it quite unscathed. Now the barn or what is left of it is a very sad sight with its huge beams pointing skyward like broken ribs.

Early December, the honey I had put to one side for an organic restaurant near Palma finally got picked up. I though I'd been caught up in the Parmalat Scandal but it all turned out alright and I got paid, not like some of the farmers who haven't been paid since August!

RABBIT FOOD FOR BEES

The middle of December, another mild spell with the bees flying, also finding the rabbit food which probably means they are using it as pollen substitute for their brood. Of course there's nothing for them yet. Had a chance to check if they were all okay and they appear so at this point.

The end of December is Pannatone time, for those who don't know, it's the Italian Christmas cake. Every one visiting some-one has one in hand (I don't think anyone eats them, they just get passed around. Any way I've found a solution to the unwanted Pannatone's, my cats (and dogs) think they are wonderful (I think it's the vanilla in them). So on dismal wet days we have a Pannatone party.

cont. on page 10

cont. from page 9

UNWELCOME VISITOR

Then to end the year "good style", I had a most unwelcome visitor by way of a creature called a 'fiena'. An enormous polecat, is a good description, nose to tail nearly a metre long, head and body about the size of a cat. The result of this visit was twenty-three dead hens and two rabbits with all their throats bitten. That creature was certainly making sure it wasn't going to go hungry over Winter. Very disheartening for me and also the dogs who do their best to guard and take care of things. It was also very painful for my big tom cat "Trouble" who was bitten in the face. Any way this murderous creature created a lot of work for me. The next few weeks were spent re-enforcing rabbit cages, mending broken windows, cementing up cracks etc. and all my remaining stock securely (I hope) shut up at night. The middle of January 15°c for a couple of days very Spring like. Bees flying, but again nothing for them but rabbit food. Hazel catkins out lower down the mountains, but not around here.

SIX INCHES OF SNOW

Checked bees again to see if all was still okay, suspect one was being robbed out. Since then the weather has closed in with a snow fall of over six ins. About a week ago and at the time of writing, its raining hard again and the temperature is well down. There are lots of catkins ready to "do it", so if the Sun Shines there will be something for the bees, and the season will start again.

Tante Salute Jeni.

EARLY DAYS WITH BEES.

It is best to begin with one hive for the first year, and by observation and study to follow the habits of the colony throughout the season. If the stock be purchased in the early spring the beginner will be able to note its strengthening as the laying activities of the queen increase and the young brood hatches out. He will see the sheets of wax foundation being drawn out into cells, and the first of these being filled with honey and pollen. He may see queen cells being formed. When the honey flow is in full swing he will have his first task to perform, namely, putting on additional shallow frames. Later he will probably have the excitement and experience of capturing a swarm, and introducing it into a new hive. In the autumn there will be the task of extracting and bottling the honey from shallow frames, and, lastly the closing down of the hive for the winter, with the provision of syrup and candy to ensure sufficient food supplies.

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 BEE-KEEPER'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)



SWARM CONTROL WITHOUT FINDING THE QUEEN

Many black bees have queens that are difficult to find. It is quite possible to apply an effective swarm control method without finding the queen

You need a spare brood box with drawn comb, a floor, inner cover and roof. Regular examination should show you queen cells. Move the occupied hive to one side and put the new floor and brood



box in its place. Remove one comb (central for the cold way beekeeper, third from the back for the warm-way fans). Take one comb from the occupied box. It should have on it bees and brood in all stages, but no queen cells. It may or may not have the queen on it, It doesn't matter. Put this comb in the space you have created in the new box, put the excluder on and then the occupied supers. Push the frames in the old box together and fill the gap with the spare comb taken from the 'new' one and place it elsewhere in the apiary.

Next week, the box with no queen cells has the queen. If both boxes have cells, you lost the swarm before you looked. The single brood comb on the old site is most likely to have the cells. Reduce them to one and wait for 2-3 weeks before you look again.

ANOTHER METHOD

Another method, is to make use of the fact that most queens cannot pass through queen excluders. You need the same spare equipment as before; a brood box and comb, inner cover and roof. Having found queen cells during a regular examination and decided that swarming is inevitable, proceed as follows:-

- 1 Empty the spare box of its combs and place it close by.
- 2 Go through the combs in the original box and brush or shake each one clear of bees - back into the old brood box.
- 3 Place each cleared comb into the new brood box in original order.
- 4 Leave one comb, with brood in all stages, in the old brood box.
- 5 Now fill up this original box with the spare frames
- 6 Re-build the hive - queen excluder, supers - and put the box of cleared combs on top, then the inner cover and roof.
- 7 At this point you have completed the Demaree method of swarm control.
- 8 Or, next day, put the original brood combs, now re-populated by bees, in their brood box on a new floor at the side of the hive. Put a new inner cover and roof on the other hive.

You have now completed the first stage of the artificial swarm. Proceed as you would for that method from now on, i.e., in five to seven days, move this box to a new location in the apiary. This move sheds flying bees before any queen cells hatch.

BEE STINGS

Work reported in The Lancet in 1996 investigated the conventional advice that a bee sting should be scraped off, never pinched. They found that weal size, and thus envenomisation increased as the time between stinging and removal of the sting increased. There was no difference whether stings were pinched or scrapped off after two seconds. The authors suggested that the emphasis should be on speed rather than method of removal.

PORTRAIT OF A BEEKEEPER.

FAMILY HISTORY

I was born on 24th March 1957 in Hope hospital Salford. I have a twin brother Keith who is half an hour younger than me and fortunately doesn't look like me. I also have an older sister, Carol who is two years older than I am. My mum Edith is still alive and lives at home with my brother. My father who was an RAF Lancaster bomber navigator in the war died in 2002.

I married Rosemary in 1983. We lived in a house on Heywood Road in Prestwich which was ideal for me as it had a large garden and four garages (Two doubles back to back). At the time, being a trained motor vehicle technician and engineer, the garages came in handy.

MY FIRST BEES

also had my first bees here, which were bought from Tom Howard in 1992. I attended Tom Howard's night school beekeeping class for two years at Prestwich High School

In 1996 Rosemary became pregnant but we lost the baby at 12 weeks. This devastated us, and even though we were informed that a high percentage of first pregnancies fail, after 13 years of trying it did not help. In September of the same year she became pregnant again and we were very careful, no horse riding or trampolining and I made Rosemary do the same.

On 21st July 1997 our son Declan was born weighing 10 lbs. Not expecting another baby, to our great surprise Rosemary found herself pregnant again and on 26th January 2000 we had a daughter, Rhianna Grace 8lbs 6oz. We now have two lovely children who both like bees and are used to being stung.

FOOTBALL

I left school at 16 and started as an apprentice motor mechanic. I was in the trade for 25 years, becoming a Workshop Foreman, Vehicle tester Technical Service Receptionist and finally a Technical Advisor for the AA. I loved woodwork at school and got 'O' level grade 1.

I had football trials for Bury and Bolton and captained the Town Team.



IAN MOLYNEUX

BEES AND GUINNESS

My interest in bees started in about 1988. I have been going to Ireland since I was seventeen mainly to drink the Guinness and sometimes go fishing. It was while there, I discovered a feral colony of bees in the chimney of a bungalow where we were stopping.

The next year they were gone but the comb and honey was still there, so we dug it out of the chimney, it was lovely stuff. We actually bought a house there and still have 6 colonies of bees there, but we sold the house just before Declan was born in 1997.

MASTER BEEKEEPER

I became a bee officer in South and West Yorkshire in 1995 and studied for my exams in the following years, I am now a Master Beekeeper.

Became RBI in 2002 after Ian Mcleans retirement and love every minute of it.

Regards

Ian Molyneux

BEE RIDDLE SOLVED

SCIENTISTS have finally discovered how it is that male bees can have no father.

They found that female bees have two versions of a gene called CSD (complementary sex determiner), one from each parent. Together, they produced a protein that triggered female development.

Unfertilised eggs, with only one copy of CSD passed on by the female queen, hatch into male.

Alistair Lilburn Via BEES

The following is taken from an article by Simon Crompton which appeared in 'The Times' recently:

A STICKY END FOR GERMS

For centuries honey was used as an antiseptic to treat wounds - the ancient Egyptians are known to have relied on its healing properties, and several millennia later honey saved the life of Prince Hal, later Henry V. At the Battle of Shrewsbury an arrow flew into the prince's face. The first challenge for the surgeon was to remove the arrowhead; equally important was to prevent life threatening infection. The surgeon's records show that honey was inserted into the wound, which was then dressed with barley and honey mixed in turpentine.



After 20 days the wound was free of infection.

Honey's healing properties have recently been rediscovered. Four years ago Aaron Phipps, then aged 15, collapsed while getting ready for school; an hour later he was on a life support system in hospital. He had meningitis C and meningococcal septicaemia, and within two months the infection had affected both legs so badly they had to be amputated. When his wounds failed to heal after nine months of using conventional dressings, his nurses resorted to using gauze impregnated with honey. He was home within ten weeks.

Many similar successes have been documented and although research is still at an early stage it has indicated that honey has considerable poten-

tial in treating scrapes and wounds that nothing else will heal. In a study reported in the European Journal of Medical Research, honey outperformed antiseptics and antibiotics in the treatment of infected post operative wounds after Caesarian sections and hysterectomies, healing 22 out of 26 wounds: routine treatment healed 50 per cent.

Perhaps most exciting is honey's potential to fight the deadly 'superbugs' afflicting hospitals. Laboratory studies have suggested that while conventional antibiotic drugs are ineffective against bacteria such as MRSA, honey appears to have some effect. Researchers at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, have eradicated MRSA bacteria from infected wounds using honey. They are also investigating evidence that honey hastens healing by stimulating the cells that promote new tissue formation.

Honey works partly because the sugar content draws moisture from the wound, which then inhibits bacterial growth. Researchers have found that it also produces the sterilising compound hydrogen peroxide in constant amounts at small, non toxic levels. The type of honey that seems to be most effective is from the *leptospermum* species of plants, usually known as manuka or Jelly bush honey and is produced from the manuka bush in Australia and New Zealand.

It has been postulated that it has something to do with a chemical derived from the plant from which the honey was made' says Dr Rose Cooper, a principal researcher at the University of Wales Institute. 'But nothing we have found so far accounts for the high levels of antibacterial activity in manuka honey.'

SOME BASIC HONEYBEE FACTS

A single honeybee weighs about 80 mg. That means there are about 12,500 in a kilogram, 5500 in a pound. The average nectar load of a foraging honeybee is about 40 mg (half its bodyweight) but it can carry up to 70 mg. The average speed of a foraging bee in flight is about 15 mph, but it can achieve about 25mph for short periods.

Though bees can maintain the temperature in the hive even in very cold periods, individual bees are constrained in their activities by the outside temperature. The minimum air temperature for foraging is about 13-14°C but short winter cleansing flights can be undertaken when the air temperature is as low as 8-10°C. However, if a bee's body temperature falls below 10°C, its muscles stop working and the bee becomes comatose.

BAD TEMPERED! - WHO ME ?

When normally well behaved bees suddenly become aggressive, this is due to environmental causes. The most common concerns electricity. When a thunderstorm is coming one can often notice bees becoming aggressive. Some years ago, I placed several hives on a crop of field beans. There was a pylon just inside the field leaving a bare area between it and the hedge where I sited the hives. During the time they were there, they were always nasty, but on returning them to their permanent site they reverted to their normal behavior.



Another factor seems to be the effect of certain pesticides. Some hives I had in an orchard gave me a bad time after the apple trees had been sprayed with an organo-phosphorous insecticide. The trees had finished flowering but the hawthorn windbreak was in full bloom. Although there were only a few hundred dead bees I wondered if other foragers had received a sub-lethal dose, changing their behavior. This group of insecticides works on the nervous system of the insect.

Forage appears to have an effect on bee behavior. When all the colonies on a site are working a single floral source such as oil seed rape or heather the bees become noticeably more aggressive. This may be due to the fact that the colony odour of each stock becomes the same, as it is mainly derived from the flowers being worked. Anyone who has kept bees at the heather or on oil seed rape will know that once the honey crop has been taken (often a painful process) the bees revert to their normal behavior.

I have noticed several times that hives sited next to a large pond become aggressive, but once moved away become gentle again. Could it be that they dislike flying over water?
From BEES.

TRAP THAT VARROA

This year I intend to have a go at trapping varroa using drone brood as the bait.

The idea is to place a *super comb* fitted with worker foundation, into the brood box, early in the year, say early April. Placed as near to the center of the brood nest as possible, without splitting the brood nest. After about 16 days, in a reasonably strong hive, the bees should have built a wild comb on to the bottom of the super comb. It will be drone comb and probably capped over by this time. As the varroa mother enters the drone cells just before they are capped to lay her eggs, we should have quite a lot of varroa mites in this wild comb.



VARROA MITES

The wild comb can now be swept clear of bees (mind the queen), cut off and destroyed. With all those nasty mites still in there. The comb is put back into its position in the brood nest to start the process all over again.

It is not important just when the wild comb is cut off, providing it is within fourteen days of it being capped as the mother mites enter the cells just before they are capped and cannot emerge until the drones start to emerge some 14 days later.

It looks as though it is very little more work, and should fit into the regular inspections. The super comb itself will be producing workers, and there will be plenty of work for the wax producers to do.

I'll let you know if it works.

Bill Ainsworth.

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.**

POLLEN WATER AND PROPOLIS

Whereas nectar is gathered at every opportunity, the collection of pollen is much more conservative. When reserves reach an optimal level, the number of foragers engaged in its collection are reduced. As pollen contains the proteins necessary for glandular development, it is, by necessity, the food of young bees. Older bees also eat a little but the amount is minimal. About twenty kilograms takes care of the colony's annual requirement.

(That's a staggering 44lb or the equivalent of twenty two 2 lb bags of sugar !! Asst Ed)

WATER

Water is not stored it is only collected when required. In winter and early spring, moisture is needed to dilute stored honey. Nurse bees consume it in order to generate brood food and it is also used as a coolant when the temperature of the nest rises above an acceptable level.

PROPOLIS

Gums and resins from plants and trees make up the major constituents of propolis. As it contains chemicals that act as antibacterial agents, propolis offers considerable protection from fungal growths, yeasts, moulds etc.

Amongst its other uses is the filling of cracks, waterproofing the ceiling and walls of the nest (a microscopic film) and reducing the size of entrances.

Mice or other small creatures that enter the nest will be attacked and killed. Being too large to move, they are normally encased in a coating of propolis, which acts as an airtight seal. A colony (depending on the race, state of the nest etc.) will collect about a hundred grams of the gums and resins annually.

The forager's normal load of nectar or water is carried in the honey stomach and averages about thirty milligrams. Loads of pollen or propolis average about fifteen milligrams and these are carried in the corbicula.

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE . . .

If we told you it was a cuspidor, would that make it easier?

Granny would probably have called it a spittoon and Grandad would have used it instead of aiming for the open fire.

What did Harold Steptoe say? "You dirty old man!"

THE GOOD OLD DAYS

This is a poem written by James Thompson 1700-1748. To me it hits home at how cruel it was to be a beekeeper in those days before moveable frames when the colony had to be destroyed to crop the honey. This is not really a case of the "good old days" but the good new days for bees.

Ah, see where, robb'd and murder'd in that pit,
Lies the still-heaving hive, at evening snatch'd
Beneath the cloud of guilt concealing night,
And fix'd o'er sulphur; while not dreaming ill,
The happy people in their waxen cells
Sat tending public cares, and planning schemes
Of temperance, for winter poor, rejoice
To mark, full flowing round, their copious store.
Sudden the dark oppressive steam ascends,
And, used to milder scent, the tender race
By thousands tumble from their honeyed domes,
Convolv'd and agonising in the dust.
And was it then for this you roam'd the Spring
Intent from flower to flower; for this you toil'd
Ceaseless the burning Summer heats away;
For this in Autumn search'd the blooming
waste,
Nor lost one sunny gleam? For this sad fate?
Ah, man, tyrannic lord, how long, how long
Shall prostrate nature groan beneath your rage,
Awaiting renovation, when obliged
Must you destroy? Of their ambrosial food
Can you not borrow, and in just return
Afford them shelter from the wintry winds;
Or, as the sharp year pinches, with their own
Again regale them on some smiling day?
See where the stony bottom of their town,
Looks desolate and wild; with here and there
A helpless member, who the ruin'd state
Survives, lamenting, weak, cast out to death.

This is a letter I have just received from Michael Birt (Ed)

Just picked up the e-mail about Barry. Really sad about it as he was a very nice Chap. I know he will be very much missed.

We have been to Burma which was quite an experience as the place is very poor. I wanted to go there as that is where my dad served in the war.

The place is very poor. Here, I found, you can buy anything you want from water to Opium. It's very near the golden triangle which is where all the opium is grown and were all the smuggling goes on.

Also we went to the North of Thailand where all the beekeeping is done and called in at a bee farm where all they do is collect the royal jelly. They then let the bees do some more work, then collect again. You can buy fresh Royal Jelly for very little money.

We are now on a small Island called Koh Samui. They call it coconut Island and now I know why. The place is very mountainous and is completely covered with Coconut palms - a really beautiful place.

I hope all goes well with the funeral and that all's well with you and Jean

Its very hot now in Thailand with temperatures reaching the mid 30s every day. A far cry from Lancashire

All the best to everyone

Michael and Saipin



A MICRO PHOTOGRAPH

This peculiar looking photograph is of a bee's foot.

The little green bits are pollen. However, the interesting thing is the sucker like piece between the claws, which the bee uses to climb plants etc.

When she gets on a smooth surface blood expands the sucker pad beyond the claws and gives a grip which enables her to climb even the smoothest surface.

SUGAR IN NATURE

Every green leaf throughout the length and breadth of the land is one of Nature's factories for the manufacture of sugar. A leaf can absorb carbon dioxide from the air; it receives a supply of water from the roots of its parent plant and, by an alchemy never yet imitated in the laboratory, it can combine the two together to give sugar.

Yet, in spite of this prodigal scale of production, sugar has always been difficult to come by and for many centuries honey was the only means of sweetening, readily available to mankind.

Most of the sugar produced is combined with itself to give cellulose which forms the wood and fibrous part of the structure of a plant; such sugar is lost as a human food.

SUGAR AND STARCH

A smaller proportion of sugar is turned into starch and stored up by the plant as a reserve food for the next generation. The ears of corn, the tubers of the potato, roots and nuts are the storehouses of the plant's starch. Sugar in the form of starch is one of the essential human foods but its sweet characteristics have been lost.

A still smaller proportion of the sugar produced circulates in the sap of the plant and, in a few cases such as the sugar cane, sugar beet and maple, sugar may be won by collecting and concentrating such sap. In the fruit-bearing trees sugar accumulates in the fruit.

A minute proportion of the sugar produced by some plants -usually flowering plants- is secreted with the apparent object of attracting pollinating insects. This secretion is known as nectar and this is the source of the sugar which we beekeepers seek through our chosen instrument, the honey bee.

THE SECRETION OF NECTAR

In spite of all that the poets say and the hymn-writers sing, bees do not gather honey from flowers. They gather nectar from flowers, carry it back to the hive and there convert it into honey. The plant organ which secretes nectar is known as the nectary. Often it is green in colour and in the buttercup may be seen at the base of the petal though it is situated at different points in different flowers.

DRIPPING NECTAR

Often it lies deep down in the flowers so that an insect has to push its way right inside to reach it. In tube-shaped flowers such as the clover and honeysuckle nectar accumulates and is often visible. In America the tulip tree secretes nectar so freely that it may be removed from the flower by hand with a teaspoon; unfortunately this tree does not yield nectar in Britain but even here the lime tree, mainstay of the urban beekeeper, will sometimes yield nectar so freely that it drips upon the ground and forms a visible damp circle around the base of the tree.

The sugar content of nectar varies enormously. It differs with different species of plants and with varieties in the same species. It is affected by weather, by the nature of the local soil, by altitude and aspect.

THE BEE'S PALETTE

The palate of the bee is surprisingly insensitive to sweetness and it does not seem to appreciate a nectar containing less than 7-10% sugar; drink a cup of tea containing 10% of sugar (that is about 20 lumps) and you will see how superior to the bee we are in this respect. Pear and plum nectars contain about 20% sugar but these are soon abandoned by the bee when apple nectar with 40% sugar becomes available while the dandelion (50% Sugar) sometimes tempts the bee from the apple.

When the temperature is low, nectar secretion diminishes. When the weather is wet, nectar may be diluted or washed out of those flowers which provide no protection against rain. In cold and wet weather, moreover, bees are reluctant to venture out on foraging expeditions and little nectar comes into the hive. A fine summer generally means a good honey harvest. Warm nights and slightly overcast days are probably the best conditions of all.

IMPORTANT

If you have an email address will you please contact John Zamorski at john@zamorski.freeserve.co.uk so that he can compile a list of members email addresses.

It will enable us to contact you quickly if there is important information

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 from the publisher is £24 - from our treasurer only £16.00 with a slight profit to our society.

The publication has just been expanded to include another publication - 'Beebiz'.

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, PADHAM, 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 427661

SWARM COLLECTORS

Blackburn, Darwen & Mellor	Robert Fulton 01254 772780
Clitheroe & Ribble Valley	John Zamorski 01200 427661
Nelson & Colne	Bill Ainsworth 01282 614015
Padiham	Ken Gaiger 01282 778887
Accrington & Burnley	John Wilson 01254 886120

INFORMATION ABOUT 'BEETALK'

Planned Publication Dates: June 2004, September 2004, December 2004, March 2005

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	Mary Anne Hartley	The subject is John Zamorski's secret and he's not telling(<i>Asst Ed</i>)
Sun 16th May	2.30pm	Brian Jackson's	Ian Molyneux	Swarm Preparation
Sun 20th June	1pm	Towneley Hall	Open Day	The society NEEDS you there for this special event

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. Mary Anne knows all about it.

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. The date is Sun 16th May.

Our annual open day is an opportunity to explain about beekeeping to the many people who visit Towneley Hall. We really do need as many members as possible to join in the fun.

PLEASE NOTE

At events where there are hives - weather permitting - we shall open one or more for the benefit of beginners and others. So, always bring protective clothing.

ARE YOU COMING TO DINNER?

If so, get on the phone right now and ring Angela Moyle or John Zamorski. 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. (The tea room is now licensed so no need to bring your own).

WE SHALL BE HAVING A RAFFLE AT THE DINNER. CAN ANYONE PROVIDE US WITH RAFFLE PRIZES? A BOTTLE, SWEETS. CHOCOLATES ETC.

Scrapings

A QUEEN MATES FOR LIFE

During the mating flight the queen acquires



sufficient sperm to last for the rest of her active egg-laying life. The sperm is stored in a special gland in her body. When the mating flight is over the queen will return to her hive to start egg

laying. This she will do for the rest of her life. She will never mate again if her first mating flight is successful and she will now never leave the hive except when the colony swarms.

USING HONEY FOR BAKING

Using honey in baked goods has several advantages over using sugar. Honey creams with shortening rapidly, giving a smooth fluffy mixture. Honey produces an attractive deep brown crust on breads.

Since honey absorbs moisture from the air, baked goods remain moist and fresh much longer than when cooked with sugar. The only disadvantage in using honey in baking, is a tendency for easier burning of the crust. However, reducing the oven temperatures by 25 degrees F (15 degrees C) will prevent scorching.

Although many honey recipe books are available, cooks frequently substitute honey for sugar in favourite recipes. The most important fact to remember is that honey is about 18.6 percent water, the rest being solids. This amount of liquid can change the delicate balance of ingredients in cakes and sweet quick breads. The liquid, which can be milk, water, or fruit juices, in such recipes will need to be reduced, keeping the following proportions.

SUBSTITUTING HONEY FOR SUGAR.

If the recipe calls for 8 oz of sugar which you replace with honey, then reduce the liquid portion of the recipe by 3 tablespoons. If the recipe contains a greater amount of honey then reduce liquid in the same proportion.

Honey can be substituted for sugar, measure for measure, in meat sauces, such as marinades, barbecue sauces and glazes; in salad dressings; in vegetable sauces, such as sweet-sour sauce and glazes; in all yeast breads; and, in beverages of all kinds. Granulated or creamed honey can be used interchangeably with liquid honey.

From -The ABC-XYZ of Bee Culture

WHERE DO BEES GET BEESWAX?

Bees actually produce their own beeswax. On the underside of the bee's abdomen there are eight glands that secrete the liquid wax. As the wax hardens it forms small flakes that are then removed by the bee with its hind legs and brought up to the bee's mandibles. Here, it is masticated into a malleable form where it is then used to build comb. To give you an idea of just how small these flakes are, one pound of the wax equates to about 570,000 of these flakes.

HONEY STUFFED CHICKEN BREAST

- 4 Chicken breasts
- 250g seasoned cream cheese (Boursin with garlic and herbs)
- 3 tablespoons honey some black pepper, salt and butter or oil
1. Season chicken breasts with salt and black pepper.
2. Fry chicken breasts in butter or oil until just cooked.
3. Meanwhile mix cream cheese and honey to a smooth sauce.
4. Cut Chicken breasts open on the top and fill them with the thick sauce.
5. Wrap each breast in aluminium foil and heat in hot oven (200°C) until sauce is warm (just a couple of minutes).
6. Serve with roast potatoes and vegetables/salad.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO OWN YOUR OWN BUSINESS ?

You can do it and control hundreds of workers - what's even better!

- **No retirement plan expenses**
- **No labour or union problems**
- **No sick leave problems**
- **No health care plan expenses**
- **No environmental or pollution concerns**

Yes, Yes, **YES!**... YOU can have ALL this with the amazing world of ...

BEE KEEPING!!!

Yes friends, with just minimal effort and a low capital investment, you can have thousands of workers. They will toil endlessly to make honey, perhaps even hundreds of jars of honey (isn't that sweet!) And once started, the bees are self-reproducing, so the colony just gets bigger and bigger and bigger, and production just keeps going up and up!

And we use only the most productive worker bees in the world! (sometimes referred to as Killer Bees). There's just almost no downside to this plan, and it's all Perfectly Legal!

GET GOING WITH OUR DELUXE BEE KEEPING STARTER KIT. HERE'S WHAT YOU GET:

The instruction book: "Bee Keeping for Idiots"

A box containing approx. 10,000 very angry Killer Bees and one tired Queen Killer Bee.

Construction plans for our unique "Bee Tower Block"TM (pat. pending)

A life-size recognition-chart of a Queen Killer Bee (1-inch x 1-inch)

A bee dancing foot chart and music cassette (Flight of the... - - you know)

A first aid kit containing a syringe of bee anti-venom, and a list of poison control centres.

And as an added bonus, absolutely free to the first 100 callers...

A Mondo-MAG-Vibrator

(nothing to do with the bees, just left over from our last promotion. batteries not included).

**ALL THIS FOR ONLY 15 EASY PAYMENTS OF £99.99.
(CAN YOU BEE-LIEVE IT?)**

Money Back Guarantee: We guarantee you won't get your money back.



Cleaver Group



Suppliers Of Quality Freezer Foods To The Retail And Catering Trade
Manufacturers of and specialists in all meat products

* * * *

 Purveyors of Quality Meat & Freezer Food

 Expert advice on choice

 Free Local Delivery

* * * * *

**CLEAVER GROUP STANDS FOR QUALITY, SERVICE
AND COMPETITIVE PRICING**

Retail Premises:

Roberts Butchers
Croft Street Burnley
(Opposite the Bus Station)

Factory:

2/4 Bradley Road East Nelson

Phone 01282 698032 Fax 01282 698119

e-mail paul@cleavergroup.fsnet.co.uk

www.cleavergroup.co.uk

WHY NOT HAVE A GO AT HOME BREWING?



**See Bob Fulton at the
regular, Blackburn three
day market where he shows
a complete range of Home
Brew Equipment.**

STALL NO. 79

Telephone 01254 772780

e-mail address

bob@darwinbrew.fsnet.co.uk