



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.2

June 2004

Registered Charity

What's in this issue of Bee Talk

EDITORIAL PAGE 1
Bill complains about the computer; a new idea for Holden Clough and something for everyone.

HONEY PRODUCTION PAGE 2
Making the most of your honey.

FROM THE SECRETARY PAGE 3
A message from new Secretary John Z.

OPEN MESH FLOORS PAGE 4
Talking about varroa dropping out and condensation coming down.

KNOW YOUR BEES PAGE 5
Managing bees and Spring cleaning.

LIBRARIANS CHOICE PAGE 6
Brian Jackson talks about books and asks if you can donate any surplus books for the association library.

QUEENS AND SWARMING PAGE 7
How to find the queen and what might make 'em bad tempered.

PESTICIDES PAGE 8
A cautionary tale from France where some are losing forty thousand bees a week.

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE PAGE 8
"The day war broke out, my missus said to me.."

ITALIAN CONNECTION PAGE 9
Jenni had pink snow and lost some bees

BEGINNER'S PAGE PAGE 11
Why beekeeping is so interesting.

PORTRAIT OF A BEEKEEPER PAGE 12
At last ! A page 3 girl for BeeTalk

EASY STOCK INCREASE PAGE 13
A simple method for increasing your stocks.

HONEY AND ALLERGIES PAGE 14
The potential benefits of using local honey

STERILIZING HONEY JARS PAGE 14
How to sterilize your jars

SOME BITS AND PIECES PAGE 15
WW2 spies; removing labels from jars; warm or cold and do bees smell?

ROYAL JELLY PAGE 16
Miracle cure or placebo? Japan consumes 250 tons each year.

NATURAL SELECTION PAGE 17
Making the most of what we've got.

NOTICE AND EVENTS PAGES 18 & 19
They may look the same but the do change - please take a look.

SCRAPINGS PAGE 20
Things you didn't know you didn't know - or maybe you did know you didn't know

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

JUNE 2004

IT KEEPS CHANGING

It happens every time we produce a Bee Talk. We either get a new computer, a new programme or an update to an existing programme. This time its an update. Not a lot different, but different!

I hope you notice the difference in the new style typeface, we hope it makes for brighter and easier reading.

OFF TO ITALY

I hear Michael Costello is off to Italy this month. Michael and his wife are going to start a new lifestyle somewhat like "Jeni" our Italian correspondent. They have promised to keep us informed of their progress. We wish them all the luck in the world.

ALL QUIET IN THE APIARY

In the Ken Preedy Memorial Apiary. We have some superb, quiet bees, but the apiary is not working as intended. We should be spreading these wonderful bees amongst the association membership. It's just not happening. So next year we intend to try something different.

ARTIFICIAL SWARMS

Roughly the idea is that about the second week in May, all the hives will be artificially swarmed using the Curry method. One week later we will need to go through the parent colonies to remove all the excess queen cells. These cells can be carefully removed and distributed to our members. The time for this to be done will be known months in advance, so every one who wants, or needs a far better bee will be able to get one, with oceans of time to get things ready.

WATCH OUT FOR MORE DETAILS

We intend to go into more detail at one of our meetings and also in Bee Talk later in the year.

A SPECIAL NOTE FOR ALL

The editor is pleased to be able to tell you that Mrs Meller (Barry's widow) has donated to our Association a Thorne's Heavy Duty Extractor with attachments for tangential extracting. This means the facilities are there for normal extraction and also full size brood combs.

It is portable and will fit in a normal car boot.

It is in the keeping of Michael Birt who you should contact if you would like to make use of it.

There may be a small charge and obviously you need to book in advance. We hope there will be considerable demand for this so it is important that it is returned promptly and in clean condition.

Talking of extractors, Jack Armistead has a little, old extractor which is surplus to requirements.

If you are interested please have a word with Jack at any of our meetings.

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'

HONEY PRODUCTION

BULK STORAGE

When extraction is complete the honey is poured into containers - an ideal type is the food grade plastic bucket. Fill straight to within one inch of the top and next day skim off, with the uncapping fork, all the wax particles floating on top. Put on an airtight cover. Honey is hygroscopic - it takes in moisture from the air and this can lead to fermentation due to the activity of wild yeast. Fermented honey is unsuitable for human consumption and is also unsuitable for feeding to bees.

The containers should be stored at a steady cool temperature. Below 10° centigrade is ideal to prevent fermentation.

PROCESSING THE HONEY

Heat the bucket of honey in the heating cabinet which is thermostatically controlled at 45° centigrade for two days. I have converted an old fridge into a heating cabinet with two 60-watt electric bulbs at the base and thermostat fitted. If honey is overheated it will caramelise and make the honey unsuitable for sale.

After heating and while still warm, strain the honey into a ripener (bucket with a valve) through a very fine nylon cloth. Place ripener back in the heating cabinet for one day to allow all air bubbles to rise. Wash the honey jars in the dishwasher and let them drain overnight. Bottle while the honey is still warm into the honey jars by pouring the honey down the side of the jar and filling to the second thread for the lid.

PREPARATION FOR SALE

Honey for sale should bear a label which should contain the following information: the name and address of the producer, description of contents e.g. Pure English Honey. There should be no misleading representation on the label i.e. picture of certain flowers such as orange blossom.

The weight in pounds and grams should be put in 4 mm size font with one letter space between each. From 2004 we also need a "best before date" five years hence will do. Put "Prod. of U K" on and a "lot number."

THE HONEY SHOW

This is the time of year when Honey Shows are held throughout the country. The following extra few points may be of help when preparing honey for the show bench. After heating the bucket of honey strain it immediately into your ripener through four layers of micro mesh strainer and leave to stand in a warm place. I put the ripener back into my heating cabinet for one more day to allow all air bubbles to rise to the surface.

It should then be ready for bottling. Heat your jars in the oven and fill them slowly down the side of the jar as this avoids getting air into the honey with bubbles settling on the surface. Do not use the first two or three jars out of the ripener as they may contain foreign bodies. Most honey disqualified by the judge is due to foreign bodies.

KEEP IT CLEAN

Your honey will not reach the stage where the lid is removed to test for aroma and taste unless the judge is satisfied that the



honey is CLEAN. Keep the jars in rotation out of the ripener as the first batch is the best honey for show due to having higher viscosity. If any jar has low viscosity the judge will test it using a honey refractometer.

Continued on Page 3

AIR BUBBLES

You now need to stand the jars in a warm place for a few days - a windowsill will do - then check each jar for foreign bodies and if present remove using a straw. Also check that you have no air bubbles on the surface of the honey - this air scum looks like froth found around the sides of the jar and can be removed by dipping a spoon into hot water, dry the spoon and then run it around the edge.

STORAGE OF SUPERS

Now that the honey is stored away carefully, let us not forget the combs which were built at no small cost in terms of the honey consumed by the bees. Supers are a re-usable asset and deserve meticulous care and attention in preparation for winter storage. Steps should be taken to guard against the two natural predators - the wax moth and the mouse.

WET OR DRY

The supers can be stored wet, or dry (this is after being given back to the bees and taken off again when the bees have cleaned them out). I store my supers in the wet state indoors by arranging the boxes vertically with a sheet of newspaper between each one. If stored dry, then place a spoon of P.D.B. (Paradichlor benzene) crystals on the sheet of newspaper between each super.

Number the supers and place them back on the same hive the following year in order to prevent the spread of disease. Under the first super, place a queen excluder and top off the stack with a crown board. This will prevent mice from gaining entry.

From the Irish beekeeper via BEES. Somewhat modified by the Ed

THE SECRETARY SPEAKS

Well folks, here goes with my first letter as your new secretary.

The first meeting of the year at the brewery was also unfortunately the last one to be held there. Jonathan is no longer able to look after us there so we need to find another venue.

The AGM is probably going to be at Ken's house but we will confirm in Beetalk. I would like to thank Jonathan for all the meetings he has organised for us and the time he has given.

The next meeting at Holden Clough had a wonderful turnout. I don't think I have ever seen so many cars which Ann and Joe did a sterling job of parking up. I had to leave early so missed the apple cake. Then came the meeting in Yorkshire at Brian and Margaret's. Once again it was great to see so many people there because it is quite a trek. Ian could not make it to tell us about swarm control so I ended up stumbling through the "curry" method and a bit of "snelgrove". The weather was kind to us on both the days so the bees were opened up and beginners were able to have a go. We are very lucky to have such lovely places and people to look after us. Without their hospitality we would not be the great branch we are. Thanks again.

Next meeting is the Open Day at Towneley Hall. It used to be known as John Zamorski's Open Day but now so much work is done by others it really is a evrybody's day. Brian and Margaret Jackson put on a great display and for those of you who have not yet been, you must come and look. It is the chance for all of us to show the public our hobby and promote it. We usually end up with a new member or two after these days so come and help. I think I have rambled on long enough. See you at Towneley.

John Zamorski

OPEN MESH FLOORS (OMFs)

Are they here to stay? Let's go back and see what we can find out about hive ventilation. OMFs were first mentioned in BeeCraft in the early 1990s. However, before this a German named Helmut Horn published his findings in the use of OMFs in the 1980s.

His experiments were contrary to the methods used on the continent at that time, i.e. bee houses and insulated hives. Horn's method was an OMF with an insulated roof. He found that:

1. Colonies on OMFs showed slightly higher store consumption compared with solid floors.
2. Brood rearing stopped earlier in the autumn and commenced later in the spring, but that colonies developed more rapidly after a month or so, compared with solid floors.
3. Loss of colonies was less in the winter with OMFs.
4. No mildew occurred on the outer frames during the winter.

VARROA FALL THROUGH

Prof. Winstone is of the opinion that approx 30% of varroa mites that fall off bees fall through the OMF and can't get back into the hive. This is a form of varroa control in itself but needs to be used in conjunction with other treatments.

So let's look at what happens in the hive in the winter. We have a colony of bees in a cubic container. The bees give off heat which rises to the plywood crown board - which will be cold as most hives have through-ventilation in the roof. The hot air rising from the cluster is exhaled air and contains water vapour. On hitting the cold crown board it condenses, and drips could fall on the cluster causing disturbance.

LESS CONDENSATION

With an OMF and an insulated pad over the crown board there will be less condensation, the air circulating around the periphery of the brood box and the moist air will drop through the OMF.

One of the things that started me thinking about OMFs was that on the occasions that I put a piece of perforated zinc over the porter bee escape holes in the crown board, I found that every autumn the bees would propolise them up. Rightly or wrongly I have assumed that the bees did this because they did not want a through draft. It would appear that they disagree with a lot of bee books.

I am fairly new to OMFs but so far I have been impressed. I have found that on inspections in January the colonies appear in good shape and there is no moisture or mildew in the hive.

BUCKET FEEDING

I can see that there could be problems with OMFs when feeding with the bucket type feeder as there is usually some spillage, which would run through the OMF and perhaps lead to robbing. Again, if the hive was subject to attack by ants the OMF would be difficult to defend.



However, this winter I am making more

OMF floors using the epoxy resin coated mesh sold by beekeeping suppliers. In the roof I am using 1 inch thick insulation pads from builders' supply merchants. *Gordon Hartshorn (Courtesy Shropshire beekeepers and BEES)*

KNOW YOUR BEES

By George Davis (Author of Beekeeping in the Swarming Season)

It is easy managing bees in the winter, but when the spring arrives it is a different matter. Some form of management has to be worked out by the beekeeper otherwise his stocks will deteriorate.



When bees establish themselves in a natural habitat they are in a festive mood and full of energy and effort. They carry with them sufficient honey to last four or five days and with this material will immediately start to build new worker comb.

STRAIGHT COMBS

In nature bees never build straight combs. They adapt themselves to the size and shape of the cavity and, providing the bees survive the first winter, they will then consolidate their position. In the third and fourth years the bees will be at their best as far as the condition of the colony goes, but as time goes by the combs will get hard and travel-stained, full of candied honey and hard pollen. If the colony cannot move away from the old combs as they do in a large cavity and build new every year, it will end up having small patches of brood and so become weak, eventually being robbed out.

Usually a swarm will occupy the old nest before wax moth can deal with the combs. Bees will clean out almost any kind of comb with vigour but the result is very poor and it is a bad start. The bees in their turn will last a few years and reproduce themselves as nature intended before once again the cavity gets choked up. It appears to the local observer that the colony never dies out, but this is not so.

MANAGEMENT

The ordinary beekeeper does not need to have any paper qualifications to be successful. The only qualification that is necessary, is to know how bees manage themselves in nature and to understand their strengths and weaknesses. You must see to it that the brood chambers never get choked up with brood, drone cells, stores, or pollen. But on the other hand the bees must never go short of stores.

BEEES UNDER STRESS

It is not generally known that bees under stress will gather and store an excessive amount of pollen which will sometimes be stored in good clean combs that would otherwise be used by the queen. In a natural habitat this weakness is responsible for combs being put out of commission, perhaps even in the centre of the brood nest.

OVERHAUL

Here the beekeeper has the advantage over nature for he can give the colony a thorough overhaul in the spring and take out combs that in his judgement are not suitable to stay in the hive, replacing them with frames of foundation placed always on the outside of the brood nest. Experience will teach you, but it takes a good many years.

LEAVE ALONE

I know several "leave alone" beekeepers who have mastered the art of beekeeping and it is surprising what a good average take of honey they have over the years. These beekeepers are proud of their bees. But they know nothing about queen rearing, nor do they see the sense in disturbing or examining the colonies every week (as I do). They have no spare equipment or hives. How do they do it?

Continued on Page 6

SPRING CLEANING

Well, they get me to spring-clean their colonies, allowing me all the wax foundation I need. These hobbyist beekeepers add supers as necessary and notify me of a swarm. This means that I have to examine the colony to see if it is a prime swarm or not. If it is, I take it away (a bonus) and then examine again in seven days time to leave but one queen cell. Should it be a cast, I return it to the hive after removing any queen cells.

No simpler way of beekeeping can be devised and, for my friends and myself, it has stood the test of time. I have explained to these "leave alone" beekeepers that if instead of having three colonies in the garden they had thirty-three, the story would be quite different. They would then have to know something about bees, otherwise the bees would get out of control in the summer.

EVERY SEVEN DAYS

My own bees are examined every seven days from mid-May to mid-July. For me these examinations are the most interesting part of beekeeping because every queen is an individual, so the conditions in each hive are different.

I never expect or want all my bees to go through any one season without attempting to swarm; this would be asking too much, but should it occur, the stocks would deteriorate in consequence. Some queens will need and use all the combs several times in both brood boxes and quite often will make no attempt to swarm. These are the colonies that fill the supers.

Courtesy of BEES

OUR LIBRARIAN'S CHOICE-

To quote from a copy of one of our books "This book tries to present the bee-colony as a single conscious entity that is not quite subject to man but accepts man's co-operation for their mutual benefit, but still reserves the right to make its own decisions"

Many of our library books are somewhat dated, around the 1980's and one must bear in mind that new techniques and advances have been made since the books were written.

Two volumes which I suggest for you

HONEY FARMING

by R.O.B. Manley

Though the title may be off-putting, as it deals with bee-keeping big time, it is on the whole a very easy book to read and from time to time snippets of information emerge from an experienced bee-keeper, which can be stored away.

HONEY FROM SOURCE TO SALE AND SHOWBENCH.

by Jeff Rounce.

Written in 1990, this is probably the latest book we have in our collection. A pleasant read and not a big volume to wade through. It gives some interesting facts in the opening chapters and worth the effort to finish reading it to the end.

Once again a plea for unwanted volumes you would like to donate to our small collection or any older magazines that could be clipped into a folder and passed around all those eager beavers dying to seek the good news.

Brian Jackson Librarian

QUEEN'S: SWARMING: TEMPER.

All experienced beekeepers at some time or other have had difficulty in finding a queen. When at last she is found she is invariably a small insignificant insect very little bigger than a worker. In my opinion such an insect should be got rid of. Not just because she is difficult to find, this difficulty can be overcome to some extent by a spot of white paint on the thorax.

The real reason to get rid of this undersized queen, which you can bet is the mother of a smallish size stock, is that, it is an indication of her lack of ability to produce sufficient eggs of the right quality. A well bred queen should be large and good looking, with an ability to lay thousands of eggs per day to build up her colony and keep it strong. Such a queen would not be very difficult to find, even if unmarked.

The queen's ability to lay eggs at a prodigious rate, somehow has a relationship to

the propensity to swarm and to the temper of her colony.



I have never read anything on this subject, or heard anyone speak on it but I wonder if it could be that there is a pheromone on

such eggs that persuades; demands; forces the workers to attend to the eggs and brood and also keeps the workers sweet tempered and less likely to swarm. Lots of brood and eggs mean swarm time to most of us but I'm not talking of normal swarming. After all I've seen pathetically small stocks swarm. Swarming and a tendency to swarm can be two different things. I suppose I'm talking about the happiness of a stock and its temper.

Bill Ainsworth

Tired with noise, pollution,
and the same old Costa holiday?
Why not try a different Costa?
Come to Costa Genairand.

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 duvet covers - just the sound of the birds
(cockeral alarm calls) and bees (please bring your own veil)

Walking boots whilst for exploring the country-side.

Price per week 650 euros. Short stay B+B also available at 10 euros per
person a night. Interested? Need to know more? Ring 0039 0525 76169.

PESTICIDE FACES BAN

By Robin McKie and Paul Webster Paris

EUROPE'S chemical trade faces the prospect of many of its pesticides being banned in a row over the death of French bees.

The furore has triggered a full environmental campaign in Europe about pesticide use. As green activists point out, Albert Einstein once warned that 'if bees disappear, then man has only a few years to live'.

At the heart of the battle is the use of pesticides to impregnate seeds of plants such as maize and sunflowers. These chemicals are then slowly released, protecting plants from insect attacks. The pesticide - sold under a variety of names including Regent TS, Gaucho, Shuss, Jumper and Zoom - attacks insects by destroying their sense of direction, and should disappear as the treated plants grow.

But almost immediately after the chemicals were introduced 10 years ago, beekeepers reported that their bees were becoming disoriented and dying because they could not find their way back to their hives. Within a few years honey production in south-west France fell by 60 per cent. According to the chairman of the national beekeepers' association, Jean Marie Sirvins, a third of the country's 1.5 million registered hives disappeared. France now imports up to 24,000 tons of honey a year. "In areas where there is a high production of sunflower, beekeepers lose between 30,000 and 40,000 bees from each hive within a week of flowering," he said.

The pesticide companies - which include leading chemical firms such as BASF and Bayer - claimed the deaths were the result of a bee illness. Emmanuel Butstraen head of the French branch of the German multinational BASF, said its Regent TS had

been cleared for use by other European countries and had no effect on bee mortality.

Keepers claim that up 90 billion bees have died and that cases of cancers in humans may be linked to pesticide use. An investigation has been launched by a French court. The French agricultural minister, Herve Gaymard, is considering a ban on Shuss, Jumper, Zoom and others.

From the Observer news paper March 1st. Sent in by Michael Costello

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE!



At the risk of being accused of being 'ageist' I suspect that most beekeepers will remember these, so you will know what the letters stand for.

Do you know what these badges were made from? Nickel, Silver or brass? Aluminium?

SEE PAGE 13 FOR THE ANSWER

ITALIAN CONNECTION.

JENI'S JOTTINGS.

Years ago my learned Geophysicist brother had warned of extreme climate change and to be prepared! Like every thing else no-one takes any notice until it affects them. The extreme can certainly be talked of this last year, after a long very hot dry summer, the winter has made up for it in being cold, wet, with lots of snow



and it lasted a very long time. As I write (April 25th) it has only just started to improve. It's a very late Spring indeed. The poor bees!

Winter had a "sting in its tail" that's for sure. After a brief good spell in February, when I had foolishly thought "if that's Winter it's not been so bad" I found how wrong I had been.

I had been busy sorting out my next years wood supply with my wood cutting cousin, in light sunshine and warm temperatures, the bees were out and about collecting pollen and it seemed that Spring had sprung. Even the starlings were back from their Winter holidays in the cities, mimicking mobile-phones and door bells.

The warm spell was very short lived and Winter really began in earnest. Snow, snow and more snow, even pink snow. The pink snow was the result of Sahara sand being brought here by the winds and getting mixed up in the snow. So one morning when I awoke to a strange yellow light, I was rather confused because it was not time for the sun to be up and normally the light from the snow is white/blue. However I got the fire lit and the first morning jobs done before facing the snow shovelling, which I had come to expect. On opening the door I was rather taken aback as the two foot of snow had a covering of pink snow, all very pretty but very strange, I don't suppose I'll see that again! Then it was as if someone had said we can't have pink snow and sent two days of torrential rain to wash it all away before it snowed another two foot of pure white snow again.

I like the snow as a rule as it is good for the land, the water table and it kills the germs, but I have to confess this year there has been rather too much of it over a long period of time and I became tired of digging myself out.

All the time I have been anxious for the bees. The main worry was that I had left the entrances off to carry out the trial that Jake had been making. His belief being good ventilation was better for them. There was nothing I could do about changing things as the entrance blocks were all neatly tucked inside the hive roofs before the hives were tied down to the stands for Winter and with two foot of snow on top most of the time it seemed better to leave well alone.

The other worry was that they had no way of getting any pollen, much needed at this time of year. I knew that they would most likely be alright for honey stores especially in the large brood boxes.

Continued on Page 10

While tidying up the bee boxes I came across some sugar candy that had pollen mixed in as well (a free gift from one of the beekeeping firms last year). In a spell of reasonable weather I tried placing some over the feed holes on a few hives but found the bees weren't interested, maybe they were too cold or perhaps they just didn't like it.

When ever there was any sunshine (which wasn't very often) I checked the bees. E.g. a note in my diary 15th March reads first sun for ages and warm, snow melting fast, bees flying and getting pollen, thank goodness!

Sadly it was short lived as it snowed well into April. All the lovely hazel catkins went brown and useless on the trees, then the pussy willow and early blossom, such as the apricot, almond, white thorn, all frosted and the bees confined to their hives. I did manage to make an effort to help them by way of a small feed with thymol in it, for all the small hives. When the temperature rose I put a tea bag of thymol on top of the frames in all the big hives, in the hope it will get them off to a good clean start. While doing this it also gave me a chance to take stock. Losses over all, not as bad as I imagined but I don't like to lose any.

On the first proper inspection 27th April, six had died out due to the cold I presume as there were lots of stores. Three were very weak and need a further inspection. The last few days have given the bees a chance to get going and the fields have turned yellow with dandelions and every thing is growing like mad. I expect the bees will soon be strong again after their hard winter and will fill some supers for me. With that optimistic thought I wish the same for all of you.

Tante Salute, Jeni.

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)



tar bearing trees, widespread use of insecticides especially when sprayed from the air, killing honeybees and other pollinating insects.

CHALLENGES

Overcoming these obstacles fills the beekeeper's life with more challenges and uncertainty than any other way of life can offer. Despite these challenges we have got to remember that honeybees have a particular fascination for everybody including the fainthearted. They provide a form of mental therapy for the stressful office worker, they provide the crank with material for an argument, they provide the scientist with the material for study and they provide us poor humans with the example of how success can be achieved without conflict.

Furthermore they are the only species in the animal kingdom where the female is the master and where divorce is the norm (all the drones being evicted from their hives at the end of the honey season). Despite all this carry on, beekeeping never ceases to fascinate the male of the human species.

D. J. Deasy

Published In An Beachlaire - The Irish Beekeeper (Courtesy of BEES)

WHY IS BEEKEEPING SO INTERESTING?

It is difficult to give a satisfactory answer to this question. We can immediately take for granted that the challenge and uncertainty are two of the main reasons. The challenge is so great that only 20-25% of those who take up the craft succeed in making it a viable proposition.

SUPERMAN

The successful beekeeper has got the following attributes: enthusiasm, perse-

verance, knowledge, judgment, attention to detail, coolness in emergencies, analytical mind and a determination to succeed.



THE WEATHER

Possession of these attributes do not necessarily guarantee success. Beekeepers also have to contend with unsuitable weather conditions during honey flows (a factor over which we have no control), intensive systems of grassland management by progressive farmers (these kill many of the main foraging crops such as white clover), intensive tillage, land reclamation, obliteration of hedges and nec-



So where are we exactly?

PORTRAIT OF A BEEKEEPER.

A BEE IN HER BONNET.

It was my best friends birthday party that afternoon, I looked forward to bob the apple, pass the parcel and all the ice cream we could eat on such a hot June day.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING

Dad said "It's such a beautiful morning I'm going to check the bees". "Can I come Dad?" My Dad tied my veil on securely and we walked down the garden together. Peering into the hives I watched my Dad removed the frames one at a time, as the bees buzzed around us. Suddenly I realised that there were bees buzzing inside my veil! I set off at speed round the garden to escape them! Shouting and screaming at the top of my voice.

LUMPS AND BUMPS

My Dad chased me round the garden trying to get me to stand still. I kept running trying to get the veil off. Eventually Dad caught me and ripped the veil clean off my head. We could both hear the bees still buzzing in my hair so the veil was used as a swot.

That after noon at Clair's party, every one wanted to know what had happened to me, with red lumps on my neck, cheeks and round my eyes. At eight years old I was proud to be a "beekeeper" and regarded my stings as a trophy of my new hobby.

SCHOOL DAYS.

Undeterred, I claimed a hive in 'Dads apiary. Most of my friends already knew about my unusual hobby so when we had to do a talk in front of the class as part of our English lessons it was obvious what topic I would choose. I took some equipment into school along with a veil and gloves for the class to try on. My talk on beekeeping and products of the hive led me to being asked to speak in front of the whole school. It was a daunting experience in front of over 1000 pupils, but my

enthusiasm in my unique pass time, Oh! and the live bees on the exhibition frame, ensured I had everybody's attention. Suddenly I found myself being asked to give my talk on Radio Lancashire, a Sunday morning programme "Country Ways".

PAGE THREE GIRL.

The Lancashire Evening Telegraph rang and asked if they could interview me and my Dad at his apiary in Tockholes. When the article was published it was given a whole page with a photo of me in my veil holding a frame of bees. Poor Dad didn't even feature, everyone laughed that it had been placed on page three.



EARNING A LIVING,

Manchester University put an end to beekeeping. After graduating I got a job with Kodak and moved to their Head Office in Hemel Hempstead.

After commuting for two years, I was offered a job with Rebok at their Head Office at Lancaster, I jumped at the opportunity to be back home. I found a place at Samlesbury, which has quite a large garden. Even before contracts had been exchanged I'd decided to put a couple of hives beyond the apple and plum trees. My Dad gave me a WBC hive that I lovingly painted, Bob Fulton gave me some bees. I now had my very own hive of bees.

Two years later and not every thing has gone smoothly. Now with the L& NWBKA for guidance and my boyfriend Phil now a new member I have three hives. I hope we will be tapping in to the wealth of experience that there is in the L& NWBKA for many years to come.

Caroline Coughlin

EASY STOCK INCREASE

I have again this year used Wilson's excellent method of making increase from two of my most productive and otherwise praiseworthy stocks. His system does not begin "First find the queen!" The latter is not always very easy, even in April, especially for those of us whose eyesight, due to the passage of time, is not what it once was! Also, the stocks chosen are usually vigorous and often well forward.

METHOD:

1. Frames of eggs, brood of all ages and some stores, all free of bees, are placed in a brood box.
2. The box is placed above the queen excluder of the original colony for a couple of hours so that a generous compliment of house bees moves up and covers the frames.
3. The two boxes are then reversed. The queenless box is placed on the original floorboard and the main colony is put above this separated by a solid division board with entrances cut in the rim on both sides.
4. After 10 -12 days queen cells will be present and the new box can be split into two with a centrally placed bee-tight dividing board, each half having one or more queen cells and an open entrance.
5. The boxes are then reversed again, the main colony being placed back on the floor.

UNDER ONE ROOF

The end result of these manipulations is three colonies under one roof. If carried out early enough in the season (as soon as

drones are about) the parent colony hardly notices the depletion and the nuclei rapidly build up into productive colonies, especially if they are on oil seed rape. Surplus queen cells can also be utilised if required. This method is wonderful in its simplicity and does not involve finding the queen. Full details are set out in Donald Sims' excellent book "Sixty Years with Bees" - I never travel

without it! One small point: The first time I tried this method the lids of the two halves of the divided brood box were not completely bee-tight and only one queen was produced since the bees treated both parts as one colony. As always in bee-keeping, it is the mistakes which drive home the lesson learnt!

Dr. Nigel Payne

Full details are set out in Donald Sims' excellent book "Sixty Years with Bees"

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE!



Of course it is the badge by Air Raid Precautions Wardens. They were issued in 1939 and 1940. They are made from solid silver and this one was hall-marked in Birmingham. Why they should choose to use a precious metal, goodness only knows.

LOCAL HONEY AND ALLERGIES

As one who makes his living by writing about allergies and asthma I am often asked about the potential health benefits of using local honey.

WHAT IS LOCAL HONEY

Honey contains bits and pieces of pollen and honey, and as an immune system booster, it is quite powerful. I have often in talks and articles, and in my books, advocated using local honey. Frequently I'll get emails from readers who want to know exactly what I mean by local honey, and how "local" should it be. This is what I usually advise:

Allergies arise from continuous over-exposure to the same allergens. If, for example, you live in an area where there is a great deal of red clover growing, and if in addition you often feed red clover hay to your own horses or cattle, then it likely you are exposed over and over to pollen from this same red clover. Now, red clover pollen is not especially allergenic but still, with time, a serious allergy to it can easily arise.

BOTTLE BUSH TREE

Another example: if you lived in a southern area where bottle brush trees were frequently used in the landscapes or perhaps you had a bottle brush tree growing in your own yard, your odds of over-exposure to this tree's tiny, triangular, and potentially very allergenic pollen is greatly enhanced.

In the two examples used above, both species of plants are what we call amphiphilous, meaning they are pollinated by both insects and by the wind. Honeybees will collect pollen from each of these species and it will be present in small amounts in honey that was gathered by bees that were working areas where these species are growing. When people living in these same areas eat honey that was produced

in that environment, the honey will often act as an immune booster. The good effects of this local honey are best when the honey is taken a little bit (a couple of teaspoons-full) a day for several months prior to the pollen season.

When I'm asked how local should the honey be for allergy prevention I always advise to get honey that was raised closest to where you live, the closer the better since it will have more of exactly what you'll need.

EASY TO TAKE

It may seem odd that straight exposure to pollen often triggers allergies but that exposure to pollen in the honey usually has the opposite effect. But this is typically what we see. In honey the allergens are delivered in small, manageable doses and the effect over time is very much like that from undergoing a whole series of allergy immunology injections. The major difference though is that the honey is a lot easier to take and it is certainly a lot less expensive. I am always surprised that this powerful health benefit of local honey is not more widely understood, as it is simple, easy, and often surprisingly effective.

STERILIZING JARS

Honey is anaerobic, contains natural antibiotics in minute amounts (hydrogen peroxide is one of them), and therefore does not need to be stored in sterile containers. They do need to be clean, though! Commercial producers use newly manufactured jars. Run the jars (new or recycled) through the dishwasher rinse and dry cycles right before you use them to remove any dust particles (which hastens crystallization).

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.**

WARM WAY OR COLD WAY ?

The national hive being square: you have the choice of putting the brood box on to the floor so that the combs run from side to side or back to front, with respect to the entrance. Side to side is the warm way and back to front is the cold way.

Personally I don't think it makes a scrap of difference to the bees, but if you work from the back of the hive then the warm way is better for manipulation.

Bill A.

SPIES ABOUT?

When, early in WW2, MI5 searched the house of an English mother of two in the home counties. a diary for 1938 was found with the entry: 'Destroy British Queen, Install Italian.

The lady was arrested at once. Five weeks later it was discovered she kept bees at the end of the garden. But she was still interned for five months.

Dromore Buzette, via Bees

HOW TO REMOVE SELF-ADHESIVE LABELS FROM HONEY JARS.

Stand the jar in the sink and fill with boiling water from the kettle. The label can be peeled off no problem and no messing about with solvents.

From Avon County BKA courtesy of B.E.E.S.

THE SMELL OF FOOD

Honeybees can be induced to return to a food source by being reminded of its smell, Judith Reinhard and colleagues at the Australian National University Canberra reported in Nature. If the scent of a previously visited source is blown into the hive bees take off towards the site where they learned the smell though food may no longer be present. Bees use odour as well as visual clues to find their way to food sources that are often several kilometres away.

Contributed by Jane Hanscomb from The Guardian

ROYAL JELLY ITS EFFICACY.

The controversy over the use of Royal Jelly as a therapeutic agent or dietary supplement has ranged from miracle food on one side to an expensive placebo on the other. Traditional medicine in many countries geographically isolated until modern times (e.g., China & Eastern Europe), has included the use of Royal Jelly.

A paper by Dr. Alan Lakin has reviewed clinical work that has been carried out on this substance and while there is no justification to refer to Royal Jelly as a miracle cure there can be little doubt that it contains biologically active substances.

THE QUEEN

Royal Jelly is secreted in the hypopharyngeal glands of nurse bees between six to twelve days old. Worker bees are fed it for their first three days as a larva while a female destined to become a queen is fed it



throughout her development and throughout her adult life. Amounts produced in a hive are considerable: - however, colonies only need to produce amounts sufficient for population maintenance and there is little available for human use. Special treatment of hives is needed to produce large amounts of Royal Jelly. Much is produced in China to supply the 250 tons consumed by Japan annually.

Biological effects can be ascribed to known and unknown chemicals in Royal Jelly. These include antibacterial activity, anti fungal activity, glycaemic activity, male hormone activity, vasodilator activity, interferon promoting activity, and reduction of hypertension. Effects from unknown components of Royal Jelly include antitumor effects and inhibition of pathogenic bacteria.

MICE AND RATS

There are a number of reports relating to the effects of Royal Jelly on mice, rats, and other animals. The administration of the Royal Jelly can be oral or by injection. Interestingly, while some reports will show a particular effect of Royal Jelly another will show the opposite (no effect at all). Although the majority strongly suggest that Royal Jelly can influence the growth and development of animals it should be realised that many studies lack precision and have a poor experimental design. A more rigorous examination of these effects would give more reliable information.

The published papers of the effects of Royal Jelly on human subjects are few but there are claims of benefits for its use in a number of conditions including debility, fatigue, headaches, and asthma. It would seem that none of the reports would stand up to orthodox scrutiny. It is very difficult to measure conditions that cannot be clearly defined and patient assessment is subjective in itself.

Royal jelly is usually given in doses in the range 200 - 500mg/day, and has been given orally and by injection. Interestingly no adverse reports have been reported.

PLACEBO

In conclusion, Royal Jelly contains a variety of biological substances, and these are potentially capable of producing physiological effects, which may be subtle and long term, but there are worries about anecdotal claims of its effects at the low levels taken. The placebo effect is a well documented phenomenon where a positive effect is experienced by people because they believe it is doing them good and not the effect of what is being taken.

Graham Loveridge

NATURAL SELECTION OF BEES

In November I gave a talk to Wadebridge group entitled More Thoughts On Better Bees, which was duly reported in December's news letter. However, I would like to clarify one or two of the points I was trying to make regarding the continual introduction of new races or strains of bees into our environment.

MONGRELS

Actually, I started beekeeping with mongrels but tried various races and strains,



including Buckfast and New Zealand in the attempt to improve my bees. I do not regard New Zealand as great survivors. Far from it in fact, in my experience they are totally unsuited to the Cornish climate, being incredibly prolific whatever the weather and being prone to population crashes during bad spells when their demand for stores is likely to greatly exceed their supply.

NEW RACES

The conclusion I have reached is that the best way to get a good bee that does well in our conditions is not to keep introducing new races and strains. If bees are kept in an area for several generations (of bees, not beekeepers) with no new bees brought in, gradually through natural selection, a strain develops which is best suited to the local environment (and to the methods of the beekeeper).

BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD

If new bees (i.e. queens) are brought in, then new genes are introduced in which no natural selection has taken place regarding suitability to local conditions. Thus all the selection processes that have taken place are annulled and it is more or less a case of "back to the drawing board".

By working with this natural selection, we have a very good base of bees to work from, which we can further select for the qualities that we desire, probably good temper, honey production and perhaps resistance to varroa.

The best way to improve the quality of our bees is, I believe, to make the most of what we have got rather than keep bringing in new strains that are unproven in our environment.

Jo Widdicombe, Cornwall beekeepers association. Via BEES

A QUEEN EXCLUDER

A queen excluder is a metal or plastic grill (similar to the wire shelving in refrigerators) that is placed between supers. The space between the grills is .16", which prevents the queen or drones from entering the supers placed above the excluder. Beekeepers place the excluder above the super containing brood to keep the queen from going into the honey supers and laying eggs. Since pollen is usually stored close to the brood, this ensures that the supers will contain only honey. Excluders are usually put on the hives in spring before the main honey flow, and removed in fall after the last harvest of honey.

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, 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
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 & Ribbles 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
Sun 20th June	1pm	Towneley Hall	Open Day	The Society NEEDS you
Sun 18th July	2.30pm	Bill's Apiary	Bill Ainsworth	A Tour of Bill's Apiary
Sun 15th Aug	2.30pm	At Angela Moyle's	John Zamorski	Barbecue
Sun 19th Sep	2.30pm	At Ken Gaiger's	Bob Fulton	Mead and other things

NOTES ABOUT THE EVENTS

OUR OPEN DAY ON JUNE 20TH AT TOWNELEY HALL.

" . It is the chance for all of us to show the public our hobby and promote it . . "
that is a quote from the Secretary on page 3. It really is YOUR day, please come along and help to make it a real success.

At Bill's apiary you will have the opportunity to see how someone else looks after the bees. Bring your protective clothing - it's going to be hands on

The Barbecue. Always a success, we need you to bring a bottle or two for the raffle. Not easy to find but a lovely venue so do ring and make sure you know how to get there.

At Ken Gaiger's on Sept. 19th there will be all sorts of things going on but Bob Fulton is an expert on Mead and other drinks (See advert). There's bound to be a tasting or two.

If you want to know more about any of the events or how to get to the venue, please telephone either John Zamorski (01200 427661), Bill Ainsworth (01282 614015) or Ken Gaiger (01282 778887) for full details. They will be glad to help.

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.

Scrapings

A SHORT GLOSSARY

Pupa:

The immature form of the bee (following the larval stage) while changing into the adult form.

Queen:

A completely developed female bee (with functioning ovaries) who lays eggs and serves as the central focus of the colony. There is only one queen in a colony of bees. A queen's productive life span is 2-3 years.

Royal Jelly:

The milky white secretion of young nurse bees. It is used to feed the queen throughout her life, and is given to worker and drone larvae only during their early larval lives.

Super:

The supplementary wooden boxes placed on top of the hive body the expand the size of the colony, and to provide for storage of surplus honey.

Supersedure:

When a colony with an old or failing queen rears a daughter to replace her, without swarming.

Workers:

Completely developed female bees that do not have developed ovaries and do not normally lay eggs. They gather pollen and nectar and convert the nectar to honey. A worker's life expectancy is only several weeks during the active summer months. However, they can live for many months during the relatively inactive winter period.

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. She will now never leave the hive except when the colony swarms.

BEE VENOM AND IVF SUCCESS

Bee sting venom can improve infertile women's chances of having a test-tube baby, according to a new study.

Preliminary tests on seven women who had failed between three and six attempts to become pregnant; with IVF found that it improved the success rate.

Egyptian scientists who carried out the research believe that the poison stops a woman's immune system rejecting the newly transplanted embryo.

The team from Ain Shams University, Cairo, injected the women with small doses of the bee sting venom for two weeks before doctors transferred an embryo. Four of the seven women became pregnant. The findings will be presented in San Antonio this week.

A second study, due to be presented today, found that propolis, a natural antibiotic from beehives, can help women made infertile by mild endometriosis to conceive.