

Bee Talk



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

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Registered Charity

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Editorial



December 2002

NEW BEES FOR HOLDEN CLOUGH

We have obtained two new queens for the Ken Preedy Memorial Apiary at Holden Clough. They have been obtained from Michael Mac Giolla Coda in Ireland. He has a reputation for breeding extremely quiet bees. They are British Blacks and have been developed under the banner of BIBBA.

Michael is so enthusiastic about BIBBA and British Blacks, that he has persuaded a great many beekeepers around him to join in association and use nothing but his strain of bees. They now have a very large area to the West of Cork in the mountains that is now only populated with his pure strain of bees. All the association members can now raise queens that are perfectly mated to quality drones. It all seems to be very successful. It's what we are trying to do at Holden Clough but we don't, as yet, have Michael's success.

IN THE LIBRARY

I found a splendid article on the internet the other day, it seemed to have all that is necessary for a beginner. It is far to long to go into Bee Talk - four or five pages. I passed it on to John Zamorski our librarian and I am sure he would make a copy for any beginner who would like one, why not give him a try, just ask, I know he does not bite.

IF WINTER COMES . . .

The cold days are now with us, but they make propolis brittle and much easier to clean of. You will never have a better chance to get all your equipment into good clean working order. Jake keeps telling us in his letters from Italy that we never keep up with the bees.

... CAN SPRING BE FAR BEHIND

Comes Spring time the bees will be hard at it and we will need all our equipment to help them get the crop we think we deserve. Come to think of it, where is all that equipment we need? Thrown in the corner just were we left it last year all dirty and 'yackie'. (*Speak for your self! (asst. Ed)*)

How about getting stuck into that beekeeping book you have been threatening to read, but just haven't had time to get round to? Also a good beekeeping book always makes a good Christmas present for any beekeeper.

I have had a message from on high, that next year is going to be the best honey year for ages. Mind you I got the same message last year, but I feel confident! So much so that I intend to go into my hives, as soon as spring shows her face, get rid of all the miss shaped combs, and those full of drone cells and give the bees new, fresh, clean foundation. *I'll believe it when I see it (asst. Ed)* The bees will soon have it drawn out with the first honey flow.

FOR YOUR TOOLBOX

With this edition is a card for your bekeeping toolbox. It gives essential information which will enable you to work out just what is happening in your hives.

Finally, together with the officers and committee members, I would like to add our best wishes to those expressed below by Michael and Saipin

The last twelve months have not been the best of times for beekeepers in general due to varroa and the bad weather.

However, here in the Blackburn area, we would appear to be coping quite well and my Christmas wish for you all is that we will continue to enjoy our fascinating hobby and the companionship and support of the members of our association.

May we wish beekeepers everywhere a very happy Christmas and a Peaceful and Prosperous New Year.

Michael & Saipin Birt

VARROA CONTROL SIMPLIFIED

CONTROL ESSENTIAL

Varroa mites have become an almost standard part of bee colonies, like workers, drones and queens. Their control is essential if a beekeeper wishes to continue the craft of beekeeping. Only American and European foulbrood are potentially more serious, (both legally notifiable) Fortunately they are uncommon, particularly in our part of Lancashire.

The essential elements in this country for controlling mites are annual treatments with Bayvora/Apistan and the permanent fitting of open floors on all hives. With open floors up to 25% of mites will fall though, thereby reducing mite build-up. In my view open floors [whether mesh or tube] will become a normal part of beekeeping, just like queen excluders were, with movable frame hives in the last century.

SUGGESTIONS

I therefore, suggest the following method, The first thing to remember is the beekeeping year starts in August/September and varroa is now part of it. Pre-varroa it basically involved ensuring bees were strong and had sufficient food to over-winter etc.

With varroa the August treatment with Bayvora/Apistan has become essential to ensure the bees are healthy and have a long winter life expectancy. Note, the heavier your mite infestation, [greater than 1000 mites] the more important it becomes to treat at the start of August where as, below a 1000 mites, mid August should suffice.

REMEMBER

Remember a colony with approximately 2500 mites in August will have around 70 mites after 6 weeks treatment. (REMEMBER 6 WEEKS ONLY) The mite level will then probably be around 70 to 100 mites by the end of March, with open floors.

If you do nothing until the next August Bayvora/Apistan treatment, mite levels could increase to approximately 2500 mites with an open floor and up to 6000 mites with a normal floor. I believe mite levels should be kept below 1000, thereby avoiding the complication of numerous virus attacks associated with high infestation levels.

THYMOL TREATMENT

To keep mite levels low from April to August, [below 1000 mites] further intervention is required. Probably the two most straight forward methods available to British beekeepers are sealed drone brood removal and or thymol treatment. Note, a second Bayvoral/Apistan treatment within 12 months should not be considered, unless the most dire circumstances dictate, like invasion.

With sealed drone brood removal, drone foundation is inserted into the brood nest centre, when full of sealed brood, it is removed and destroyed with the trapped varroa mites. This normally takes place between late May and mid July. Thymol treatment needs caution as it can kill bees and brood if applied incorrectly. The two most important safety factors are, quantities used and daytime temperatures. A safe dose is around 8g per hive and should be applied in March and April when average daytime temperatures are between 10C and 15C. Regarding both the above treatments, more detailed articles will be published in future Bee talks.

SUMMARY

Summarizing the treatments:-

- [1] Use a open floor.
- [2] Apply Bayvora/Apistan early August for 6 weeks only.
- [3] Treat with thymol in April or remove sealed drone brood in May, June and July.
- [4] Use a combination of thymol in April and sealed drone brood removal.
- [5] Monitor mite drop to be aware of sudden increases in infestation levels due to invasion etc.

Ken Gaiger

FAQ (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

HOW DO HONEY BEES CARRY POLLEN?

Honey bees carry pollen back to the hive in a small "basket" of fine hairs on the outside of their hind legs. As the bee scrapes pollen off its body, hairs on the leg collect the pollen. It is then transferred to the basket opening with a minute comb at the mid-joint of the leg. There is even a "pollen press" as part of the joint that will pack the pollen into these baskets. When the basket is full the bee will return to the hive and unload the pollen "pellets" out of the baskets into a cell. The house bees then take care of packing the pollen down in the cell until it's needed for food for the brood.

NORTHERN BEE BOOKS

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

The postal address is:

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

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

CALLING ALL EXPERIENCED BEEKEEPERS.

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

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

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

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

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

The Good Old Days

I have in my collection of Bee Literature quite a few old magazines, which have been donated by various members over the last few years. I am going to try and give you a taste of the items I find interesting in each issue of Beetalk. Here goes with the first.

Extract from the B.B.J. of 22nd June 1905

"In the year 1892 it chanced that I saw in a local shop window a back number of the B.B.J. and bought it, never having heard that there was a Bee journal before. I read it all through more than once, and found, to my surprise, that my good wife knew something about bees, as, when quite a girl, she used to hive swarms for her aged grandmother, and did it with bare arms and face uncovered.... Then a stock of bees was secured, my stepson and self carrying it nine miles slung on an ash-pole"

This was written by a gentleman from Taunton. Collecting swarms with no protection is not such a problem but who fancies walking nine miles carrying them afterwards. Not many these days I should think. Another little snippet from the same issue is for Bill and Ken the Holden Clough men.

"French sources report on an experiment which has been carried out in France on mating queen bees with selected drones in wide mouth bottles, presumably something like a jam jar. The report says that a number of drones are put in with each queen and if mating does not take place almost immediately, then the bottle should be shaken, which usually produces the desired result. Of nine tests with queens, eight were perfectly successful"

The report goes on to say that in similar tests in this country there has not been a single success. Maybe we should try "stirred not shaken"

John Zamorski

Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.

THE ITALIAN CONNECTION *from Jeni*

SALUTI FROM GEMINANO.

As I start to write this I am looking at snow on the tops above 700 metres. Our first of the year. It seems winter has arrived early or perhaps it's only a blip!

JUST LIKE COLNE

The second half of this year has been very unsettled and it has been like living in Colne rather than Italy. After six dry months and a very hot June things changed in the third week of July when the rains came and stayed through the rest of summer and Autumn. A small disaster for the farmers as no one managed the second or third cut of hay. Most of them cutting and feeding it green so that this coming Winter they will have to buy in from the Po Valley farmers.

Most crops in our gardens were a disaster, tomatoes rotted, our potato crop only a fraction of what it normally is, beans nonexistent and only enough corn for seed next year.

The only things doing well were onions, garlic and peas. A similar story with the bees. After the early build-up and over 200 lbs of honey extracted in June we expected a bumper year, had bought a large stock of jars and were even getting orders of 100kgs from Albergo owners, 50kgs orders from some of our private customers and thinking at least the bees would pay for themselves. But with the rain and unseasonable chill over the rest of the summer our honey take was 10% down on last year (even with 15 more hives) to under 500Kgs.

This has now all sold, we just about completed our orders and wonder if there is enough left to see us and the locals through the Winter! But at least we did get some honey. We read in the agricultural mags that professional beekeepers are asking for government help nationally, crops are down 60-70% and already there is a shortage of Italian honey.

OXALIC ACID

In October we treated our 65 stocks with oxalic acid with results we have now just about got use to, the inserts in the drawers under the brood boxes brown with thousands of dead varroa, even after the Thymol treatments in spring and Summer.

ESSENTIAL OILS

We read with interest the small article by Ken Croft in the last Bee Talk on essential oils, A strange coincidence as we had just been given. A Swiss beekeeping magazine, similar to Bee Talk, published by the Societa Ticinese Di Apicoltura written in Italian, with a very comprehensive article on just this subject, also research into and the use of essential oils for varroa control. Some of them have very good results, with over 95% of varroa being destroyed.

In 1990 clove oil in very small amounts (5ml) was tested killing 47%. Also in the same year, 1% oil of sage mixed with 0.5% oil of thymol given every 4 days for 4 times killed 95%. This resulted in a commercial product called BIOLOGIC V being sold in Switzerland and Germany. Interesting the Latin name for sage is SALVIA which means -to save-. Other oils such as marjoram mixed with organic acids such as oxalic and formic resulted in 99% of varroa being killed. Interestingly the article says essential oils have between 50-100 components and as yet no one seems to have isolated the bit that works. Other oils such as turpentine mixed with camphor are still being tested with good results.

The last two pages deal with thymol and various mixes of thymol with other oils. All in all a very good article with information for us all if it gets us away from the dangerous insecticides used by beekeepers around the world. I have found out that the original article was written for a magazine called Apidologie and was in English. "Use of essential oils for the control of varroa jacobsoni in honey bee colonies". By Anton Imdorf. No internet address but perhaps Bill can get a copy for the association from Anton Imdorf, Centro Di Ricerche Apicole, F.A.M. Libefeld, CH-3003, Berna.

(You can read it on the internet at:-
<http://www.hereintown.net/~rnoel/eotreatments.htm>) *Ed.*

Now is the time of year for stocktaking, frame cleaning, hive repairs and to be ready for next season, as always it is upon us faster than we think. Strange to think that in another month here at least the hazel and willow will be starting to flower again and the bees building up quickly, will we be ready? It's also the time of year when we get the plough out, start to cut woodland for next Winters heat and cooking and try to make more sense of the hovel!

For now wishing you all the best for 2003.

Jake & Jeni.

A SPOONFUL OF HONEY HELPS THE SWELLING GO DOWN

IT'S NOT JUST TASTY ON TOAST, SAYS BARBARA LANTIN OF THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

PLEASANT TASTING

It is hard to believe that anything as pleasant tasting as honey could be good for you. But new research shows that drinking four tablespoons of honey in water improves blood antioxidants, which helps to prevent narrowing of the arteries. Weight for weight, honey contains about the same amount of antioxidants as spinach and a similar range to that in apples, bananas, oranges and strawberries.

THERAPUTIC AGENT

"It is generally accepted that honey is a respectable therapeutic agent, and there is a rapidly increasing Use by clinicians, as well as the general public," says Dr. Peter Molan of the University of Waikato, New Zealand.

The substance has been used medicinally for at least 2,000 years Aristotle referred to pale honey as being "good as a salve for sore eyes and wounds" - but it is only recently that its antibacterial, anti inflammatory and antioxidant properties have been fully documented. The hydrogen peroxide produced by enzymes in honey is the main active ingredient..

SKIN ULCERS

In one study, 59 cases of wounds and skin ulcers that had failed to respond to conventional treatment for up to two years became sterile and odourless within a week after honey was applied. In another trial, patients given a daily application of honey recovered more quickly from necrotising fasciitis - the flesh-eating bug" - than those treated with surgery and antibiotics.

LEG ULCERS

Patients who really respond are people with wounds and leg ulcers that are slow to heal because they have poor circulation - perhaps due to diabetes or atherosclerosis," says naturopath Marcus Webb, director of the Hadley Wood Health care clinic in Hertfordshire. "Sometimes, the skin is almost down to the bone and there are areas of rotting tissue. Conventional medicine treats these problems with a kind of supervised neglect: there is not a lot it can do. Dressing the wound with honey is extremely effective. In most cases, it heals completely."

ATHLETE'S FOOT

Because it draws fluid out from tissues, it creates a moist healing environment. Dressings do not stick to the surface of wounds, as they sit on a layer of diluted honey. And, as there is no growth of new tissue into the dressing, there is no pain when the dressing is changed, and new tissue is not torn away. Honey has other medicinal uses mix it with lemon and hot water to soothe sore throats and coughs, and with hot milk to aid Sleep, for athlete's foot and other fungal problems and to rehydrate dry skin.

Do Bees Sleep?

Research has been carried out in Germany into sleep patterns of honeybees.

They discovered that honeybees do sleep, on comb edges and away from brood areas. Advancing night resulted in progressive reduction of movements of the head, body and antenna, the tone of leg muscle is reduced and the bee sinks lower and lower into its abdomen.

Little is known about the biological purpose of sleep patterns of honeybees, but now that it seems substantially proved that bees do sleep, they could form excellent models for research into the function of sleep generally and especially in relation to man. Like man bees are social and have a highly developed communication system and learning capacity. They are most active in the daytime, have their rest periods in sheltered surroundings and have one main bout of sleep at night. We and the honeybees are so remote from each other in an evolutionary sense, and yet we possess several behaviour patterns in common. The longer you live the more you learn.

D J Deasy The Irish Beekeeper



KEEPING IN TOUCH

SOME PEOPLE SNIFF GLUE

So, creosote will vanish said one of the snippets in Scrapings, September issue, adding that the European Union has decided to ban this product. Never-the-less, someone will have to inform the giant chemists - Boots, of this decision. For years, one of the ingredients in their formula for catarrh pastilles has been given as creosote. Why should the European Union, ban creosote when cigarettes present a considerably higher cancer risk.

The snippet ends with, "Sorry Albert, somebody's pinched your favourite topic". However, I must reveal that I shall be waiting to catch it when that person drops it. They will not possess it for long as I can assure you the reader, that as long as there are wax moths, robber-bees or wasps engaged in their nefarious activities viz- attempting to enter hives, I shall be there, informing all and sundry of how to put a stop to their unwanted depredations.[A lick of creosote across the entrance] Ed..

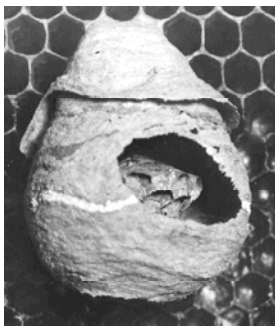
FROM THE FAMILY ALBUM

Here's an unusual photo I took some years ago. A hive to attract swarms was set up in times when swarms didn't arrive carrying, unwanted guests (varroa). just some old combs smelling of honey propolis and creosoted wood. No swarm arrived but the following spring, a queen tree wasp *Vespa silvestris* did, and after removing some cells, this queen proceeded to build her nest. When constructing their paper combs, wasps use wood fibres which, using their powerful jaws, they chew to a pulp which, when mixed with their saliva, dries into a strong, tough form of paper.

The wood they use is well-weathered and on the point of decay and this gives all tree-wasp's paper nests, a greyish colour but what is shown in the photo regarding this nest, is something I've never seen before that is the white streak running round the nest. I have no idea where this came from.

This streak is interrupted by the entry/exit hole which later would be filled in as their entry/exit

hole is always at the bottom of the nest. Despite being inside a hive, the wasp, like all tree-wasps, was also constructing a 'canopy' above the nest as an extra protection from wet weather.



TOSH & POPPYCOCK

Another snippet on page five, in the last issue made me smile. 'Bees used to protect valuables' it read. It then goes on to say that there exists a particularly savage strain of *Apis dorsata* which is the largest and most lethal of bees. Tosh and poppy-cock. When I served with the RAF in India for four years, I hunted these bees, often working with them at over thirty feet up, on a ladder or two, which I lashed to tree-branches. I wore no veil, gloves or protective clothing when handling them over that period of four years, despite a warning from the Indian Bee Journal's editorial regarding these bees, I received only one sting which I didn't consider any worse than that of our own bees. I also to a lesser degree, handled the similar-sized *Apis laboriosa* and was never stung by any of these bees. Just because they're bigger, they're not necessarily more savage. It depends on the way they're handled.

WINGLESS QUEEN

There was also a query from John (Zamorski) concerning a savage stock and a wingless queen where he says, maybe this is one for Albert Morris. Thank you for thinking that I might be able to solve this one. After several days (on and off) of thought, I find this is a tough assignment. However, I have been thinking along the following lines. Perhaps originally, there was something wrong with the queen which was causing the stock to be bad-tempered. The queen could have survived Balling but her wings and even her stumps had been removed by the bees for some reason known only to the colony after she had flown and mated? This could explain the puzzle and might be the only explanation as it is difficult to imagine that a queen and drone could successfully mate other than whilst in flight; they're not programmed for that. So it would seem that she was firstly mated in flight and then, de-winged for some reason known only to the bees all of which, could be the reason for their aggressive behaviour.

Regards to all, Albert Morris.

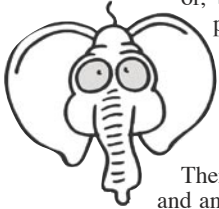
beebits

Topical Tips

Here are few tips for the time of year gleaned from various past and present masters of the craft:

A new idea for BeeTalk.

A special page where members can advertise for things they want to buy; things they want to sell; or, better still, things they are prepared to give away.



All we need is your name, phone number and details of the item.

There is no costs involved, and any arrangements, financial or otherwise are strictly between the parties concerned.

We have rung round one or two people so here are a few of items to give you a start.

John Zamorski 01200 427661

Still wants bees wax to make candles. If you can spare some, give him a ring.

Bill Ainsworth 01282 614015

How about making a solar wax extractor this Winter? I have three brand new 1 $\frac{1}{8}$ thick 21 inch x 33 inch double glazing units - ideal for the job. Also some bigger ones which would do for cold frames. Yours for the asking

Pauleen Roberts 01282 438615 / 698119

still has thirteen metal shop display stands ideal to stand a hive on. Pauline also has some 6 ft ladder like display stands which would also make hive stands. all are free. Do contact her if you think you could use them.

Bob Fulton 01254 772780

has some white boiler suits ideal for beekeepers. £5 each

Please ring Bill Ainsworth on 01282 614015 if you have for sales, wants or give always for the next issue of BeeTalk.

If you should be lucky enough to get something for free from a fellow beekeeper, How would you feel about making a small donation to the Association? - Just a though (AB, Assistant, acting, honorary, co-opted, unpaid, assistant editor) By the way, what's the significance of the elephant's head at the top of the column? It's a 'White elephant'!!

1. Don't necessarily mistake the earliest flights as a sign of prosperity since their main purpose is defecation, and a weak colony, which needs to use more food per head than a strong one to maintain the correct temperature, will also be inclined to fly more.
2. Heft your hives at regular intervals to assess the quantity of stores left. Starvation shouldn't occur in winter if the bees were adequately fed in the autumn, but at the beginning of spring the daily demand for food is very heavy, especially if, an early mild spell prompts the queen into laying. So as winter draws to an end be ready to provide syrup (1 pt. water/ 1 lb. sugar) with a contact feeder if necessary.
3. Don't go poking about in the hives too early. The bees know instinctively that the survival of the colony depends on the protection of the queen until such time as brood-rearing has begun in earnest, and if they are disturbed too early they may ball the queen in a clinging mass and stifle her.
4. Look out for signs of health. Pollen going in will indicate the presence of a queen. A loud buzz should be the response to a rap on the outside of the hive. A closer eye should be kept on hives in the absence of these signs.
5. Get your equipment ready for the coming season. Carry out repairs. Prepare floors, boxes and frames in readiness for spring cleaning and replacement of defective comb. I made a vow I'd do all this in time this year. I still haven't started.
6. Make a rough plan of campaign for the coming season, i.e. decide how you will provide replacement queens, increase the number of colonies, and control swarming??

BEGINNERS PAGES

HANDLING BEES

Some strains of bees are, by nature, overly defensive. Other strains are comparatively docile but if subject to persistent poor handling a change in their "demeanour" will result. Whilst the former can be rectified by requeening, the latter should not be allowed to occur. Whether beginner or seasoned, all beekeepers need ensure that the best possible care is taken to foster amenable bee stocks. we know about the defence mechanisms of the honey bee when bees perceive that their nest is threatened, they will respond very quickly and vigorously.

DRESSING CORRECTLY



A problem arises when beekeepers continue to wear gloves throughout their lives. This gives rise to a feeling of security as the handler is immune to attacks and as a result, carelessness creeps in. Bees are mishandled and squashing, jarring, etc occur. Inevitably an aggressive strain of bee will develop and the responsibility for that rests entirely with the beekeeper.

GLOVES OFF

Beginners however should start by wearing full protective gear; veil, gloves and rubber boots. Then, as experience and confidence is gained, gloves can be dispensed with. There will be exceptions to the "gloves off" guidelines, for example in cases where there is a requirement to handle strange bees or to remove the honey harvest. Err on the side of caution. Handling bees is an acquired skill. No one becomes an expert overnight; it takes time and patience. Many beekeepers do it so well that they do not need to wear gloves and there is no reason why, with perseverance, you cannot become one of them.

MANIPULATIONS OF THE COLONY

It is surprising the number of times that hives have been opened only for the beekeeper to discover that some essential tool or piece of equipment has been forgotten. In this regard, anticipate what you need and take it to the apiary with you. There should be no necessity to start a manipulation or inspection and then have to close the hive with the task unfinished.

AVOID THUNDER AND SHOWERS

You may find that an empty nuc box comes in very handy to put the first couple of frames in when they are removed from the hive. So too does a second manipulating cloth to cover it. The ideal time to carry out inspections is at noon or during the early afternoon. The temperature should be above 16 degrees. By necessity, other times would be in the evenings, i.e. when supers have to be added or a feed provided. Sunny weather is the best. Avoid showers and thunder or opening hives, even for short periods, when the temperature is below ten degrees Celsius.

Light the smoker and give it time to kindle properly. One of the most effective and cheap fuels is dried grass. Always approach the hive quietly. Work from the rear in order not to cross the line of vision of the inhabitants or obstruct foragers leaving or entering. Give two or three gentle puffs of smoke across the entrance, never into it. Allow a couple of minutes for the smoke to take effect. If too much is used it will be counter productive and instead of putting the bees temporary off guard it will have the opposite effect.

THE ROOF

Turn the roof upside down when it is removed. It will be very handy to place the first super on. Gently prise up the corner of the crown board and give a couple of puffs of smoke under it. When removing the crown board, do not attempt to lift it off cleanly, there may be a frame stuck to it with propolis. Twist it gently sideways until it is free. This will avoid a frame becoming loose from the crown board and dropping back into the chamber. When carrying out short manipulations on fine days, you may find that when the crown board has been removed, the amount of smoke can be limited. The bright warm sunshine has a very calming effect on bees.

DEFENSIVE

For a good measure as to how defensive the colony is, check how they react when the crown-board is removed. If they are going about their business as normal they may be fairly docile. If however, there are rows of little heads peering above the "parapet" of the frames they are well and truly alert and smoke may have to be used to keep them down.

STACKING SUPERS

When stacking supers ensure that bees do not get crushed in the process. . The queen excluder is next to be removed. Generally it will be well and truly stuck to the top of the frames, inviting itself to be pulled free. Resist the temptation and twist it sideways to release it.

The queen may be located on the underside of the excluder. Tilt it to one side and check if she is there, if so return her to the middle frames where the brood would normally be.

During manipulations, a cloth should be used to cover frames in the brood box that are awaiting inspection. The normal environment in the hive is dark and the cover will keep the bees down. Manipulating cloths should be of an even texture, not woolly which bees will cling to or get stuck in. Linen or such is good but not nylon or other static generating material.

WARM CONFIGURATION

If the frames are arranged in the warm” configuration, i.e. running lengthways parallel to the entrance, the dummy board should be at the rear of the brood box. It should always be the first item to be removed. The design concept of the brood box should allow additional space for a dummy board. When removed, the extra space provided will create sufficient room to remove the first frame without crushing bees. There are so many botched up brood chambers that do not provide space for the dummy board. In respect of preventing injury to bees, the dummy board is without doubt the most important piece of equipment ever invented.

DON'T CRUSH THE BEES

When removing frames, the angular end of the hive tool should be inserted between the lugs of the first and second frames. A gentle prising movement will ease the first frame towards you. Alternate the movement between left and right lugs to ensure the frame comes free evenly.

Lift the frame clean out by holding it with both lugs. Avoid crushing bees through rubbing the side bars of the frames against the internal hive walls. Carry out the inspection of the frame and when completed, place it in the nuc box and cover it with the spare cloth. You can put two or three frames in the nuc box. Then you will have plenty of room to handle the rest of the combs. Replace the frames from the nuc box in the same order they came out of the hive.

HOLD YOUR BREATH

When inspecting a frame, avoid exhaling your breath on the bees as the carbon dioxide causes a very strong reaction from them. Never try to remove a frame from the centre of the hive unless there is sufficient space to provide adequate clearance. Ensure there is no danger of bees being injured by large outcrops of comb that may have been built on the lower regions of a frame. The injuries are caused when bees are crushed between the outcrop of comb and an adjacent frame.

CLOSE IT QUIETLY

When replacing frames after an inspection, do so in the same sequence in which they were removed. It is best not to slide a frame along the runners in order to close it up to the next frame. Doing so will trap bees between the side bars of two frames. Lower it down vertically, keeping it in close contact with the side bars of the adjacent frame. When the inspection has been completed, close the hive quietly.

SUMMARY

If at all possible, avoid arousing the defensive senses of the bee. That means no knocking, jarring or any other vibration that will alert their sense of touch.

- 1 Don't make sudden movements that will draw their attention.
- 2 Deodorants, perfumes, etc will arouse their defences and should not be worn during manipulations.
- 3 One of the most effective ways of arousing their defence mechanisms is to crush other bees or incur a sting yourself.
- 4 The inspection of a colony is a real test of the beekeeper's ability, not only to carry out a manipulation with competence but also to improve the temperament of the inhabitants.

.....
: Nothing that grieves us can be :
: called little: by the eternal laws :
: of proportion a child's loss of a :
: doll and a king's loss of a crown :
: are events of the same size. :
:.....

BEEHIVES ARE LIKE SUPERMARKETS!

AT LEAST IN SOME WAYS

I am sure many beekeepers will see similarities between the beehive and human societies but how about the comparison between the hive and the supermarket ? How about this.

RECEIVERS

We all know that forager honey bees collect nectar but did you know they don't put it directly into the cells?

The nectar is transferred to receiver bees. These receivers are younger bees who have not yet started their foraging career. They extend their tongues and suck up the nectar from the forager and then transfer it to the cells, adding enzymes from glands in their own body in the process

This direct transfer from one bee to another means that each forager has to have a receiver and visa versa. If there is no 'partner' one or the other has to wait until one becomes available,

CHECK OUT

That's where we come to the supermarket bit. You are the forager and the check out is the receiver. You can't unload your trolley until a check out is available and the check out has to wait until someone with a trolley arrives at the till.

In both the beehive and the supermarket, maximum efficiency is achieved when the two groups (foragers and receiver, shoppers and check outs) are in balance.

THE TROLLEY QUEUE

In the supermarket they *try* to achieve this balance by opening up more check outs when it gets busy - this is usually down to a manager, supervisor or even check-out cashier who notices the growing queues. Francis Ratnieks and colleagues have done some research on this subject and discovered that rather than the receivers (check outs) being the ones who controlled the queues, it was the foragers (shoppers).



DANCING

If there was a delay in being able to find a receiver, the forager performs a 'tremble' dance away from the main receiving area which has the effect of recruiting more receivers.

If, on the other hand, receivers are idle, the forager performs a 'waggle' dance which has the effect of encouraging foragers to 'go forth and forage' and at the same time directs them to a specific place where nectar is available.

SUPERVISORS

If it were a human organisation and not a bee colony, there would probably be a gaggle of managers and supervisors monitoring the time taken for individual foragers and receivers to find a partner. The information would be fed into a computer translated into a memo and distributed to the staff. By which time the situation would probably have changed or even reversed

WITHOUT A MANAGER

In a honey bee colony, however, such central control is impossible because bees have no way of collecting and analysing the necessary information. Instead the bee colony works on a de-centralised basis without a manager.

Instead, each forager makes her own her own decision as to whether to recruit more foragers or receivers based on her own experience of the delay in finding a receiver.

SELF INTEREST

Compare that to your own experience of human organisations where there often appear to be more supervisors and managers than there are workers. Perhaps the difference is that the bees are working for the good of the colony rather than their own self interest.

Have you seen Jake's advert for a fabulous Italian Holiday on the inside back cover?

BEES CAN THINK

Bees can use their reasoning powers to get to the nectar, according to an international team of scientists.

In tests, the bees learned which signs led the way to something sweet and which did not, the researchers report in *Nature Today*.

This discovery will have set the world of animal behaviour abuzz. Vertebrates - and especially primates - were thought to be the only creatures that could hold in their heads the concepts of 'the same' and 'different'. Now the team from France, Germany and Australia say their research shows "that higher cognitive functions are not a privilege of vertebrates".

HOW BEES NAVIGATE

Bees are the cooperative go-getters of the insect world. The workers wake up, set off, search, find a source of nectar, return, tell their colleagues where the best supplies are, then find their way back. Researchers have watched noted and experimented for years to discover how bees navigate and communicate.

Martin Giurfa of the Free University of Berlin, noted from earlier studies that bees can "interpolate visual information, exhibit associative recall, categorise visual information and learn contextual information" - in other words, do what in a human would be evidence of thinking. So they set the bees a test. They trained the honeybees *Apis mellifera* to recognise particular colours and grating patterns, using a Y-shaped maze. In one trial, the bees saw either blue or yellow as they approached the entrance to the maze. When they got to the Y junction, they saw that one turning was labelled blue, the other yellow.

MENTAL GYMNASTICS

They quickly learned that the sucrose reward was to be found down the turning that had the same colour code as the entrance. In further experiments they found that the bees could perform the same mental gymnastics with similar and different grating patterns. And when colours were swapped for odours - lemon and mango - they saw the same outcome. The bees could tell sameness from oddity in the abstract. They could think!

TIM RADFORD, Science Editor, The Guardian

COLONY DEFENCE

Honeybees have many predators and are alert to intruders within the precincts of the apiary.

During the active season guards will normally patrol the entrance to the nest and react to animal odours, rapid or jerky movements, vibrations, woollen or nylon materials, breath, deodorants, dark attire etc. Away from the precincts of the hive reaction is very rare unless provoked by releasing the chemical isopentyl acetate from the sting gland, a guard provides a warning of danger to other bees in the vicinity. As the bees' sting is barbed, it cannot be withdrawn from most animal hides and in an attempt to free itself, the sting chamber is torn from its body. The pump, which accompanies the venom sac, will continue to operate for a few seconds. Isopentyl acetate also escapes into the atmosphere and has the effect of drawing other bees into the attack.

Invaders of the nest, such as bees intent on robbing or drifters, undergo a "scent" test to ascertain whether or not they are from the colony. If they fail the test or refuse to submit to further examination, they will be attacked and killed. A much less known alert pheromone, 2-heptanone plays a significant part in the defence of the nest's entrance. It is secreted from the mandibular glands of the bees and when robber bees are being physically examined and resisting, the guard can daub the chemical on the invader. This renders any further time consuming examinations unnecessary as the intruder is clearly identified to the entire colony.

from the Irish Beekeeper

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE . . . !



About a foot long with metal blade and hook this would have been in many a Lancashire cottage in the early 1900s. Those of a sensitive nature won't like this!

Answer on page 16

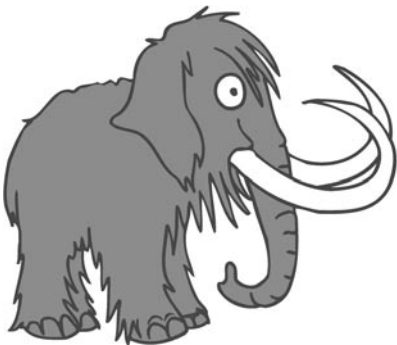
80 MILLION YEAR OLD BEE

Several years ago, the perfectly preserved body of a bee, encased in amber, was put on display in the Museum of Natural History in New York City. It was carbon-dated to be at least 80 million years old, but may be up to 135 million years old.

The little bee, was probably caught in a glob of tree sap while out on a mission of gathering the sticky fluid for the production of Propolis. Propolis is the antiseptic or antibiotic that bees produce to keep their colonies protected from invasion by disease. It is believed that they keep their nests more sterile and free from bacteria than a modern hospital.

EFFICIENCY

The oldest continuously living species on earth has not survived all extinct earth dwellers' by accident. The honey-bee is the embodiment of efficiency and ingenuity. Efficiency, in having the most effective social and production-oriented society ever known, and ingenuity in having the most masterful research and development program ever conceived.



GOING, GOING, GONE. . .

Woolly mammoths died out, dinosaurs disappeared, but the bee has outlasted them all, and continues to flourish today even stronger than ever. As mentioned, this is no accident.

For over 80 million years the bee has been attacked by all variations of threats from viruses, fungi, bacteria and a host of little and large pests. Nothing has been able to interrupt the bee's survival plans. It just keeps on keeping on, providing us with the fruits of their labours, research and development.

THE BEE LAB

Imagine, for a moment, one little section of the hive, designated for R & D. You open up a tiny little door, peek in to see thousands of busy bees, dressed in tiny white lab coats, going about the business of developing new anti-biotic like prescriptions that quickly act to neutralize the newest form of drug-resistant bacteria to attack their fellow bees. The formulae for these unique remedies are immediately communicated to the worker bees and synthesized into their food and germ-fighting products, to eliminate all threats to their existence.

IT WORKS !

Man and other animals, have harvested the products of the beehive, for their pleasure and very survival. The fact that bees have existed continuously for over 80 million years, tells us that whatever they are doing.....works! There's a lesson in this experience, one that should be taken seriously.

The products of the bee hive, POLLEN, HONEY, PROPOLIS and ROYAL JELLY, may just be the most potent combination of nutrients ever developed since time began. For the sake of brevity, I won't get into descriptions and studies of these products, but you may want to do this in order to see what you may be missing.

The most amazing little creature on this great earth of ours is the bee. The "ultimate" survivor. What can "WE" learn?

Bill and I wondered about Albert's use of the word 'Poppycok' in his article on page 6. Well, it comes from the Dutch word *pappekak* for soft faeces. The word was presumably taken to the USA by Dutch settlers; the scatological associations were lost when the word moved into the English-language community.

The first half of the word is closely related to our pap for infants' soft food; the second half is essentially the same as the old English cack for excrement; the verb form of this word is older than the noun, and has been recorded as far back as the fifteenth century.

If that's poppycock we daren't imagine what Tosh means (Ed.)

BEE WARNED

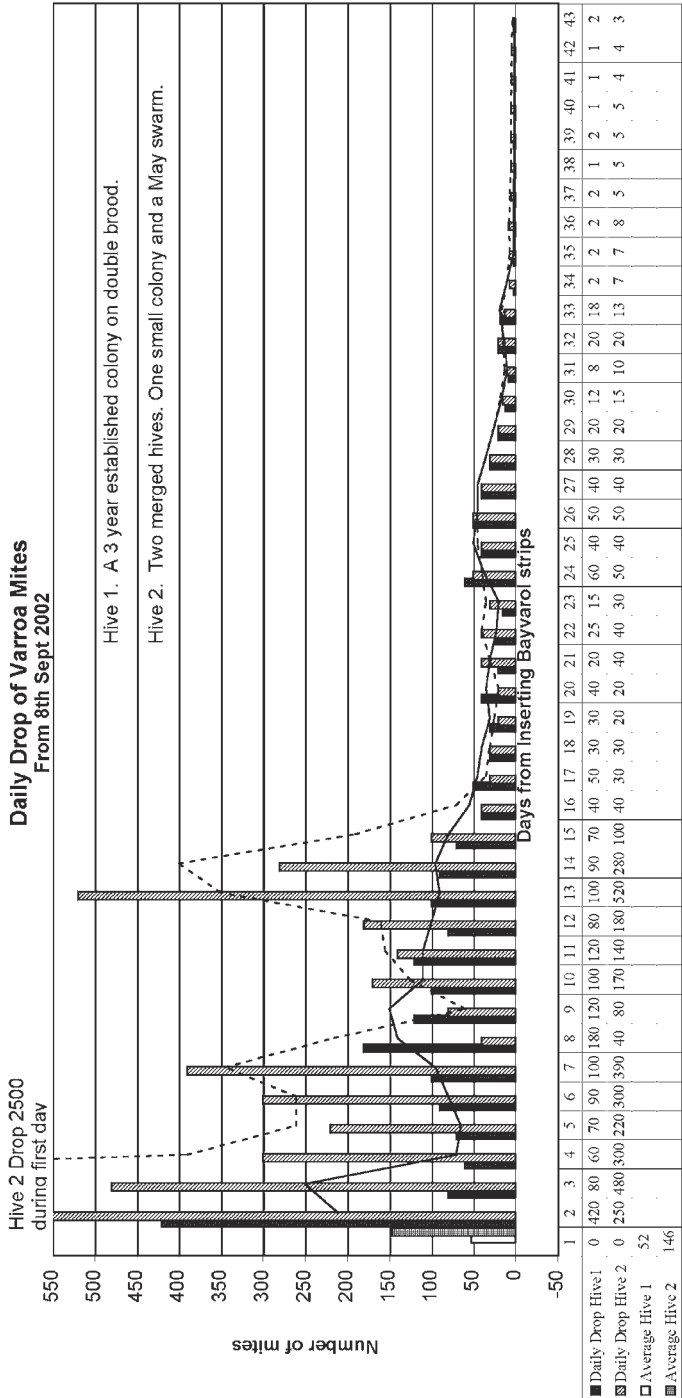
Barry Mellers has two hives at home. For various reasons, they have had to be neglected, but they were plodding along OK on there own, there was no sign of disease or more especially not any sign of varroa.

Aug/Sep came along, and Barry wasn't feeling to good, health wise, so, being a good samaritan I volunteered to put the necessary Bayvoral strips in the two hives. At the same time I put open mesh floor boards under too. Of course it wasn't necessary there was no sign of varroa, but better to be safe than sorry.

Barry said he would put the varroa inserts under the new floor boards just to see what was going on. The very next day he counted 2500 dead mites on one of the inserts ,yes 2500 from a hive with no outward sign of anything untoward.

Stung into action Barry kept a record of the daily mite drop and made up the graph shown. You can see the rocketing of the daily mite drop as the bee brood emerge, bringing the newly hatched varroa with them. It makes one think. You can't be to careful.

Bill Ainsworth.



BRANCH HONEY SHOW

Held at Castle Cement 6th Oct.2002.

Thanks to the efforts of John Zamorski, we once again held our major event of the year in this superb venue which suits our needs admirably.

The number of entrants this year were 16 in total, exhibiting 73 entries. The new category of wax craft exhibits prove very popular and some very good work was shown. Due to a very poor season for honey production not as many entered the honey classes, but this was more than rectified on the cake section.

The judge for this year was Mr. Dennis Atkinson and our guest judge was Mrs. Albert Morris who did an excellent job and our thanks go to them both.

It was very pleasing to see the enthusiasm of our new members who entered for the show and it seems our association is assured of a successful future.

My thanks go to Angela and Bridget for helping on the day and to John for organising the venue.

Pauline Roberts Honey Show Sec..

WINNERS OF HONEY SHOW

1 Light Honey	Mrs. B Beattie
2 Dark/Med	Mr. J Zamorski
3 Heather	Mr. D Barrett
4 Granulated/Set	Mr. D Barrett
5 Novice	Mr. & Mrs. Leaming
6 Frame	Mrs. B Beattie
7 Cake of bees wax	Mrs. B Beattie
8 Honey cake	Mr. B Jackson
9 Honey fudge	Mr. & Mrs. Helliwell
10 Honey dessert	Mr. B Jackson
11 Mead	Mr. R Fulton
12 Photographic print	Mrs. B Beattie
13 Wax craft product	Mr. J Zamorski

Challenge Cup	Mrs. B Beattie
Ken Preedy Memorial Cup	Mrs. B Beattie

AGM

The AGM was held at Samlesbury Brewery on Wed. 6th of November.

There was a good turn up of members, (was it the free beer that added to the attraction?.) The business was gone through without any problems, every one seemed to take a keen interest in the discussions, and most joined in.

The officers and committee, were re-elected as per last years list, with one addition to the committee. John Tracy, a new member, who has not yet learned to keep quiet on these occasions., muttered something, and was duly proposed, voted for, and elected to the committee.

Joking apart his ideas and opinions as a new bee-keeper will be most welcome.

The only down side to the meeting was the Treasurers announcement that due to an increase of £2.80 in the Capitation Fee etc. to the BBKA and also ELBKA, our individual subscriptions will have to be increased (Details on page 16).

It must be pointed out that the Capitation Fee etc. to the BBKA and the ELBKA now totals £13.20 per member (20p more than we actually pay in subs). Our brilliant Treasurer (Ken Gaiger) runs our Blackburn district on donations, gift aid and other odd bits that he manages to scrape together. So well done Ken!

Committee members approved At the AGM for the year 2002 CONTACT DETAILS

Michael Birt	Chair	01254 814088
Bill Ainsworth	Vice Chair	01282 614015
Angela Moyle	Hon. Sec.	01200 445398
Ken Gaiger	Hon. Treas.	01282 778887
Pauline Roberts	Honey Show Sec	
	Home No.	01282 438615
	Work No	01282 698119
John Zamorski	Librarian	01200 427661
Robert Bradshaw	Member	01254 261216
David Bush	Member	01200 428152
Barry Mellers	Member	01282 612985
Joe Wrigley	Member	01200 447621
John Tracy	Member	01204 394558

FOUL BROOD DISEASE

I have been prompted to write this article mainly as guidance to our many new beekeepers. However the recent limited outbreak of foulbrood around Coventry, and now an outbreak in Bolton means none of us can afford to be complacent.

I understand the source in Bolton has been identified as old contaminated combs from an outbreak many years ago. Hopefully this is now fully under control.

TWO DISEASES

There are two Foul brood diseases, namely American Foul Brood (A.F.B.) and European Foul Brood (E.F.B.). Both are notifiable diseases under the Bee Disease Control Order 1982. I.e. the Regional Bee Inspector must be informed and he will arrange for the appropriate control measures to be instigated.

LEAFLETS

American Foul Brood is the far more serious of the two diseases, but European foul Brood is more widespread in this country. However the spores of American Foul Brood do remain active for many years in both old comb and honey products.

Leaflets produced by the Central Science Laboratory (C.S.L.) give first class guidance on recognising and preventing these two brood diseases.

LIKELY SOURCES

The most likely sources of contamination for American Foul Brood are:-

- (a) Previously contaminated comb that mist destruction by burning.
- (b) Honey products, particularly from abroad where American Foul Brood is a widespread problem, controlled by antibiotics etc.. Honey from abroad containing American Foul Brood spores, though harmless to humans, is probably the most common cause of A.F.B. in this country.

Summarising, to minimise Foul Brood problems:-

- (1) Avoid old brood combs, particularly from outside the area.
- (2) DO NOT feed other peoples honey to your bees, particularly from abroad.

Ken Gaiger

MEMBERS SERVICE

Bayvoral £3.10 per pack

Thymol crystals £2.20 per 100 g

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

See Ken Gaiger for these bargains
phone. 01282 778887.

Library. There is an extensive range of bee books etc. that may be borrowed. Our librarian, John Zamorski brings some with him to our meetings. Contact him on 01200 427661 for special requests.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

DATE	TIME	VENUE	ORGANISER	SUBJECT
Wed 12th Mar	7.30pm	Samlesbury Brewery	Ken Gaiger Bill Ainsworth	Preparation for new season
Wed 19th Mar	7.30pm	Hillcrest Tea Room Mitton Whalley	Angela Moyle John Zamorski	The Annual Dinner Bring your own wine

NOTES ABOUT THE EVENTS

March 12th. Ken and Bill will try to inform you how to get your bees up to speed for the new season with some ideas on the easiest and best ways to control the dreaded varroa. They don't think we did as well as we might have done, last year.

March 19th. The annual dinner. The cost will be £13 and we would like names of members and guests as soon as possible. Please contact Angela on 01200 446398. You can pay on the night. Don't forget to bring your own drinks - there is no corkage charge.

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE !!

Place an advert in BeeTalk and contact beekeepers World Wide (Well!, Jake's in Italy, Bridget's in Montserrat and Albert's somewhere off Manchester Road)
Full Page £14 Half Page £8 Quarter Page £5
(It helps to pay the postage on BeeTalk)

From The Treasurer

Subscriptions for 2003 need to rise due to increases in Brood Disease Insurance (B.D.I.) and capitation payments to the B.B.K.A. also County funds. Part of the B.B.K.A. increases due to the extra cost of public liability insurance and B.D.I. Rises are due to increases in incidents of Foul Brood.

The extra cost to the branch is £2.80 per member, but 80p will be absorbed by the branch. (the monies coming from Gift Aid).

The new full membership rate will be £13.00 and £2 for each additional family member. Associate membership remains at £4.00.

The new 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

INFORMATION ABOUT 'BEETALK'

Planned Publication Dates:

March 2003 June 2003
September 2003 December 2003

LATEST TIME FOR COPY IS TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE MONTH OF PUBLICATION.

Please contact Bill Ainsworth, 296 Scotland Road Nelson BB9 7YS on 01282 614015 as soon as you can. Good, crisp photographs or line drawings are always welcome

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE . . !

I'm told that in the early 1900's, many people kept a pig in the backyard. When it came time to 'bring home the bacon' the pig would be slaughtered in the same back yard (The squeals could be heard for miles!). The carcase was placed in the zinc bath and scalded with boiling water. This scraper was used to remove the bristles.

And the hook? You really won't like this bit! The hook was used to rip off the trotters.

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'

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.

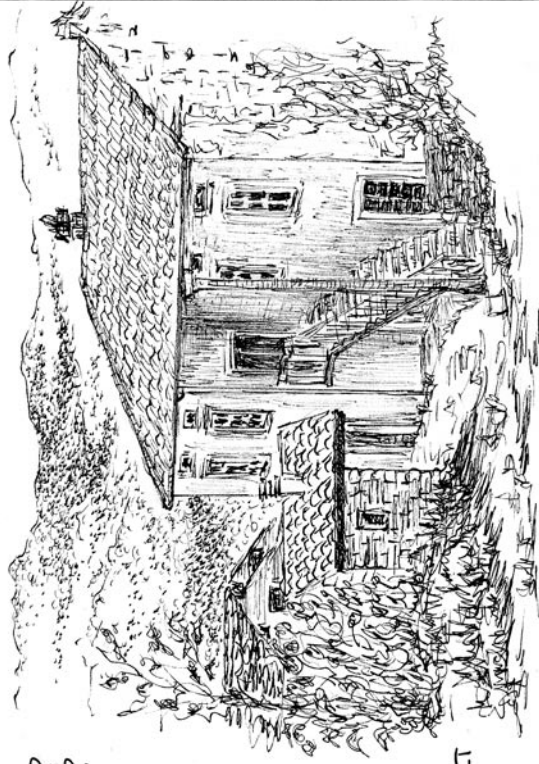
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