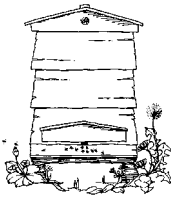

Bee Talk

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What's in this month's Beetalk

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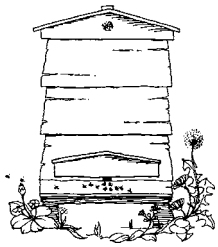

Editorial

February 2001

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HAPPY NEW MILLENNIUM

A happy and prosperous beekeeping in 2001. It doesn't seem five minutes since we were celebrating the new Millennium - or is this year the beginning of the Millennium.

I was speaking to the bees about it and they just did not seem to care, after all they have been around, more or less as they are now, for thousands of millennia.

SPELL CHECKING

Albert Morris takes us to task for bad spelling see - Page 5 - I refute the allegation! My computer's spell checker is as good as any ones. It's my grammar that's at fault I don't know my were from my where or my there from my their. Sorry but I was (educated?) in the war years and Borstal was pretty bad and so was my Grandma.

FAR FLUNG CORRESPONDENTS

It is grand to hear from our very own correspondents again, especially our far flung ones.

I like the way Jake puts it so just to repeat, and as Editor to get in first, let us all look forward to a new season ***with*** the bees.

THE DINNER

Angela Moyle and John Zamorski have arranged this years Dinner at Mitton near Whalley on the 14th. March it is to be a private affair no one there but us lot. Bring your own wine - there will not be a corkage charge! The Food is great! SEE THE NOTICE ON PAGE 11.

SUBSCRIPTION CORRECTION

The Treasurer corrects me regarding the subscription list in the last issue of Bee Talk. It is to difficult to explain! - just take it from me, the list in this issue on PAGE 12 is correct.

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE

Arthur Bickerstaffe, our assistant editor, has a huge collection of odd things acquired over many years working in the antiques business.

He has agreed to photograph some to put into Bee Talk so we may put our wits against him as just to what they are, with the answers on the last page sort of thing.

The one in this issue is just to get us started. I remember gas mantles and remember breaking them by sticking the taper in to them whilst trying to light them. I must be getting old - correction I am getting old.

THE ITALIAN CONNECTION

EARLY JANUARY Saluti once again from us both in Geminiano

UP AND DOWN

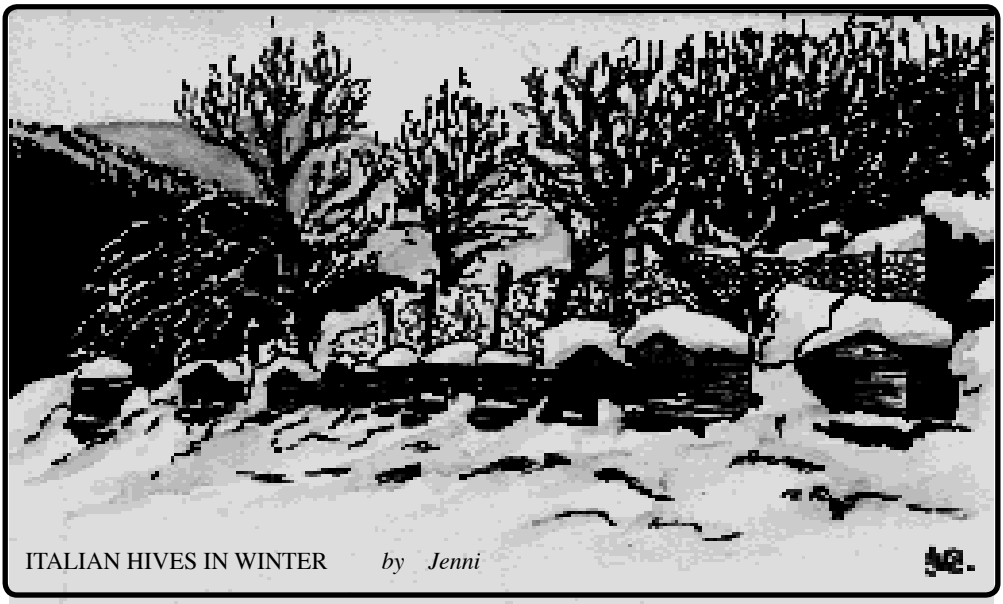
On the 11th of December it was warm enough for shorts and tee shirts. We saw the bees working Primroses, Coltsfoot, Hellebores and late (early?) dandelion's. Pollen from these arriving in all the hives. So it was a shock when a week later the temperature plummeted to minus 8deg.C. Two days of snow over the festive season and then 48 hours of rain when it was still minus3deg.C.

This caused a large build up of ice an inch thick on every thing and we started to worry about the trees as thy began to shed small branches. Two years ago when this happened our roads were blocked for days as whole trees crashed to the ground with the weight of the ice and we had to spend days with the chainsaw clearing up in the woods. But this time in the space of an hour the Sirocco arrived from North Africa bringing some of the Sahara with it, the temperature was back up to plus 18deg.C the snow and ice disappeared in hours. yesterday pollen from the first hazel catkins was being brought home which always marks the start of our beekeeping year.

PROPOLIS

It has been the time of year when our Propolis has been in demand again as colds and influenza spread. We have used it since starting to keep bees 25 years ago when it was considered an alternative medicine, but the last few years have seen a renewed interest and we are even seeing propolis products on the shelves in the chemist shop in Bordi. The use of propolis dates back to at least 300 B.C. when its qualities as a medicine were made use of. It soon found its way into folk medicine.

However, apart from some studies made at the beginning of the last century most of the work on composition, pharmacological properties as well as preparations from propolis has been carried out only in the last 30 years. Many of the reports dealing with propolis are not accessible to most readers except as abstracts, because the majority of published work is in the Eastern European journals. Even so with the help of the International Bee Research Association we have managed to put together quite a large amount of these abstracts. *cont. on page 3*



ITALIAN HIVES IN WINTER *by Jenni*

ALCOHOL

In Colne we had trouble getting hold of alcohol strong enough to dissolve our propolis, as well as costing a fortune when we did find it. (We tried whisky but found propolis would not dissolve in it).

But no such trouble in Italy. Ethyl alcohol, 95% proof can be bought in any super market and even the local corner shop in Bardi sells it at a reasonable price.

BETTER THAN A FLU JAB

This we place in stock bottles with propolis and as we need it, it can be decanted into smaller bottles, we make a point of having a spoonful when we go to Bardi and when we get back, and always after being in contact with someone with a cold!

It is a little like liquid dynamite and if the propolis does not kill the virus then the 95% proof alcohol certainly will!

A normal bee colony will collect about 150/200 grm. of propolis a year so it is quite easy for us all to put a little to one side for ourselves.

It would be possible for us to fill quite a few Bee Talks about our passion for propolis, it's use by bees, composition, biological activity, antibacterial and antifungal activity etc., etc., so perhaps more in the future before I get too boring.

MORE ALCOHOL

One of our next rainy day jobs will be to get the 'Still' going as we have three demijohns (45 litres each) to distil, one of wine not fit for the table, one of fermented plums and one of mead like liquid. After uncapping last Autumn I washed all the cappings with warm water after draining off the honey and put the liquid with a little yeast. This has fermented strongly over the last few months and is ready to go through the still (twice) to see what comes out at the other end. I will let you know the results. Meanwhile a question for readers. If distilled wine is called grappa, plums slivovich (sic) what is distilled honey called? I don't seem to be able to find a name for it anywhere.

AND WORK

We are still behind with all our work on the land. The plough hasn't been touched and apart from some spade work in the small gardens around the house we don't think we will ever catch up this year. The problem being of course all the rain over Autumn and early winter. At least the grass should grow well this year! We have been getting some work done on the 'hovel', a new floor going in the older part of the house and the pointing on the Cantina. Soon it will be time to start putting together more supers as we were very short last year. So for now a belated Anguri for 2001 to you all as we look forward to a new season with the bees. Saluti Tutti. *Jake & Jenni*

HONEY CAKE

Cheese-Frosted Honey and Almond Carrot Cake

CAKE

* 1 1/2 cups honey
* 3 eggs
* 3/4 cup melted butter
* 1 1/2 cups grated carrot
* 3/4 cup chopped almonds
* finely grated rind of an orange
* 2 1/4 cups plain flour
* 2 1/4 teaspoons baking powder
* 1/2 teaspoon each ground nutmeg, all spice, and cinnamon
* pinch salt

FROSTING

* 185g cream cheese
* 1/4 cup butter
* 1/4 cup honey
* finely grated rind of an orange
* 1/2 teaspoon vanilla essence

To make the cake, beat the honey and eggs together until light and frothy and then slowly pour in the melted butter and continue beating until its smooth. Stir in the carrot, almonds, rind and sifted dry ingredients.

Line a deep 20cm round sandwich cake tin with lightly buttered greaseproof paper and pour in the cake mixture. Bake at 180oC for 1 hour.

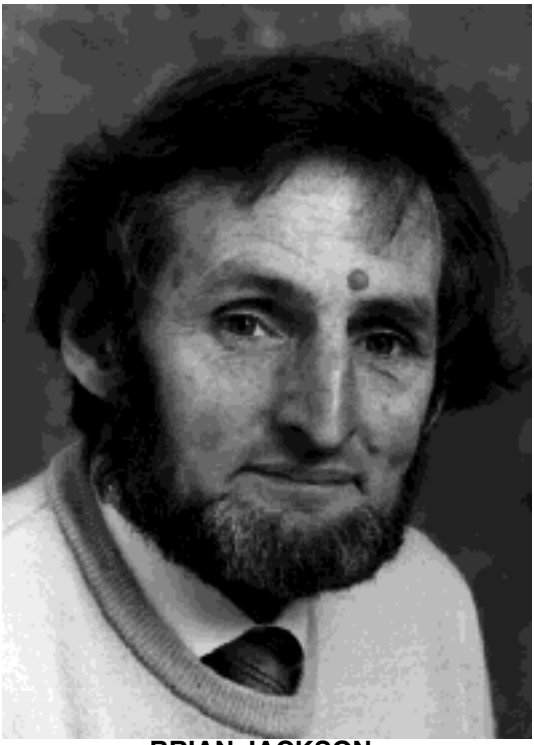
Cover the cake lightly with foil to stop it getting too brown and bake for another 45 minutes. When it's cooked, let it stand in the tin for 10 mins before turning it out on to a cake cooler or wire rack.

Beat the cream cheese, butter, honey, orange rind and vanilla essence together until the mixture is smooth and fluffy and then spread it over the top and sides of the cold cake before serving.
Peter Russell-Clarke's Honey Cookbook

PORTRAIT OF A BEEKEEPER

TALL, FAIR AND . . . .

Being tall, fair and not too handsome, bee-keeping has always been a side hobby, After my early years of being actively involved in all forms of sport



BRIAN JACKSON
(He's the first one I've met of 'You Lot' who actually looks like a Beekeeper ! - *Arthur)*

but mainly rugby and cricket I did a spell of two years National Service, defending the dwindling Empire in Egypt, The Pharaoh smiled sweetly and again I played sport and travelled a lot on sight-seeing trips.

COLLEGE

On returning home I entered college and pursued a course of "joy through strength" (a P. E. teacher), I soon returned to College again to qualify in Rural Environmental Studies, It was here that I was detailed to look after the apiary because I had the right equipment - - a track-suit and a pair of running shoes.

THERMOSTATS

It was later suggested that I fit thermostats into hives to help control the temperature especially during winter, It was hoped to show a better survival rate and what effect it had on the feeding rate, I'm sorry to say that thermostats in those days were not very reliable and the only firm result I arrived at was their epitaph "They sacrificed their lives in the line of educational duty" (either frozen or roasted - I'm not sure which).

Back at home I was given a Catenary-hive along with a small swarm of black bees rescued from the gatehouse at Fountains Abbey. This was to be the new revolution in bee-hive structure BUT, after a short while there appeared more draw backs than good points and so I slowly changed over to National hives, two persons influenced me to carry on, one was a William Dobson, a big man, who without net or any protective clothing, entered the hives showing no fear and absolute faith in his own ability.

CURSES

It was from him I learned how to spit on stings in the most appropriate way and chant the magic words "@@*??*?!**" to cure all ills. It was only much later that I learned that his secret for keeping bees away was the result of the habitual pipe in his mouth and his smoke saturated clothing. He did say it had the same result on his wife. The second person was Percy Ogden, who guided my brother and I. But as he was a headmaster, each meeting was rather like a lecture; fortunately he never gave us homework. My wife enjoys seeing bees making full use of the plants in the garden, but due to an unpleasant and painful episode, when she was badly stung by some irate bees, she now views from a distance. She did however brave all, when I was away from home and collected two swarms most successfully,

I suppose to sum up my bee-keeping, I am a "potterer", Providing I get sufficient honey to see me through the year, on the morning toast but more importantly to add to the whisky to soothe a cough, which appears most nights at bed time - I'm very happy. It is the whole structure and social activity of these insects which fascinate me enormously. I have a policy of "laissez-faire" in my approach and both the insects and myself have been at peace with the world for about fifty years,

Brian Jackson

KEEPING IN TOUCH by Albert J Morris

SPELLING BEE!!

Yes, Bee Talk does still go from strength to strength and is full of interesting articles and snippets, ferreted out from various sources and edited for the best presentation.

A tiny bit of advice might not go amiss - watch the spelling - on the first page, there are seven mistakes.

STINGLESS BEES

In December's issue, a brief mention was made of stingless bees and as little is generally known about them, readers might find the following information to be of interest as they have a totally different lifestyle from the bees we keep in our hives. Compared to the quantity of honey which can be collected and stored by Apis species, which is because of large numbers of bees in their colonies, stingless bees produce only minuscule quantities.

DOZENS OF BEES

The number of social stingless bees in a nest can be counted in dozens or at best, maybe around a hundred. However, having no sting, one would imagine that what little they do gather and store, could easily be taken from them, but some species have developed their own unique way of defending their homes and stores of honey.

TROUSER LEGS

When disturbed, one species of bees make for any orifice they can enter, the ears, nose and mouth of an intruder.

Even wearing a net-veil couldn't guarantee comfortable handling of these, furry, tickling creatures; they will climb up inside sleeves and trouser-legs where they will tickle the intruder to bits. They also have strong, sharp jaws and can inflict much pain by biting eyelids and other soft body-parts.

SUPER GLUE

Other species have developed a unique way of deterring attackers. Each bee when it is not collecting honey or pollen, as a small quantity of colourless gum on its hind legs which is almost as sticky as super-glue and when disturbed, they use this against intruders.

BODY HAIR

They bite body-hairs and eyelashes and glue them together. The honey they produce, though small in quantity, is much sought-after for medical purposes. Most stingless bees are of a round shape similar to bumble bees rather than the slim shape of Apis species and are smaller than the average bumble bee. Although they are bees of warmer climes, most have a covering of thick fur which is often colourful.

BLUE BANDED BEE

The Amegilla, an Australian solitary stingless bee, is one of the most attractive bees in the world as regards colour. Known as the Blue Banded Bee, it has beautiful iridescent, metallic-like stripes of brilliant blue across its black abdomen. Its iridescent colouring comes from its body-fur, each individual hair of which has microscopic diagonal stripes engraved on it. These diffract the light, giving colours resembling a exquisite opal. They have a thick fleece of red-brown fur on their thoraxes and bright lemon, cream or white markings on their faces.

SNIFFER BEES!?

As the new millennium dawned, the American Association for the Advancement of Science listened in amazement to a speech by Jerry I. Broemenshenk. His experiments with honey bees may have profound and positive gains for the landmine technician.

CHIPS WITH EVERYTHING!

Broemenshenk told the AAAS that, by placing sensors in beehives, we can discover if a bee foraging in a field has been in the vicinity of explosives. Scientists are now developing a tiny microchip to be glued on to a bee's head. It has proved clear that one hive of bees could be used to detect explosives within an area of one square mile. If a series of electronically equipped hives could be monitored, it may be possible to pinpoint the presence of mines down to an area of around ten square feet.

The technology is in its infancy and may, sadly, come too late for the 500 victims a week yet to be maimed or killed. But at least in this instance, science is working in the right direction. *Extract from Saga June*

BIOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR (Part 4)

BEESWAX

World production of beeswax exceeds 10,000 tons annually. Propolis is used in the attachment of combs to the top and sides of the hive, as well as for filling cracks, reducing the size of the hive entrance, and embalming intruders. It is composed of plant resins gathered by worker bees, beeswax (30 to 60%), balm (perhaps a glandular secretion of bees or a product of honey bee digestion), as well as pollen and hive debris. In times past, varnishes responsible for the tonal quality of violins and the finishes of other fine woods contained refined propolis. The human nutritional value of pollen and queen (royal) and worker jelly has been of great interest throughout the world. However, there is much doubt as to their real worth. These jellies, larval food synthesized from the digestion of pollen and secreted by the brood food glands of worker bees, have, like pollen, no proven attributes except as bee food. Nevertheless, both are used in various cosmetics, lotions, and dietary supplements.

GREEK MYTHOLOGY

According to Greek mythology the infant Zeus, out of gratitude for the honey that sustained him, gave the honey bee its sting for defense. Because the bee abused this power, Zeus later decreed that the bee must die whenever the sting is used. Perhaps it is ironic that now we have developed the means to milk venom from bees and use this product in medicine. The collection and sale of bee venom is an increasingly popular although extremely limited enterprise. Presently, its greatest use is in the treatment of bee venom hypersensitivity. It is also reported as helpful in reducing the pain caused by certain types of arthritis.

BEES BY THE POUND

Commercial beekeeping has given rise to two additional hive products, namely, the queen and worker honey bees. Worker bees are packaged and sold by the pound by beekeepers who are engaged in this highly specialized form of beekeeping. Packages of worker bees and queens are frequently delivered by the postal service. A package of bees normally contains 2 to 3 lb of bees plus a mated queen. Packaged bees are used for establishing new colonies or for replacement of those lost through natural causes or catastrophic events. The selling of honey bee queens is a highly lucrative commercial enterprise. Queens are often advertised as being of a specific genetic origin with certain desirable attributes.

RE-QUEENING

These queens are used by beekeepers to re-queen existing colonies in which the old queen is failing or was lost. Beekeepers may also expand their businesses with the purchase of additional queens; each new queen is installed in a new colony made by dividing an existing colony in half (the old queen heads up the parent unit)

POLLINATION

Reproduction in many plant species is a sexual process analogous to that of animals. Pollen (equivalent to sperm) must find its way to the stigma (equivalent to the vagina). Flower visitors, principally bees, are essential in the transfer of pollen within and between flowers.

Floral nectars and aromas attract bees and thus ensure adequate pollination and the reproductive success of the plant. The honey bee's most significant contribution to human dietary habits has been these pollination activities. Without honey bees human tables and lives would be impoverished by a general lack of fruits, vegetables, flowers, and other bee-pollinated plant products; and the human diet would be almost wholly restricted to cereals, some nuts, and the meat of wild animals.

BEES AS BENEFACTORS

One of the world's estimated 20,000 to 30,000 living species of bees, the honey bee has become indispensable, humanity's greatest and most versatile insect benefactor. More than 90 fruit, vegetable, nut, and seed crops are partially or entirely dependent on bees for pollination, as are numerous ornamental plants and wild flowers. The value of bee-pollinated crops in the United States is estimated to be $100 million 100 times the value of the honey produced.

These crops represent up to one-third of the human diet in many countries. Mobile beekeepers in the United States and elsewhere can even supply bees to farmers at the time pollination is needed. Early in the year these beekeepers provide pollination services to growers in warm areas. They then move their hives into the more temperate climates, following the spring weather northward (southward in the southern hemisphere) and pollinating both orchard and field crops. When they terminate their annual trek, they collect a final large honey crop and then return home in the fall to prepare for another northward migration the following year.

Concluded

Letter from Montserrat

IT AIN'T HALF HOT. . .

Hello again, B&EL Beekeepers, and very best wishes for the new millennium. I understand you have been having a little wet weather at home, perhaps with some little snowfalls… well, I'm pleased to report that the uncomfortable steamy temperatures in the 90s here have fallen to more reasonable 80s. However, the volcano continues to issue huge amounts of ash with constant rock falls as the dome grows rapidly, and everything is covered in a layer of grit. It drives me bananas (sorry!) and takes an hour to clean up in the mornings.

On the subject of beekeeping – in my last letter I mentioned that I had been to visit a beekeeper in the neighbouring island of Nevis, and thought you might find the beekeeping activities there of interest.

John and I decided to treat ourselves to a weekend in the tiny island of Nevis, visible across the blue Caribbean from Montserrat on most days, as we had never been, despite all those years of living so close. We caught the evening ferry to Antigua and had to stay overnight as the flights do not connect. We flew on a tiny airplane next morning to Nevis, the smaller of the two-island nation of St. Kitts and Nevis, a constitutional monarchy and part of the British Commonwealth.

We were staying with a friend, and on asking where we could find the Beeman were told he would be at the Beehouse in Gingerland most afternoons. Driving to the other side of Nevis's volcanic mountain (dormant, they say….) on the narrow potholed roads, we did indeed find him at the Beehouse, an old stone outhouse serving as the centre of the beekeeping co-operative. He welcomed us with an invitation to a cup of tea at home and a chat, which has led us to have great respect for this dedicated and likeable character.

FIVE TONNES OF HONEY

Quentin Henderson was sent to Nevis by VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) in 1987 , as a trained apiculturist. At that time, there were few beekeepers — just a few hives scattered here and there. Thirteen years later, 20 beekeepers produce five tonnes of honey annually. This remarkable success story has come about in large measure due to the dedication of The Beeman of Nevis, as Quentin has become known.

HE'S BEEN AROUND

As the son of Scottish fruit growers in Kent, he trained originally in agriculture with fruit growing and subsequently spent a summer working with a commercial beekeeper at Peace River in Alberta, Canada. Two years later, he took a beekeeping technician course and worked around the world, beekeeping in Southland, New Zealand, and Scotland. After another course, this time the Postgraduate Diploma in Apiculture at the University of Wales, Cardiff, he was sent to Nevis and has been there ever since. So popular were his activities that after his term with VSO was over that he was asked by the Nevis government to stay on as Beekeeping Advisor and the rest, as they say, is history.

BEEKEEPERS MEETING

We met some of the Nevisian beekeepers, including Vincent, the President, and were fortunate to be invited to one of their meetings and to see an apiary. The members were helping each other make up frames for their Langstroth hives, and while we were there some local ladies came to ask for beeswax for making candles, as they were starting up a small business.

Quentin travels to nearby islands to market surplus honey, and the whole enterprise is really inspiring. He was responsible for getting Eva Crane to visit Nevis and Montserrat a few years ago. Now there's a great lady……

In August, (the week before I arrived, bother), the Caribbean Beekeeping Congress was held in Nevis, with 50 beekeepers and experts on Apis mellifera from the Caribbean islands plus the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United States, Finland and Costa Rica. As reported by Reuter's:

……the beekeepers meeting on this small but important beekeeping island in the eastern Caribbean were looking at ways to turn a hobby into a commercial venture. In a seminar called "Expanding the Horizons for Caribbean Beekeepers" such issues as controlling pests and diseases, honey production and marketing techniques were explored. With the growing demand for natural foods, the commercial need for honey is increasing, but some islands barely fill the local demand, much less produce enough for export.

cont. on page 8

cont. from page 7

WHEN SUGAR WAS KING

But most realize beekeeping's potential in the world economy as it relates to honey. Said Elvin Bailey, Permanent Secretary for agriculture in Nevis, "This beekeeping fraternity offers a tremendous potential. It will not replace any of the crops but it has tremendous potential for the Caribbean community." The days when sugar was king, bananas were profitable and cotton was a major crop are mostly gone in the Caribbean. Today the island economies are based on tourism, offshore financial institutions and other service businesses. Unlike other products, beekeeping is a relatively simple and inexpensive business to start. The Caribbean now produces about 7,000 tonnes of honey per year, most of which is consumed in the region. Gladstone Solomon of Tobago, a driving force in organizing Caribbean beekeepers, said it would be impossible for this region to compete with the worldwide market led by Argentina, China and Mexico.

For example, last year, Argentina produced 93,000 tonnes, followed by China at 87,000 tonnes, according to Bees for Development. What the Caribbean can offer is multifloral honeys with exotic tastes that can be marketed along with the region's romantic aura. Creating and developing niche markets, which includes marketing beeswax, royal jelly, pollen, propolis and bee venom can create jobs and high financial rewards from this year-round crop…..

This sounds to me rather familiar – apart from the bit about a year-round crop (we should be so lucky!), amateur beekeepers in Lancashire are perhaps also looking for the niche market to sell the wonderful natural honey from a variety of floral sources – and we all have wax, propolis, pollen and venom to spare, not always where we want it in the hive! So it struck me that I'm not so far removed from home after all….

Unfortunately Varroa has arrived in Nevis, and as no-one had imported any bees, it is thought that the introduction came from a swarm which had entered a shipping container from the US – the swarm gave a port worker an awful fright! However, Ian McLean has kindly helped here and identified it as Varroa destructor, which is not as devastating at V.jacobsonii and others.

Here in Montserrat, the bees are still Varroa free. As far as we know…..
More next time. *Bridget*

A TIMELY REMINDER

Do you remember Little Jimmy Aspden? Five foot nowt and as crammed as a wasp. He was well into his nineties when he died about five years ago. To the very end he was a practical beekeeper, with a lot of help with lifting from me. Jimmy was a very ***observant*** beekeeper, with a memory to compete with any elephant. The point of this tale is this. Some ten or more years ago I cannot remember what year it was , but we suffered a lot of Winter losses.

Looking through the hives with Jimmy I was horrified at the number of dead colonies, and what was more horrifying I could not find any reason for all these dead bees. There was mostly a fair amount of food still in the combs, no sign of any disease that I could detect, so why? why?

Some days later Jimmy rang me to say that as he was sat at home thinking about things, it had occurred to him that in the colonies that had died out there was no sign of pollen stores. That was the clue I wanted. I knew that bees without pollen, which is their source of protein, would deprive their own bodies of protein to feed the new brood in times of dire need.

This was it then, the bees were killing themselves to feed the new brood, starving as it were, though there was. still honey (carbohydrate) in the combs
Our cure for this was an immediate feed of substitute pollen to save all the other hives. Within a few weeks, information started to come in from all over the country that everyone was more or less suffering the same as we were. It was put down to the very wet Autumn and Winter that had prevented the bees gathering sufficient pollen for there needs. A substitute pollen was recommended and Thornes must have made a mint selling Flying Start a pollen substitute.

We, of course, made our own. The recipe was 10 oz. Aro soya. 5.5 oz. Hisoy .(I think any soya flower will do). 2.5 oz. brewers yeast powder. 1.5 lbs.. sugar 3/4 pt. water mix to a stiff paste and put in a plastic bag to prevent drying out. Puncture with a knife on the side you place directly on to the top bars above the cluster so the bees can get to it. You may need to use this receipt as we have never had a wetter Autumn than in the year 2000.

What a story of observation . The ability to observe and record things in the mind is worth gold.

THYMOL

TOXIC

Thymol is usually obtained in crystal form. It is best stored in a glass jar in a cool dark place.

The main characteristics of thymol for beekeepers are:

1. melting point of 5l.5c.
2. Soluble in alcohol e.g. surgical spirits.
3. Almost insoluble in water.

Thymol has two main uses in beekeeping. As a preservative in sugar syrup and as a varroacide and disease control agent.

At low doses thymol seems harmless to bees, whilst being toxic to varroa mites. One theory is that European bees have foraged on thyme for millions of years thereby developing some immunity.

PRESERVATIVE

Using thymol as a preservative is not new. Numerous pre-war beekeepers mention it in their books. Because thymol is basically only soluble in alcohol, a crystal/alcohol stock solution needs to be made.

Dissolve 40g of thymol crystals into 200ml of surgical spirit this makes a 20% solution and should remain stable if stored in airtight container in the dark.

Only 5ml to 10ml of this thymol solution is added to a gallon of sugar syrup, this gives a thymol concentration of 0.05% to 0.1% respectively.

Recent Pan-European research seems to suggest that a 0.1% concentration is the most effective without causing any side effects.

Remember too much thymol can kill bees

Furthermore, thymol solution can be added to any sugar syrup for making candy. There are indications that thymol helps control nosema, chalkbrood, acarine and of course varroa. Whether it helps when given in winter syrup, I do not know.

VARROACIDE CONTROL AGENT.

Thymol crystals are used by two basic application methods.

Sachets made from old tights or teabags placed on top of the brood frames. Recommended dose is 12g per application.

A special modified brood frame available from Thornes at £10.50 which should ideally be placed to one side or the back of a brood chamber recommended dose 12g per application.

THE BEST TIME

One of the best times for treatment is early Spring (before any supers go on) when the average daytime temperature is between 10c and 15c. The slow crystal evaporation can then be completed before the honey flow starts.

Furthermore reducing the entrance is reported to increase the efficiency of the treatment.

EXCESS THYMOL

Using excess thymol can have serious consequences for example damaging bees and brood; risk of queen loss; risk of hive abandonment, also using crystals when air temperature exceeds 25c poses similar problems.

APPRIGUARD

If members are apprehensive about using thymol crystals, a commercial thymol varroacide is available called “Apriguard”.

This has thymol fixed in a jelly solution which is placed on top of the brood frames. The bees remove the jelly and in doing so distributes it through out the brood nest. The theory is, this jelly solution controls the evaporation rate, thereby avoiding overdosing the bees.

Ken Gaiger

Ken should have some thymol crystals for sale to members at a preferential price. Editor.

DARK HONEY HAS MORE ILLNESS-FIGHTING AGENTS THAN LIGHT HONEY

19 SAMPLES

Honey bees pollinate the crops we eat and provide honey. Where they forage for nectar now has gained nutritional importance: What they eat determines the level of antioxidants in honey, according to new research. In a study that analyzed 19 samples of honey from 14 different floral sources, University of Illinois scientists found that honey made from nectar collected from Illinois buckwheat flowers packs 20 times the antioxidant punch as that produced by bees that lap up California sage. Clover, perhaps the most common plant source tapped by honey bees, scored in the middle of the rankings.

LESS WATER

Antioxidants - substances that slow the oxidation of other substances - counter the toxic effects of free radicals, which can cause DNA damage that can lead to age-related problems such as arthritis, strokes and cancer. Free radicals are atoms or molecules that are usually reactive or unstable. In an article to be published in the Journal of Apicultural Research, the researchers say darker honey has less water and more antioxidants than light-colored honey.

VITAMIN C

"Not all honeys are the same," said Berenbaum "The antioxidant content of buckwheat honey compares favorably, pretty much bite for bite, with the ascorbic acid-related antioxidant content of tomatoes. Gram for gram, antioxidants in buckwheat honey equal that of fruits and vegetables such as sweet corn or tomatoes. It packs the antioxidant power of Vitamin C in a tomato, but most people who would be willing to eat an entire tomato would balk at eating the equivalent of a tomato's weight-worth of honey."

SUGAR REPLACEMENT

Honey could be a supplemental source for antioxidants, the researchers concluded, noting that many fruits and vegetables often include other desirable sources for antioxidants. Although honey can't replace fruits and vegetables in the diet as a source of antioxidants, it has a lot to offer as a replacement for table sugar, which has little value other than as a sweetener, Berenbaum said.

TEN BILLION DOLLARS

Depending on the floral source, honey varies widely in color, water composition and sugar, ash, nitrogen and metal content. The researchers gathered and analyzed honeys produced in 1994 and 1995. The findings could impact the beekeeping industry, which has been growing nationwide, mostly as a hobby, Robinson said. "Bees are essential for pollinating many of the crops that we grow for food and fiber. The estimated value of bee pollination in America alone is $10 billion per year," he said. "Now, honey may also take on extra importance as there may be health issues to add to the equation. Not all nectars are created equal, thus not all honeys are created equal."
University Of Illinois

A SMILE

A Smile costs nothing, but it enriches those who receive, without making poorer those who give. It takes but a moment, but the memory of it sometimes lasts forever. None is so rich or mighty that he can get along without it, and none is so poor but that he can be made richer by it.

A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters goodwill in business and is the countersign of friendship. It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the discouraged, sunshine to the sad, and it is nature's antidote for trouble.

Yet it cannot be bought, begged, borrowed or stolen, for it is something that is of no value to anyone until it is given away.

Some people are too tired to give you a smile. Give them one of yours, as none needs a smile so much as he who has no more to give. (Aaahhh!)

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE . . but we threw ours away!

We thought we'd have a change from the, often unfunny, bekeepers jokes and try something different. Nothing whatsoever to do with beekeeping but, we hope, interesting.

The "old 'uns" will probably recognise this - it's an incandescent gas mantle which was attached to the gas fitting to give a bright white, light.

This one was made about 1930 and at three old pence quite expensive. Work it out, as a Tackler my Dad probably earned £2 a week in 1930.

He could have bought 160 gas mantles. The equivalent wage today would be about £300 and a 100 watt light bulb costs about 50p that to my reckoning is 600 light bulbs.

We used to light a taper from the gas mantle when going down the yard to the outside toilet. No wonder my Dad used to say "Be careful of that gas mantle!"

I wonder how many remember the old 'Long Drop' or 'Tippler' toilet. Scrubbed wooden seat over a brown earthenware toilet all in a whitewashed little room in the yard.

Pieces of newspaper on a nail behind the door - I bet Albert Morris remembers!

ANNUAL BEEKEEPERS DINNER

THE VENUE: **Hillcrest Tearooms**
Great Mitton
Whalley

DATE: **14th March 2001 7.30pm for 8pm**

MENU: **3 Course with Coffee £12.95**

(Bring your own drink as the premises are not licensed)
If you are interested in an enjoyable evening out please contact Angela Moyle on 01200 445398

Angela has to confirm numbers **before** 15th February so please contact her right away

SPECIAL REQUEST
Please bring along something for the raffle which is to be held during the Dinner on March 14th

NOTICES

SWARM COLLECTORS

Beekeepers prepared to collect swarms

Blackburn, Darwen & Mellor	**Robert Fulton 01254 772780**
Clitheroe Ribble Valley	**John Zamorski 01200 427661 David Bush 01200 428152**
Nelson & Colne	**Bill Ainsworth 01282 614015**
Padiham & Burnley	**Ken Gaiger 01282 778887**
Barnoldswick and Earby	**Ian Dent-Willough-by**

FROM THE TREASURER

Subscriptions are due on November 1st. If your subscription is outstanding, could I ask you to pay before March 1st in order to simplify administration.

The fee is unchanged at £11 per full member and £2 for each additional family member. Extra Bee Disease Insurance costs are:

Up to 5 Hives	£1.80
Up to 10 Hives	£4.20
Up to 15 Hives	£6.00
Up to 20 Hives	£7.20
Up to 25 Hives	£7.80

Up to 39 Hives 36p per colony
(Amended Prices Feb 2001)

INFORMATION ABOUT 'BEE TALK'

Planned publication dates : **May 2001**
July 2001
October 2001
December 2001

Latest time for copy is the first week of the month prior to publica-

If you have any information, titbits, articles or stories about beekeeping, please contact the editor :- Bill Ainsworth, 296 Scotland Road, Nelson, 'phone 01282 614015
e-mail:- bill@scotroad.free-online.co.uk or arthur@lapwing.idps.co.uk

Please don't worry about writing skills, between us we will knock it into shape.

MEETINGS

March 22nd.	Samlesbury Brewery Bill Kitchingman 'Talking on Mead' (with samples)
April 22nd.	Holden Clough Keith Wilkinson 'A demonstration of the Snelgrove board
May 20th.	Brian Jackson's Lower House Farm, Cowling Speaker yet to be confirmed.

Committee Members Approved at the AGM FOR THE YEAR 2001

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