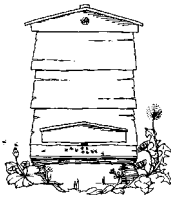

Bee Talk

Vol. 7 No. 2 May 2001 Registered Charity
Newsletter of The Blackburn and East Lancashire Branch of
The Lancashire & North West Beekeepers Association
http://www.kimberim.freeserve.co.uk

What's in this month's Beetalk

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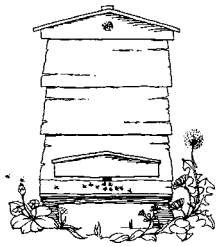


Editorial
May 2001

WINTER
What a long Winter! I have heard of quite a number of lost stocks over this long Winter period. I've lost one due to starvation and one which went Qeenless. Now 'Qeenlessness' is just one of those things - but starvation!!! No doubt it will all be made up with lots of swarming come the end of May

Now that May is with us, you will have fed stocks that survived the Winter, changed or cleaned the floor boards, checked all is well in the hive and fitted the first super, won't you?!! By this time all these things should have been done and the bees well- away on their new season of nectar gathering.

As I write these notes the (first week in April) the weather is still cold and wet. Summer seems a long way away, but be sure, as soon as the sun starts to shine, Mother Nature will get into top gear and do three weeks work in as many days. *So be prepared* !

VARROA
After all this time it's at last got round to me. On the 28th March for the first time, I found varroa in my apiary. I'm surprised it didn't upset me at all. I suppose it is to do with all the talk about varroa over the years, how many is it now, ten?

Anyway I found the odd mite on the Varroa insert in all my hives and simply accepted it and proceeded to make plans to keep it under control. As simple as that. Surprising isn't it?

THE DINNER
Every one who attended, tells me what a splendid time was had at the Annual dinner. What a shame Jeanne and I were unable to be there to share in the enjoyment. I'm keeping my eye open for the date of the next years dinner so I can get it in my diary right away with a big priority sign against it.

MOAN, MOAN, MOAN
I have paid my B&DBKA. subscription for 2001, and find that included in the subscription I have paid insurance for two hives, so that should the ministry demand that they be destroyed, in the event of foul brood infection, I should be recompensed.

I also find that as I have more than two hives in my apiary I would not be paid out on those two hives because the insurance policy demands that ***all*** my hives must be insured.

Now, I'm quite prepared to stand my own losses and not to be insured at all. So, if I wish to be a member of the B&DBKA, why should I have to pay unwanted insurance when I cannot make a claim in any case. .?

This cannot be right Mr. Treasurer! I would rather my compulsory two hive insurance premium were paid into the general funds of our society than into some insurance company funds.

INTERNATIONAL
Bee Talk is an Internationally read publication. Don't laugh it's true! See page 8

Bill Ainsworth

Committee Members for the year 2001 Approved at the AGM

Michael Birt	Chair	01254 814088
Bill Ainsworth	Vice Chair	01282 614015
Angela Moyle	Hon. Secretary	01200 445398
Ken Gaiger	Hon. Treasurer	01282 778887
Pauline Roberts	Honey Show Sec	01282 438615
John Zamorski	Librarian	01200 427661
David Bush	Member	01200 428152
John Holland	Member	01254 670498
Barry Mellers	Member	01282 612985
Keith Wilkinson	Member	01254 812425
Joe Wrigley	Member	01200 447621

HOLDEN CLOUGH

New management set up

Holden Clough management has had to be re-formed. It has been agreed that it will be run by four managers - Bill Ainsworth, David Barret, Michael Birt and Ken Gaiger. They will be assisted by Jack Armistead, David Bush, Hilda Metcalf, Derek Ward, Joe Wrigley and John Zamorski who have already volunteered.

Any other B&DBKA members who wish to participate may do so. A list of visit dates and the manager in charge of each visit for 2001 is appended. A phone number is also given so members may contact the manager in charge if they should wish to assist on that day.

Managers

W. Ainsworth.	01282 614015
D. Barret	01254 385230
M. Birt	01254 814088
K Gaiger	01282 778887

Ken Gaiger and Bill Ainsworth will attempt some Queen rearing again and any one interested should contact Bill or Ken.

The apiary is now linked with BIBBA Bee Improvement and Bee Breeders Association and is now listed in there news letter available on their web sight http://www.bibba.com

All this is just academic right now as Holden Clough is a prohibited area due to foot and mouth regulations. Participating persons will be informed when regulations are lifted.

Schedule for Holden Clough. 2001.

Date	Visitor.
1st April	Bill Ainsworth
15th April	Ken Gaiger
29th April	Michael Birt
13th May	David Barrett
27th May	Bill Ainsworth
10th June	Ken Gaiger
24th June	Michael Birt
8th July	David Barrett
22nd July	Bill Ainsworth
5th August	Ken Gaiger
19th August	Michael Birt.
2nd September	David Barrett
16th September	Bill Ainsworth
30th September	Ken Gaiger

WORKER POLICING

The honey bee colony is a model of co-operation but there is still potential for conflict within the bee society.

WORKER'S EGGS

Worker bees, for example, have ovaries and can lay unfertilised, male eggs. However, if a worker bee lays an egg another worker bee normally eats this egg. This is known as "worker policing". Worker bees are able to discriminate between queen-laid and worker-laid eggs, because the queen marks her eggs with a special pheromone. Research at LASI (Laboratory of Apiculture and Social Insects) at Sheffield University, has shown that worker bees rarely kill queen-laid eggs. In a few queenright bee colonies workers do lay a lot of eggs. (Eggs and drone brood can occasionally be seen above the queen excluder in a queenright hive - if you see this in one of your hives please contact LASl so that we can study it.)

ANARCHISTIC COLONIES

These colonies are known as "anarchistic" because they lack the normal order in which the queen is the only reproducing bee. Research at LASI, in collaboration with the NERC-funded Sheffield Molecular Genetics Facility, is studying the genetics of the bees that lay eggs in anarchistic hives, including one hive donated by a beekeeper from Widness in Lancashire. Research at LASI is also investigating how it is that the eggs laid by anarchistic workers are not killed.

ACCEPTABLE EGGS

Anarchistic workers lay acceptable eggs - if their eggs are transferred to a normal beehive they are still not eaten. This suggests that anarchistic workers lay eggs that mimic those laid by the queen, probably by producing the same egg-marking pheromone.

Courtesy of Devon "Beekeeping".

HOW CAN WE BE SURE THE HIVE IS QUEENLESS.

If we are to introduce a valuable new Queen into a stock that is thought to be Queen-less. We must be certain the stock really is without a Queen of any kind. Determining if a stock of bees has a Queen or not, is not as easy as may be thought. So here is a list of conditions to look for and consider, if we should come across a stock that at first sight would appear to be Queenless.

1. **No eggs or young uncapped brood.**
   This could be a swarmed stock with a young un-mated virgin, or newly mated queen not yet laying. Sealed worker brood can be present for 21 days after the last eggs are laid, and some queens take an extraordinary long time to start laying after they have mated.

2. **Bad temper.**
   Especially if they were good previously.

3. **Roaring.**
   It would be best if you heard this in the presence of a very experienced beekeeper, but once you have heard it, you will know what it is. If you rap the side of the hive, you will hear a buzzing that dies away within one or two seconds if the buzzing persists a lot longer it may indicate queenlessness.

4. **Lots of nectar in the brood box.**
   Very much more than is normal, especially if it is where you would expect to find brood.

5. **Lots of drones.**
   Lots more than you would normally see in a similar stock at a similar time.

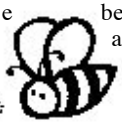
6. **Only drone brood present.**
   Drone brood takes a farther three days to mature than worker. But with just drone brood present and no eggs. I think I would use the comb of eggs test (9). If a queen is a drone layer, (unable to lay worker eggs), more often than not drone eggs are laid in worker cells. A careful examination will soon determine if this is the case. Worker cells with a raised cap indicates drone brood in the worker cells.

7. **Many eggs in one cell.**
   Maybe six or seven all in one cell. This indicates laying workers. Perhaps a comb of eggs (test 9) would work, but not always. Some times the only way is to take all the combs some distance away from the hive and shake all the bees on to the ground. The idea being that all the bees will fly back home with the exception of the laying workers who will be too heavy to fly due to their egg production. A comb of eggs must be given during this operation so the bees have proper eggs on which to raise a new queen.

   Some times a newly mated queen will lay more than one egg in one cell but she soon learns how to do it right. In this situation she will only lay two or three eggs in the one cell, probably the queen will be on the comb near the eggs. Look for her diligently.

8. **No pollen coming in.**
   When other stocks are bringing in lots.

9. **To be *certain* a stock is queen-less**
   give it a comb of eggs from some other stock. After four or five days if the stock was queenless then emergency queen cells will have been started. Be careful to look closely these cells are started right down on the septum and are not as obvious as swarm cells. However you should be able to spot them as they are quite different from worker cells. Always use a comb of eggs from the best stock of bees you have, or can scrounge, cadge or whatever. So that if cells are built on the comb you can leave the bees to re-queen themselves and you will end up with a stock of the finest strain, for your efforts.



With the exception of items 7 & 9 none of these things are a confirmation that the stock is queen-less. However the more of these things you see the more confident you can be.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS HOMILY

If you should attempt to introduce a fertile laying queen into a stock that has a virgin queen, or a fertile queen not yet laying, a drone laying queen, or has laying workers, then it is almost certain you will loose her.

Bill

PORTRAIT OF A BEEKEEPER

A LANCASHIRE LAD

Although I was born and brought up in London, fear not! For my father was a Clitheroe lad and mother came from Bolton.

My first meeting with bees was during an idyllic life as a very small refugee in rural pre-suburban Hertfordshire. The next door neighbour's stocks in WBC hives had probably contracted Isle-of-Wight disease and the local bee master was called in to advise.

This old worthy arrived resplendent in stove pipe topper, smock, gaiters and hobnail boots, all rheumatically supported by two gnarled walking sticks. He duly spake, prodded the hives and I got stung.

HOLDEN CLOUGH

After growing a little bigger, and leaving school, National service in the RAF (poor Cyprus!) and college I came back North when my parents retired up here, I found and married Ann, "Hung my hat up" and settled into Holden Clough and a happy career (!) in the variously named organization always known to the farmers as "t' river-board".

DIED OF NEGLECT

In the old kitchen garden at the Clough there were two large hives of bees visited very occasionally by there owner and very generous with their stings, until they died of neglect.

This was where it really started. I got a book, went to my first meeting, talked to Jack and got hooked. I bought a shed-full of hives and equipment for £25 from a man who had been washed out in a flood.

The bees plus hive came from someone else who unfortunately had to give up beekeeping and they were collected the day we went on holiday, but that is another story in itself.

When we returned the bees had swarmed twice into the two old hives and this meant surgery on the large size combs to fit them into standard frames and hives.

HONEY, SWARMS AND STINGS

From there on over the years we got varying amounts of honey, quite a lot of swarms and many stings. The number of hives rose until we decided to move them down from the top of the bank to their present site in the orchard, saving much pounding up and down the hill.

There the numbers of stocks rose and fell until in spite of feeding them two bad winters in a row finished them of.

EASIER TO HANDLE

Jack came to the rescue with a stock of much milder strain, easier to handle and with better swarming habits. Many of us will remember how they would oblige us on meeting days so that the impromptu demonstrations for beginners" how to collect your swarms" could be given and at ground or near ground-level too.

KEN PREEDY

The rest most of us know. Ken Preedy established the association's own apiary at the Clough where, retired at last, I hope I can more often come down and help with the inspections and manipulations. It's no longer a surprise to me how much there is still to learn especially " When tha mucks in".

Joe Wrigley.

THE ITALIAN CONNECTION

EARLY APRIL

SALUTI DA NOI

We have now been in Italy eight and a half years, and this Winter and Spring have been the wettest yet. The rain started in October and as I write, it is still raining - over six months with very few let ups. Only two days ago after storms in the night we awoke to snow on all the tops around us, perhaps Winter having a last fling! At least when we do see the sun now it is hot, in fact on a couple of days I have managed to get the solar extractor working to render down old combs.

SPRING IS WITH US

Whatever the weather, Nature is sure that Spring is with us. Fruit trees are blossoming, the asparagus tips showing and the few things we have managed to sow growing at last. Our bird population has also grown with migrants showing up. Our first Swallow on April Fools Day. Redstarts bobbing about fly catching and Goldfinches serenading us from the top of the Pines and alongside our residential birds, all showing lots of activity as nest building gets under way.

WOOD CUTTING

We also have been active between showers and have only just got our wood cut and brought home. As the season ends by law on the 15th April it has been touch and go, not only for us - whenever it has been dry the woods have been alive with the sounds of chain saws and falling trees as all the locals rush to get their wood in for next Winter. Very important as most of us have wood burning stoves as our main source of heat.

THE PLOUGH

Yesterday the plough came out for the last time this year and our large 'garden' (3 acres) has finally been turned over although it is still far too wet to do any planting or sowing. Our potatoes should have been in weeks ago and it is almost too late for our main crop of onions, garlic and shallots. At least we have a few in around the house for our own use!

THE BEES

Over the Winter we have lost five stocks of bees and looking at my hive records these have all been swarms from last year, plenty of stores but with all five we have noticed supersedure cells in the centre of combs so for some reason Queen failure has been the problem (we think)! The other thirty seven stocks in the main are very strong and even with the weather we are going to get some early swarms.

Cont. on page 6

KEEPING IN TOUCH by Albert J Morris

continued from last issue.

STINGLESS BEES

A specie of stingless bee lives much nearer to home, in Britain. It is Osmia rufa - the Red Mason Bee and as its name implies, it is covered with thick dense red fur. It is a solitary bee and uses any sort of cylindrical longish tube like stems of dead plants. It collects a supply of pollen and after moistening it with honey, rolls it into a ball about the size of a small pea after sealing the open end of the tube. Several more balls of pollen are made and an egg laid on each, until there are as many as a dozen, each separated by a mud plug. The pollen is food to a future bee which will emerge the following year and carry on in the same way to propagate the species. Other solitary bees building nests in a similar manner, (leafcutter bees) use disks cut from rose-tree leaves to separate each egg with its pollen supply, from the next one.

cont. from page 5

VARROA

All through Winter we have seen a few Varroa in the hive drawers, so in early February I gave all the stocks a tablet of APILIFE VAR placed on top of the frames. This is a biological control, the ingredients being thymol, eucalyptol, menthol and camphor, then after we have given the hives and bees a spring clean just before the supers went on we have also treated with oxalic acid again. This should halt a quick build up of Varroa, keep numbers down over the summer and if the sun ever comes out again perhaps the bees will collect some honey.

NEW SKILLS

The other evening I was thinking about the new 'skills' we have had to pick up over the last few years, most of them natural to most farmers and Italians but for us, trial and error. Things like caterpillar tractor driving on steep wooded slopes, the plough, simple hay making, the outdoor wood burning bread oven, edible mushrooms, Italian building methods and bureaucracy to name but a few - and, of course, the language.

THE LANGUAGE

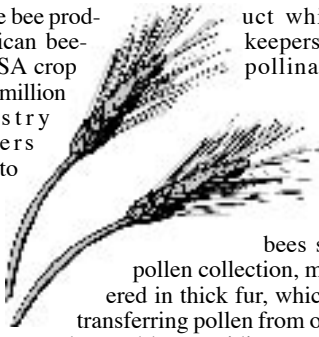
At times we have had a whole restaurant in uproar when ordering dog (cane) instead of meat (carne) or telling them that we get pigs (maiale) from hives instead of honey (miele) or that we grow pigs (maiale) on the apple (mela) tree! And other clangers to numerous to mention certainly keeps the Italians on their toes if not us.

Now its time to bottle (bottiglia) or perhaps that should be (apribottiglie) some wine. So once again from us both.

ARRIVEDERCI for now.

MULTI MILLION POUND INDUSTRY

In the current Beekeeper's Quarterly magazine, No:- 642001, there's an excellent article about this bee, Osmia rufa, complete with an interesting argument for and against it being a better pollinator than our hive bee, Apis melifera and there are two full pages of excellent colour photographs of these furry bees, in their cells with larvae and pupae and also of tubes which can be provided for their use as nest.



When you think of bees, honey is what usually comes to mind. This however, is not the bee product which most American beekeepers seek. In the USA crop pollination is a multi-million pound industry and beekeepers there, strive to manage which are best at this and solitary bees specialise in pollen collection, most being covered in thick fur, which is ideal for transferring pollen from one flower to another and by providing nesting sites, hundreds of thousands of bees can be recruited for this task.

ALFALFA

American beekeepers offering pollination services to farmers and seed companies, have built trailers with huge blocks of wood fastened to them in which many thousands of holes of the size required by pollinating bees, have been drilled into the blocks on two sides and the trailers are positioned near the crop which is to be pollinated such as alfalfa (sweet clover) an animal fodder crop which is required to be pollinated for maximum seed production. When another crop needs to be pollinated, the trailers are moved at night when most of the adult bees are in there holes - holes which solitary bees compete in there thousands to occupy, for nest building.

A CHURCH FLOWS WITH MILK AND HONEY
(well honey at least)

BINOCULARS

Examination of the church with binoculars showed a stream of bees flying in and out of the church roof near the vestry chimney.

A call to my colleagues in Ryedale beekeepers allowed me to assemble a team to investigate the roof. Fortunately the lower part of the roof was a mere eighteen feet off the ground and had a reasonably shallow slope. This allowed us to use it as a base for the assault on the pitched roof behind the chimney.

A HOT SUMMER

A number of years ago I acted as server at the church of St. Lawrence in Kikbymisperton. One day, on arriving at the church, the lady who was arranging flowers showed me a stream of liquid running down the inside wall of the vestry near the altar steps. It was a hot July morning and the previous day had also been very hot followed by a heavy thunderstorm. We did have hot summers once upon a time in case you have forgotten.

It appeared that the liquid was falling from a crack in the plaster some 15 ft above the ground. It was quite clear and very sticky. I cleaned up most of the mess and thought no more about it until it was time to robe up for the service. The vestry cupboard in which all the clothes were stored was full of bees.

A FIREPLACE FULL

This was next to an old and cracked fireplace which was buzzing furiously. I examined the boarded section in front. When we removed the panel we found that the whole of the fireplace was full of bees. After this none of flower arrangers or the verger would go near the vestry. The next job after the service was to clear the bees out of the vestry, check the chimney and - - surprise, surprise it was clear of bees.

The church was left clear and clean but a repeat shower later on in the week meant a call from a verger as more sticky fluid flowed down the church wall.

ON THE ROOF

With full protective gear on we examined a loose roof tile and found the colony. To get at the bees we had to remove the top lead flashing, the roof tiles and the wood panels behind them. This gave us a real shock as the colony was the biggest one we had ever seen. Based on the colour of the comb the colony had been in the roof for many years.

It took us over two hours to remove the comb, the colony and their honey. We filled a dustbin with new and old comb.

COVERED IN ANGRY BEES

Unfortunately it was contaminated with the rotten timber, mouldy comb and debris so could not be used. By the time we finished we were all covered with very angry bees and had to spray to prevent reinfestation of the roof. As a result, repairing the roof was rather a hurried and rough job but it seems to have held together for the last five years and the bees have not returned to my knowledge.

About this time there were articles in the tabloids that claimed miracles for statues crying so we wondered about claiming another miracle for the church wall leaking honey but we never did.

It took me almost as long to get the honey, squashed bees and wax out of my camera as it did to remove the colony from the roof and the camera never really worked well after that.

Barry Mellers

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

I'll bet even Albert Morris has never seen one of these. A few clues for you. It was made in 1941 during World War 2 by Lyons Ink Ltd of Walkden in Manchester It measures about four inches by two and has to do with shortages and economy. The construction is fairly crude but Lyons did apply for a patent.
The answer is on page 12
Arthur

RECEIVED VIA THE INTERNET
(Printed as received)

Dear Bill,
You don't know us, but we are receiving the Bee Talks from our good friend Brian Winstanley. We know him of the model aeroplane contests in Portugal.

We're Dutch, living in Portugal for more than eight years, interested in modelling but also in bees. We don't have much information about bees, therefore we're grateful to Brian for sending us articles about Varoa and also for the Bee Talks. We are also very interested in the combination alcohol-bees, and enjoyed the article about the 'Italian Connection' from Jake & Jenni. Perhaps we have an answer for their 'problem' about the name for distilled honey. Here they are using the name 'aguardente de mel'. Let's explain: aguardente is the Portugese word for 'grappa', honey is in Portugese: mel and if you're using honey, you could say 'grappa de mel' (don't know the italian word for honey, or mel).

We're also interested in the combination Mimosa-alcohol also; we're making nice licor out of it, but that is not a story for your magazine, we assume!

We hope having enough honey this year to make the honey cake, or making indeed the aguardente de mel. Until now we let the bees have the honey, we only have two beehives, but this year we want to taste our own honey. And compair it with the nice honey we have got from -of course- Brian! Keep going on with your Newsletters, we really enjoy reading them.

Greetings and love
from Christine Baars and Eep Buys
Quinta da Tapada, Loureiro,
3420-054 Tabua, Portugal
e-mail:datapada@clix.pt

THE ANNUAL DINNER

We had a wonderful time, at the Hillcrest tea rooms, Great Mitton, Whalley on 14th March.
There were twenty-two members present and all agreed it was a most enjoyable evening. The three-course meal was superbly presented and was appreciated by everyone.
We tried hard to arrange a speaker but without success. However, in the event, it didn't appear to be necessary as in the cosy setting we found ourselves, there was much talk, and time was passed in a very enjoyable manner.
Such was the success that Angela Moyle and John Zamorski are thinking of arranging a similar event for next year.

would like to thank our secretary Angela who arranged everything splendidly and John also for his help and commitment to the success of the evening.
We raffled various prizes that were donated by members present, raising £46 which was presented to our treasurer by John. Here's looking forward to next years dinner. Michael.

(There is a photograph, taken at the dinner, on page 11. Our method of printing (cheap!) means that the quality isn't up to much but at least it's full of smiles - Arthur)

WHY STUDY THE HONEY BEE? (Part 1)

The reason would seem to be obvious. Honey bees are vital to human agriculture. Not only do they produce honey and wax but they also pollinate many crops. Worldwide honey production is estimated to be 1.137 million metric tonnes (approximately 2500 million 1 lb jars of honey—enough for one jar for every two people on Earth). In the UK the annual value of the honey bee is estimated at £200 million. In the USA the annual value is estimated at anything up to $10 billion. In both countries, the value from pollination is far greater than from honey. Pollination is especially important in California where a large numbers of crops requiring bee pollination are grown, such as almonds, melons, kiwi fruit, apples, pears and alfalfa seed. Of these crops, almonds have the biggest pollination requirement. There are approximately 400,000 acres of almond groves, equivalent in size to a typical English county. Two colonies per acre are needed in February when bloom starts. Growers pay beekeepers approximately $40 per hive for a month's pollination rental. This is enough to ensure that truckloads of bees are brought into California from all over the western USA.

LEARNING AND PERCEPTION

A honey bee forager is never satisfied. She visits flowers, fills her crop with nectar, and then returns to the hive where she unloads the nectar to receiver bees. A few minutes later she is off on another trip. To forage she has to learn the location and appearance of her own hive entrance and the location, smell, colour, and shape of the flowers she is visiting.

This makes the honey bee ideal for studying learning and perception. Because a forager bee makes many foraging trips per day researchers can study learning in a single bee much more easily than in a single non social insect, which once full of food would cease foraging. Because the forager bee repeatedly visits two locations, the flowers and the hive, researchers can vary the appearance of flowers or entrance to determine the effect on the bee.

COLOUR VISION

A classic example of this type of research was in showing that the honey bee is able to see colours. We now know that colour vision occurs in many animals but at one time this was controversial. Colour vision in the honey bee was discovered by Karl von Frisch.

He trained bees to fly to a feeder dish of sugar syrup on a table. The feeder was placed on a coloured piece of paper. Once a group of bees had learned to forage at the feeder he removed the syrup and substituted a range of pieces of paper of different colours and shades of grey. The bees preferentially landed on the colour on which their feeder had previously been located. That is, the bees learned to associate the colour with the syrup reward.

YOU CAN TALK TO HUMANS

This showed that bees could both learn colours and detect different colours. That the bees did not select one of the greys showed that they were not learning some measure of overall brightness, but a definite colour.

One difference in studying animals and humans is that you can talk to the human. Showing that a human has colour vision would be quite easy. You could just ask the person "are these two pieces of paper the same colour". Most animals don't talk to you.

But the honey bee is an exception. Researchers can sometimes use the honey bee dance language to eavesdrop on what one bee is communicating to another. One recent piece of research used this in a study of how bees measure the distance from the hive of a patch of flowers.

TRAINED BEES

Bees were trained to fly to a syrup feeder located at the end of card board tube 6 metres long and just wide enough to fly down. The tube was marked either with a checkerboard pattern or stripes running the length of the tube. On returning to their hive the bees danced and the researchers then decoded the dances to determine how far from the hive the bees estimated the feeder to be. (The waggle dance of the honey bee is used to communicate both the distance and direction of a flower patch from the hive.) When the feeder was at the end of the checkerboard tube the dances indicated a longer distance than when the feeder was at the end of the striped tube even though the feeder was at exactly the same actual distance to the hive in both cases.

Cont. on page 10

Cont. from page 9

USING THE DANCE LANGUAGE

This showed that the bees were measuring distance by the movement of the landscape past their eyes as they flew. Flying down the checkerboard tube seemed further to them than flying down the striped tube because it resulted in more contrast passing their eyes. In a similar way, you would feel as though you were moving faster in a car going 50 mph down a road with a hedge or houses on either side then 50 mph down a road without any objects close by.

Earlier work by von Frisch had suggested that bees measure distance by the amount of energy they use during the flight. This study showed that this was not, in fact, what happens. The research cleverly used the dance language to get the bee to tell the researchers how far it thought that it had flown.

From Bee Improvement and Conservation a Magazine from BBIBA

To be continued in future is-

Canadian farmer creates a buzz over wild bee shortage

A CANADIAN farmer has been creating quite a buzz in his quest to help his fellow growers overcome the wild bee shortage caused by parasitic varroa mites.

Andrew Sperilch, from Norfolk County, Ontario, has been introducing a dial-a-bee service, where farmers hire out their bee supply to other farmers to pollinate their crops.

All one has to do is call the bee supplier who loads his truck with hives, drives them out to the farm in need, drops them off for a few days or weeks - and then they are ready to get on with the Job.

The next morning the bees come out of the hive seeking nectar from flowers of cucumber, apple, plum, and blueberry crops.

Mr Sperlich told the National Post of the need for such a 'beesness' in a land deprived of bees. He said: "Without the bees' work, a farmer's yield suffers and the crop is of a lower quality. It makes for straight cucumbers, if not they get crooks."

According to Mr Spedich the dial-a-bee service could be exported to USA regions like California, where the almond crop could demand a large proportion of the bee stock In all of North America.

From member - B Thornber of Darwen

SCRAPINGS

MOVING HIVES

Moving hives during the winter. If you want to move your hives within the immediate vicinity, this should be done from Jan until March. During the coldest parts of the winter. The less than three feet or more than three miles rule, can be ignored for re-siting bees at this time. Choose a long frosty period so that the bees gradually re-orientate when they start to fly again.
From The Welsh Beekeeper.

GET THE SWARM

Getting a swarm down from a high tree. When a swarm is very high up in a tree, we have a technique that works well to get it down. If you are blessed with a clear sun, the Mirror Method should work. Beam the image of the sun just above the swarm with a mirror, and then push the swarm down the tree by nudging the image onto the top of the swarm. In my experience the swarm will proceed at a slow but steady pace down the tree, as you continue to push them with the sun-image.

BROOD FRAME

A national brood frame full of stores weighs about five pounds commercials about seven.
From American Bee Journal.

ALBERT'S REPLY TO ARTHUR

You're right Arthur, I do know all about the things you mentioned regarding old gas mantles and old toilets.

In particular the ingenious workings of the automatic flushing systems of the old long-drop lavatories with waste water, which was a great step forward in Social Hygiene those days.
Albert Morris

Any one in difficulty with their long-drop. Please communicate with Albert direct. Ed.

PRECIOUS HONEY

A thousand years ago, honey was a very precious commodity, so valuable that it was used as currency. People paid their taxes and rents with it.

It was a lucky day when you captured a swarm of bees. The church devised a prayer to help the faithful to take a swarm. Christ there's a swarm of bees outside, fly hither, may little cattle, in blest peace, in Gods protection, come home safe and sound! (An Anglo Saxon prayer).

Venetian records describe a shipment of sugar cane reaching Venice for the first time in 996 AD. from Persia or Egypt, but it was not imported further into Europe until the middle ages.

Sugar was not brought in any quantity into England until the development of the Caribbean sugar plantations in the seventeenth century. It would not be readily available to the man in the street until the mid eighteenth century - your great grandfathers time - well certainly mine!

In 1618 sugar cost £1.50. per pound, even 100 years later in 1745 you could hire a skilled workman for 15d (7.5p) per day.

So now you see why it was so precious. No honey, no sweetener. I seem to recall that the economic reason for the Romans presence here was for Silver, Lead and Honey. No wonder almost every cottage in the country had some skeps in or about the garden.
Bill A.

BEE STINGS

One little-known aspect of beekeeping is the uncommonly high incidence of sensitivity to bee stings found among the spouses and children of beekeepers. The members of the family who do not work with the bees appear to have a much greater chance of becoming sensitised than the person who is stung regularly. Sensitivity to bee stings is fifty times more frequent within the families of beekeepers than in the general public.

It is believed that the allergic reactions may develop because stings and venom are brought into the house on gloves, overalls, etc. by beekeepers.

Dried venom particles in the air cause family members to become sensitised when they inhale the particles. Later these individuals exhibit allergic reactions when they are stung. There are reports that workers in laboratories where bee venom is prepared for use in medicine become sensitised by being in contact with the dried venom.

To protect the family members, beekeepers would be wise to store their beekeeping clothing outside the house in an airtight container.

People who actually work with bees may receive protection from allergic reactions by being stung. Thus beekeepers might actually help themselves by not wearing gloves while working with bees under normal conditions."

THE ANNUAL DINNER

NOTICES

SWARM COLLECTORS

Beekeepers prepared to collect swarms

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

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	£3.00
Up to	10 Hives	£5.40
Up to	15 Hives	£7.20
Up to	20 Hives	£8.40
Up to	25 Hives	£9.00

Cheques sent to our treasurer should be made payable to L&NWBKA. Thanks to

MEETINGS

May 20th At Brian Jackson's, Lower House Farm, Cowling

Question Time

Let a panel of Experts (!!) solve all your problems - but only about beekeeping

June 17th Towneley Hall, Burnley

Open Day with John Zamorski

July 22nd Michael & Saipin Birt's, Long Row, Barker Lane, Mellor, Blackburn

We are fairly confident that, in spite of the Foot and Mouth Crisis, all the meetings will go ahead. Please contact Michael Birt or Ken Gaiger for confirmation

INFORMATION ABOUT 'BEE TALK'

Planned publication dates :

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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.

We had one of those . . . . the answer

Anyone who lived through the Second World War in Britain will remember the shortages. Bananas were virtually non-existent, No. 8 batteries as used in hand torches disappeared, we were told they were used to fire the then modern rockets fitted to some aircraft. Made in 1941 when the shortages really began to bite, this device was designed to split matches, lengthways, into two usable halves using old razor blades. The label on the base says "In the interests of NATIONAL ECONOMY tell your friends about 'RAFF-LINK' and send used razor blades to the patentees"

Blackburn branch's Web site is now linked to the BBKA web site www.bbka.org.uk Take a look if you have the chance.