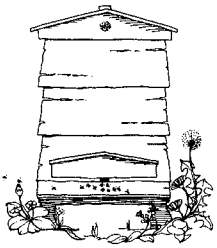

Bee Talk

Newsletter of The Blackburn and East Lancashire Branch of
The Lancashire & North West Beekeepers Association
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What's in this month's Bee Talk

Editor: Bill Ainsworth 296 Scotland Road Nelson phone 01282 614015
e.mail:- bill@scotroad.free-online.co.uk
Assistant: Arthur Bickerstaffe phone 01282 695560 e.mail:- arthurbick@btinternet.com

Editorial

2002

NEW FEATURES

You will see a couple of new items. On page 3 is an invitation for experienced beekeepers to offer help for beginner.

Sales, giveaways and wants are listed on page 11. Do take a look. We hope they will become a permanent feature of BeeTalk. I think they will work, half a dozen phone calls found me five volunteers and some give away items or very near give away.

Whilst I'm on about give away. It seems beginners in particular don't realise that our treasurer has thymol crystals and bayvoral strips for sale at a price that cannot be beaten. Bought in by the society in bulk. We should perhaps announce this more often at our meetings.

THE LOSS OF A GOOD FRIEND

Just a personal note to say how much I will miss Jean Gaiger who died on the 12th of June after a long battle against cancer.

A service was held for her at Saint Johns' Church Higham, at which there was standing room only by the time the service began.

This was to be expected as Jean was a well liked, outgoing, jolly person with many, many friends. Our beekeeping society was well represented at the service and I feel sure they were remembering Jean as the happy, jovial hostess at our meetings on many, many occasions. She will be sadly missed by us all.

OPEN MESH FLOORS

Talking to Ken Gaiger some days ago. He tells me that within a short time an open mesh floor board, will be as much a part of a standard bee hive as a queen excluder is today. I think he is probably right.

FEED BACK

The only feed back we got from the article in our last issue entitled "Varroa count from two adjacent hives" Was,

(1) It was a 'decamping' from the hive next door, because they did not like the thymol in their own hive.
(2) It was from a hatching of drone brood.

Your guess is as good as mine. All I know is that there is sill a lot of varroa in that hive.

A PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY ANGELA BARRETT ON OUR RECENT TRIP TO THORNES'S

KEEPING IN TOUCH

MR KIPLING WRITES VERY NICE VERSE

It was interesting to read Rudyard Kipling's 'Bee Boy's Song' in the June issue of Bee Talk. In those long gone days, people were closer to nature and beekeeping than they are in these HiTech times.

Another of Kipling's verses connected with bees which I remember learning over seventy years ago when at school is as follows.

There's a whisper down the field
Where the year has shot her yield
And the ricks stand grey to the sun,
Singing over then, come over
For the bee has quit the clover
And your English summer's done.

MONEY FOR OLD SKEPS

How much would you be prepared to pay for a skep? It depends what it is made of. A George III silver honey skep was recently sold at auction by Bonhams for £18,400.

DOLLY RIPLEY

A reader of Bee Talk who is thankful for being sent a regular copy by its producers, is Dolly Ripley, a friend of ours whom we first met in Cornwall some years ago.
Dolly wrote a regular column for the British Bee Journal for over thirty years under the heading, "Cornwall Calling", until it sadly closed down some few years ago.

Along with her husband Raymond who sadly died in 1998, she has lived in Cornwall for that length of time after thy moved there from Yorkshire. A swarm, settling on a shed door, triggered off as Dolly says, " a whole new way of life" for them – beekeeping. As Dolly said, Raymond studied just about everything published on bees and soon got a job with MAFF on bee diseases in West Cornwall and later filled the then vacant post of Senior Bee Disease Officer. *Albert J Morris*

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

WE HAD ONE OF THOSE . . . . . .

About 3" long, this is hallmarked silver. Made in about 1930. The tiny little bit on the stem slides down and causes the clamp at the opposite end to the ring to reduce in size. Maybe to hold a test tube containing chemicals which wouldn't affect the silver.

Maybe it is something a dentist would use or an eye surgeon.

When you want to know which is the right answer, take a look at the bottom of page 16. All will become clear!

OPERATING A HONEY WARMING CABINET

Honey deteriorates with heating as the volatile elements are driven off, natural enzymes are destroyed and chemical changes take place. As the temperature increases more changes occur, ultimately rendering the product useful only for cooking.

Use only the minimum heat required to achieve your objective. Your honey warming cabinet with a thermostatically controlled heater is a versatile tool. It will control a range of temperatures with accuracy for such purposes as the following:

75˚F (24˚C): prepares base honey and seed honey for creaming; decrystalises semi-granulated honey in jars; ferments mead and home made wine.

80˚F (27˚C): prepares combs of blossom honey before uncapping and extracting (needs 12 hours or more).

90˚F (32˚C): prepares combs of heather honey before using a heather honey loosener or roller (36 hours or more).

95˚F (35˚C): prepares combs of rape honey which, though liquid, are not dripping with thin honey and have been at least half-sealed (needs 3 to 4 days)

100˚F(38˚C): liquefies honey which has been stored in air-tight containers in bulk.

120˚F (49˚C): reclaims solidified rape honey. Cut the solid comb from the frames and mash them in a 30 lb plastic bucket.

After 2 or 3 days the wax and a proportion of the very solid crystals will be suspended in a mush in the liquid honey. Strain to remove the mush for processing in a steam or solar wax extractor.

It is important that you do not allow liquid honey to remain at 120˚F for any longer then is absolutely necessary.

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 ITALIAN CONNECTION *from Jeni*

Saluti
This time Jeni has written a little bit for you as it was such an 'Interesting' day for her.

The bees are doing fine. June was very hot, 35º almost for the whole of the month. July was very mixed and from the second week of July until now, a thunderstorm almost every afternoon. Very humid but the bees like it and are going mad on all the Summer flowers.

We extracted about 200lbs of nice, amber, Spring honey in June. Even so the supers are filling fast and, yes, even with all my forward planning we have run out of supers again and it will mean some more juggling or more extracting.

We hear you have had some decent sunshine so hope that you all get some 'rewards' for all your hard work with your bees.
Regards from us both Jake

MY UPSIDE DOWN DAY IN MAY

The upside down day started the right way up with fair weather, usual jobs done, feeding and cleaning around fifty or so rabbits and numerous hens and chick, even some weeding done and two swarms from a few days previous united.

My job is to shake a mixture of icing sugar and flour all over the bees, so in effect they are "all wearing the same shirt" - and it also may help them get rid of varroa having to clean themselves and each other, we hope so. Our swarms are always given a quick feed of sugar syrup with thymol

The day began to go strange just before dinner as I came out of the Stalla after checking the little chicks and collecting eggs. "Whoosh-thud", something black dropped out of the sky just in front of me.

Out of the corner of my eye I saw a large bird passing low. Curious I stepped forward to see what it had dropped and to my horror the black thing uncurled into a metre long black grass snake.

I took a quick step back and watched as the frantic snake tried to make an escape, first getting trapped in the angle of the house and the garden wall before eventually making it's escape.

WHATEVER NEXT INDEED !

I went in to dinner and to recount my tale, I thought 'Jake will never believe this one'.

His usual logical Yorkshire way of thinking was to enquire whether I was sure it hadn't jumped off the roof! Do snakes jump off roofs I asked, I certainly hope not, whatever next.

After dinner it is my habit to make time to have a really good walk with the dogs, two English border- collies. The weather and time of year dictate where we go. In May the grass is very long and thick, and as it's the crop round here you don't go tramping it all down, so we stick to the tracks which are very numerous. The dogs like to go swimming when it's warm and have their favourite pools, both in the river Dorbara and in the little stream that rises not far from our house. On this particular afternoon I didn't feel I wanted any more adventures, just a quiet walk. I should be so lucky!

We set off down the track in the direction of the woods and the first thing we meet are two of our cats. One very pregnant, and a young tom called 'Trouble', both of them like to come for walks but I'm not happy to have them tagging along, the grass is to long, they'll get lost.

BORED CATS

I try to get them to go home. Meanwhile the dogs have run across the meadows in the direction of the stream to their favourite bit. I'm in two minds whether to continue but the cats get bored and decide not to follow after all. The dogs realize I'm not playing their game and rejoin me on the track, off we go again.

WHAT A BOAR!

As the track curves round the bottom meadows we ford the stream, my thoughts are on all the different flowers and their names. The dogs have run on in front still eager to go swimming.

A sudden yelp and scuffle from round the bend in the track. Some thing's wrong. Instinct tells me to act and I run in the direction of the noise. As I round the bend I see 'Brigg' and a huge wild-boar all tangled up together. The wild-boar is huge, three times bigger at least than 'Brigg'. I do my 'mad woman' act, waving my stick and shouting at it. "Get out of it you* ! * ! It knows I mean it, thank goodness! and crashes up the bank and through the hedge into the last meadow before the woods.

HACKLES UP

I don't bother to see where it's gone as my main concern is for 'Beck' who's not in sight. I find her further down the track, rather slavered on but still wanting to go swimming. A lucky escape I think, as wild-boar are known to kill hunting dogs. As for me, my nerves gone - that's it, I'm going home. The dogs aren't to happy about going back the same way. 'Brigg' still with his hackles up. I realize that 'Beck' must have literally bumped into the beast as it grubbed about in the old leaves at the edge of the track. It is very unusual for a wild-boar to be about like that in broad day light. They normally feed and move about at dawn and dusk, then hide up during the day.

A 'BUZZY AFTERNOON

On arriving back at the house, having collected the cats on the way. I soon realize I'm in for a 'buzzy' afternoon.

Jake appears in bee-gear carrying a nuc-box. I get my orders to "keep an eye' on the swarm on a fence-post with another swarm at that moment joining it. Jake is off down the field and into the undergrowth by the stream to collect another swarm.

IT'S DOWN TO ME

I get my bee-gear on quickly and go to survey the situation. Jake has put an old cardboard box upside down on the fence post and a nuc-box with a hive cloth ready in position. There's an awful lot of bees inside and outside the box, plus lots still in the air. I wait watching the lettering on the box (upside down of course) disappear as more bees land. A gust of wind moves the box and the buzz gets louder, it also makes the box start to disintegrate. I move in to support the box. Still lots of bees in the air. Another gust of wind and I realise the box isn't going to last much longer. No sign of Jake, so it's all down to me.

I carefully slide the now distorted box off the post and deposit the bees swiftly into the nuc-box, cover with a cloth and give the fence-post a couple of sharp thwacks which sends most of the bees onto the ground in front of the hive. Off with the cloth and roof on, then watch and wait. Very soon I realize the bees are all quite happy to run in. I wonder if there are one or two queens in there, saves us uniting them anyway. Just then Jake appears from the undergrowth having also succeeded in hiving his swarm. On returning home for a very well deserved glass of wine, we find the cat having her kittens in the box left ready for her. Who said life in the country was boring. *Jeni*

BEES USED TO PROTECT VALUABLES

From time immemorial bees have been used to protect valuables. In Kashmir, in India, there exists a particularly savage strain of Apis dorsata, which is the largest and most lethal of bees. Apparently colonies of this bee were frequently used by bandits to guard loot in mountain caves. In the London Times of January 1953 an account is given of how smugglers on the river Hamble in Hampshire would conceal their contraband under empty skeps in a local apiary. A little honey was all that was necessary to attract sufficient bees to deter any customs officer from taking a closer inspection. Probably bees have been used to safeguard valuables in this way throughout history. One curious discovery described in the British Bee Journal of February 1951 was the finding of the long-lost building plans of Cologne Cathedral within a beehive. It is probable that they had been stored there during a period of uncertainty.

HOW I CONSTRUCTED THE VARROA FLOOR BOARD.

Using "Standard National Hive" measurements, the items are required per Varroa Floor Board.

1	7 Lengths of 20mm plastic electrical conduit.	2	54 inch x 2 x $^{3}/_{4}$ planed softwood timber.
3	16 $^{1}/_{2}$ inch x 2 x $^{3}/_{4}$ planed softwood timber	4	Tin of Plastic glue
5	Piece of Plastic sheet "offcut" $^{1}/_{8}$th inch thick from local sign maker.	6	Some 2$^{1}/_{2}$ inch long nails and wood glue (waterproof type).

Cut 2 - 18inch and a 1 - 16$^{1}/_{2}$inch piece off the 2inch x $^{3}/_{4}$ inch softwood timber, glue and nail the two longer to the shorter piece of wood at its ends to form a square "U" shape.

Then glue and nail the 1- 16$^{1}/_{2}$ inch x 2 inch x 3/4 inch to the open end of the "U" frame. This is, of course, the entrance to the hive.

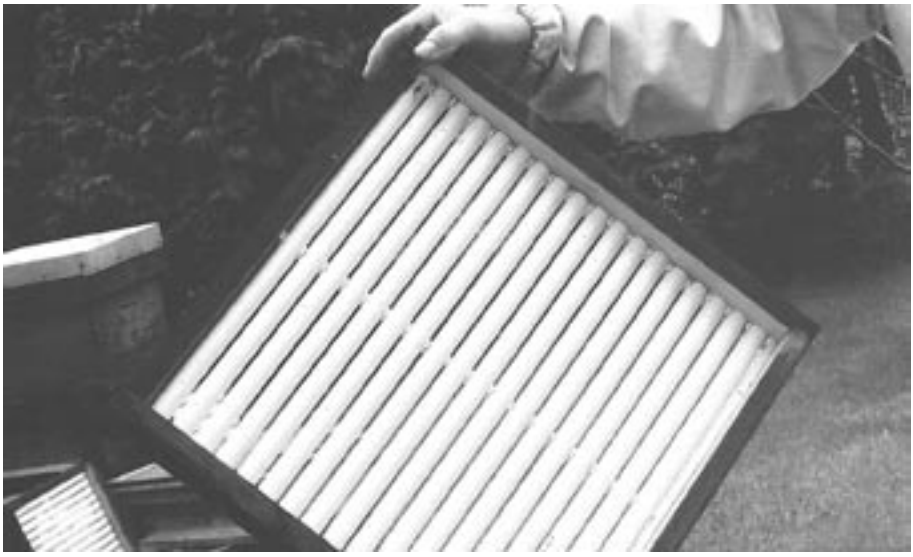
You then need to cut 18 pieces of plastic conduit to the inside measurements of the floor frame. A good tight fit. Cut your plastic sheet into strips $^{3}/_{8}$ wide and then cut these strips into $^{1}/_{2}$ inch pieces - these are the $^{1}/_{8}$ th inch spacers to create the gaps between the tubes.

The trick now is, to lay your frame onto a flat surface making sure that the frame is square and not twisted and something that, once all is glued together, it can be removed off the flat surface. Yeah, your mothers old grease proof paper would be great!

Then glue a spacer at each end of the frame and glue a tube at each end to butt up to the spacers. You then use the glue brush and put a liberal smidgen of glue at each end of the tube. This will fix the tube to the wood frame. I used three spacers per tube-One each end & one in the middle to stop "bowing" of tubes.

Complete the frame and, unfortunately, there will be a gap which will not take a further tube, but too big a gap to leave. I cut a thin strip of wood to fill the shortfall leaving an 1/8th" gap to the last tube. I chamfered the top of this wood infill, so should the mites fall on the top edge, they would slide off into, one hopes, death! Should anyone want to look at the finished article, just call round.

Keith F. Stubbs.



THE QUEEN CELL

With apologies to the more experienced beekeepers.

- If you look at a queen cell and the inside is dull and empty, then nothing is imminent.
- If the inside is polished the Queen is considering laying in the cell soon.
- An egg inside is a warning that swarm preparations are in their earliest stages.
- Tiny larva and royal jelly means swarming is likely in 9 or 10 days (Very often, however, there will be a series of cells raised and if conditions are not right when the first cells are ready to hatch, they will be torn down and the swarm will depart at a time of its choosing, from a cell raised later).
- Cells already extending and with larvae and royal jelly mean you should take preventative action now.
- Sealed cells, or nearly sealed cells indicate that radical action should be taken now.

The old fashioned way of 'cutting out the cells' is futile and just prolongs, sometimes for weeks, the period of colony instability during which the old queen does not function properly, thus lays less eggs (if any) per day, and you suffer in the later flows from lack of bee power.

Splitting; and reuniting when the young queen lays is far more beneficial.

POLLEN

Bees collect about 66 lbs of pollen per year, per hive. Pollen is the male germ cells produced by all flowering plants for fertilization and plant embryo formation. The Honeybee uses pollen as a food. Pollen is one of the richest and purest natural foods, consisting of up to 35% protein, 10% sugars, carbohydrates, enzymes, minerals, and vitamins A (carotenes), B1 (thiamin), B2 (riboflavin), B3 (nicotinic acid), B5 (panothenic acid), C (ascorbic acid), H (biotin), and R (rutine).

THE QUEEN QUESTION

A BIT NAUGHTY

Earlier on this year I split up my colonies using the "Curry" method as I usually do. One colony that I have, has always been a little bit more aggressive than the others and this year I intended to re-queen it from another stock.

The colony came from an association member who had given up beekeeping and from the first day I put them in my apiary, they were always a bit naughty. Seven weeks after I had split them up I went in to search for the new queen but could not find her or any signs of laying.

VERY INTIMIDATING

One week later I checked again and found eggs and larvae but still could not find the queen. Every time I opened up a few hundred bees would hurtle out to attack me. They would be bouncing off my veil at speed and were very intimidating.

PURSUED TO THE CAR

Last week I decided I was going to have to find her and remove her because now all the bees are hers and they have become impossible to work with pleasure. After nearly one hour of searching, which is a long time with bad bees, I found her and removed her. I closed up and left them (although they didn't leave me but chased me 30 yards back to my car)

WINGLESS

Once I had got back in and made sure no bees were with me I took out the cage I had put the queen in to examine her. Now I saw why I could not find her easily. She had no wings.

There were no signs of stumps or anything. The puzzle is, how could she have flown out to mate if she was wingless? Did she have her wings chewed off by the aggressive bees after she came back? Was she mated in the hive? How many shredded wheat can you eat in one sitting.

I CAN'T BLAME VARROA

Can anyone come up with an answer for me. Maybe this is one for Albert Morris. Send your ideas to Bill at Beetalk because I haven't a clue. I will let you know how I get on with a replacement queen and whether or not she loses her wings. Last but not least, this colony has no obvious Varroa so the mite is not the culprit.

John Zamorski

BEGINNERS PAGE

THE BEESPACE

The bee-space is the minimum gap that bees will tolerate around and between the various parts of their hive. Basically, it's the distance required for two bees to pass each other in such a gap, about $^{1}/_{4}$ or $^{3}/_{8}$.

The discovery that bees will respect a bee-space between the end of the frame and the hive-wall led to the invention, credited to Reverend L. L. Langstroth in America exactly l00 years ago, of the hanging frame with space all round. This permitted the development of moveable-frame hives similar in concept to the ones that we use today.

Though hanging frames had been used many years earlier, they were made to fit close to the hive wall, with the result that the bees would attach them to the body of the hive. They therefore had to be cut away if frames needed to be removed for any manipulation.

With a bee-space between the end of the frames and the walls and between the top of the Frames and the crown board, it became an easy task to open the hive, remove frames for inspection and manipulation, and return them with the minimum disturbance to the bees.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BEE-SPACE

The reason why the bee-space is important is that bees will fill larger gaps with brace comb and smaller gaps with propolis. Even though bees will tolerate a bee-space between the frames and the hive wall, they dislike any space between one frame and a frame above it.

For example, in a double brood box the frames in the top box are quite likely to be joined on to the frames below, unless measures are taken against it (such as smearing the top and bottom bars with Vaseline).

FRAME SPACING

There are several designs of frame aimed at maintaining the appropriate spacing. The most popular design is probably the Hoffman type. This is a self-spacing frame with end-bars that are wider than the full width of the comb to be built in them. At its widest point (only the top third of its length), the end-bar is 1 and $^{3}/_{8}$" wide, which gives the correct spacing when placed next to another frame of the same design.

PLASTIC SPACERS

Other types of frame have end-bars that are no wider than the top bar and the correct spacing is achieved instead by metal or plastic spacers, which slide onto the lug-ends of the top bar.

Frame spacing is not so critical in the supers since the bees will normally build the cells to a depth that gives a bee-space between each comb. This means that wider spacing can be used for supers, reducing the number of frames required to hold the same quantity of honey (with a corresponding reduction of effort for the beekeeper during honey extraction).

The wider spacing can be achieved either by using extra-wide spacers or by a castellated strip with fewer slots, wider apart (9 or 10 slots instead of the usual 11). A 9-slot strip has the added advantage that many extractors are designed to hold 9 frames, so each super represents one extractor-load

Though wider spacing has advantages in a super, a word of warning is necessary. If you put frames with just foundation in a 9-slot super, the bees will often build extra comb between your neatly spaced frames, completely defeating the object. It's best, therefore, to use frames that have already been drawn out to standard width. Then the bees will build the comb out wider, to give themselves the normal bee-space between them.

Dave Bates, Cumbria Bee Times Nov 2001. courtesy of B.E.E.S.

■

It's some time since we had a beekeeping joke and as there is a corner to fill, here goes:

A beekeeper was out hunting with his friend. The friend got shot. The beekeeper called 999. "My friend's been shot, I think his dead. I'm really worried." "OK, don't panic," said the operator. "First make sure he's really dead." There was a silence, then a single shot. The beekeeper came back on the phone. "OK, now what?" asked the beekeeper.

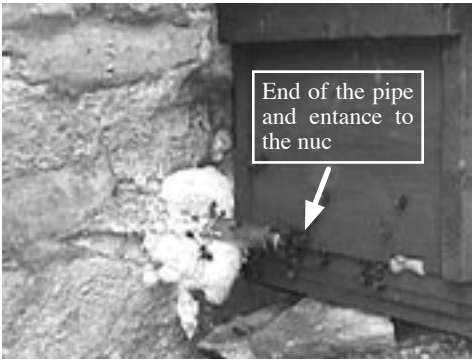
A WILD COLONY

Early in June, Bill Ainsworth rang regarding a wild colony The story started over two years ago, when Bill was called out to collect a swarm from a house at Foulridge. When he arrived the lady who had 'phoned him accurately described the swarm but it was nowhere to be seen, despite Bill searching the house and gardens.

IT'S STILL THERE

Two years later, Bill received another 'phone call from the house next door to the original call. A young couple had just moved into the house and discovered a colony of bees in the cavity wall of the stable block at the back of the house.

Prior to calling me, Bill had visited twice in an attempt to kill off the bees but to no avail. He wanted to try another idea, to see if it was possible to entice the bulk of the colony out of the wall and get them to 'take up residence' in a nucleus box. The idea being to eventually kill the queen, having removed the majority of the flying bees. The bees were entering the main stable wall through an adjoining dry stone wall. Bill had partially dismantled this wall to get to the entry point of the bees and had introduced petrol to kill off the bees with no effect. He had plugged the obvious exit holes but the bees simply found others.



DRY STONE (UN)WALLING

The dry stone wall was taken down to where the main exit holes could be seen. We blocked them all except for what appeared to be the main one into this we placed a tube approx ½ inch diameter and secured it with expanding foam. The entrance to the nucleus box was level with end of the tube forcing the bees to fly past the entrance to the nucleus box.

THE LURE

Bill had inserted a frame of brood in the box along with built frames, the idea being that the brood would attract the bees into the box and the eggs could be used to raise a new queen. Whilst we were doing all this, the bees, were quite placid, neither of us were stung despite our hands being covered by bees as we worked .

SUCCESS?

When we returned to the hive after three days it was already filling with bees, and they were building queen cells. At this point as the bees were used to flying from this point we introduced a smaller piece of tube into the original. This new tubing was bee size diameter, the principal was that as bees were coming out they wouldn't be able to get back in as easily and hopefully would be persuaded into the nucleus.

Again the bees were very placid. We left it again for four days and when we returned the bees were in full residence. All looked very hopeful. We decided that we could leave them a few days more to get the maximum number of flying bees into the nucleus when we could seal the nucleus and remove it, late in the evening.

FINISHING OFF

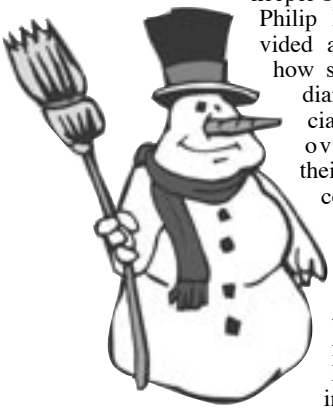
However, when we returned a dead drone was blocking in the end of the narrower tubing and the bees had discovered a new route from the wall. We started again by blocking off the new exit hole and left the tubing without the narrower insert. We came back a few days later and I removed the completed nucleus, at the same time I introduced an insecticide powder provided by Environmental Health into the tube. The idea being that the remaining flying bees, returning to the hive to find it gone would go back into the wall taking the powder with them and then hopefully it would kill off the remainder of the bees in the wall. Well that was the principal! It took over three more weeks to kill them off. The owners kept finding bees inside the rooms of the stables where it appeared, they were trying to get out using that route.

An interesting experience but I wonder if Bill will get another 'phone call from the original lady about another swarm….. what comes around goes around, so they say….
That pipe in the wall wants removing and the hole blocking up. When are you going to do that Adrian? (Bill)

PREPARING FOR WINTER

THE NUMBERS GAME

Numerical strength plays an important part in ensuring the survival of the winter colony. In an article in the November 2000 issue of the "Beekeeper's Quarterly", Philip McCabe provided a synopsis of how some Canadian commercial beekeepers over-wintered their large Dadant colonies.



They reduce the strength of the colony to five frames, house them in a nuc made from polystyrene and, for logistic control, gather them in from the forage fields into a consolidation area.

FEEDING

Two or three litres of syrup are then pumped into a float in the bottom of the nuc box and it is closed down for the winter. (Capacity wise, five Dadant frames are about equal to nine National brood frames or just over six Commercial).

Whilst the insulating properties of polystyrene are essential for survival in the arctic conditions of Canada, our colonies do not need such protection from the cold. Our problem is that it doesn't get cold enough for any length of time and break ups of the cluster occur all too frequently. As a result, flying by the bees not only incurs a higher mortality rate but also a much greater consumption of stores. These factors are of less significance in Canadian winters. As a quite separate issue, large colonies are reputably better able to fight disease.

HONEY REQUIREMENTS

To survive the winter, the gross stores requirement for a colony in a National brood box is forty pounds, for a Commercial about fifty. Net requirements can be calculated by allowing five pounds for every full frame of stores in a National brood box, seven for a Commercial. Z

FEED RECIPE

The beekeeper can make up any shortfall by feeding a syrup comprising of one part water, two parts sugar.

The reason for the strong composition is that, as the feed is intended for storage, the bees only have to reduce the moisture content by less than twenty per cent. For the record, two pounds of sugar dissolved in one pint of water makes two pints of syrup. It is also the equivalent of two and a half pounds of stores.

The feed should be provided in a top feeder in order that the colony can take it down quickly and administered no later than the end of September Prevent robbing by feeding the entire apiary on the same day, the later in the evening the better. In addition, reduced entrances and avoid spillages of syrup.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

In a compact cluster, honeybees will survive in temperatures as low as minus forty Celsius. Assuming that the population is strong, relatively healthy and with sufficient food, what then is the cause of some colonies perishing? There is little doubt that the location, ventilation and quality of the hive are amongst the key factors.

First the location; Ensure the hives are sited well away from disturbance by animals. Try to avoid hives being located under trees; long after the rain has stopped there is the constant disturbance of dripping rainwater. Prevent creeping damp by ensuring the apiary is not sited in a wet, misty area in a still air pocket.

These factors, among others, will cause stress to the colony and facilitate the spread of disease. The breathing from a cluster of ten thousand bees will generate a lot of carbon dioxide and condensation. Good ventilation is essential, not only to disperse these build-ups but by so doing, it will reduce the incidence of chalk brood and help to curtail the spread of other diseases.

AIRFLOW

There are a couple of methods of achieving the desired airflow. First the hive should be well above the ground, beyond long grass or weeds (this will also help to avoid creeping dampness).

Make sure there is a wide, open entrance with mouse guards fitted. Either raise the crown board about one eighth of an inch or remove the covers from the feed holes. If you opt for the latter, make sure there are mesh covered vents in the walls of the roof.

Bear in mind that, as the winter cluster slowly eats its way through the food store, it gradually changes it's location. It is therefore important that the ventilation encompasses all areas in the brood box.

Draughts however must be avoided and the hive entrance should not be facing into the full blast of cold winds. Ensuring the hive is fully waterproofed is another measure, which will be rewarded by a reduction in colony losses.

VARROA CONTROL - TRY IT!

In 1998 two articles on mite control were published in the 'Beekeepers News' - the first by a Dr. Pedro Rodriguez who was using Liquid Paraffin, and the second by a beekeeper on Grenada using a concoction of beeswax, cooking oil and essential oil.

After reading these two articles I decided to try using Liquid Paraffin spiked with Tea Tree Oil (Tea Tree Oil is used for the eradication of head lice). The results so far are promising - this year in 8 colonies no mites were found until mid -June (one mite in one colony). On my next visit no mites were found. At the beginning of July one mite was found in another colony; on subsequent visits no mites were found.

TEA TREE OIL ??

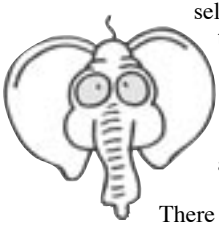
Dosage: 2 full droppers of t.t.o. per 150ml of liquid paraffin. Method: drizzle a 1/4 inch bead of the mixture along the top bars of the brood chamber at each nine-day inspection,

by Ken Croft

beebits

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
wants bees wax to make candles

Bill Ainsworth 01282 614015
is giving away standard floor boards & entrance blocks. He also has a tangential extractor cage, to fit $^{1}/_{2}$ ins or $^{19}/_{32}$ spindle in a 18ins dia extractor. Asking price £4 ONO

Pauleen Roberts 01282 438615 / 698119
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.

Michael Costello 01772 433423
has a four frame tangential extractor. Old but in good order. This is offered for free to a new beekeeper (That's how Michael got it)

Bob Fulton 01254 772780
has some white boiler suits at £5 each

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

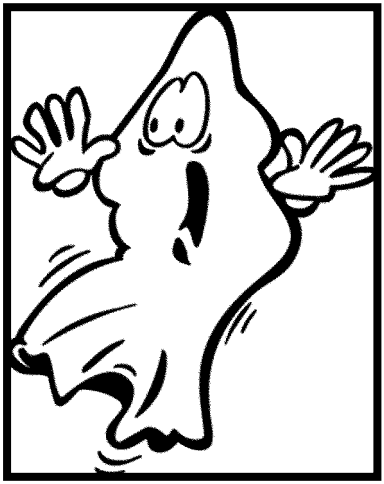
If you should be lucky enough to get something for free from a fellow beekeeper, How would you feel about making a small donation to the Association? - - Just a though (AB, Assistant, acting, honorary, co-opted, unpaid, assistant editor) By the way, what's the significance of the elephant's head at the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

GHOST BEES

I have been seeing rather a lot of "ghost bees' lately. I can well remember, one September evening in the Twickenham apiary at dusk, a lady exclaiming "Look, ghost bees" - and "ghost bees" they have remained ever since.

WHITE ALL OVER

In the fading light the bees were still working and the returning foragers, covered in a white powder, seemed, indeed, to be ghost like. Their flight appeared to be much slower than usual, almost hovering, as they homed into the hive entrances.



Closer investigation revealed the powder to be pollen from the Himalayan or Water Balsam, lmpatiens glandulifera also known as Policeman's Helmet on account of the shape of its flowers, Stinking Pops, Jumping Jacks, Bee-bums and Poor Man's Orchid.

NOT A NATIVE

This plant is not a native although it is now well established and listed in the British flora and is, no doubt, known to most of us in the south of England. It is a garden escape, introduced into the West Country late in the nineteenth century and now spread throughout the country mostly along water courses, for it is by nature a marsh loving plant. It is less frequently seen further north, perhaps being of doubtful hardiness, but I have certainly come across it at Pitlochry in the Central Highlands.

TEN FEET TALL

It is capable of spectacular growth, spending the winter below ground and not showing itself until well into May, whereupon it has the ability of shooting up to some ten feet in height within a couple of months, though often content with a mere four feet, and with stems two inches or more in diameter. It spreads partly by a creeping rootstock and is an aggressive grower, crowding out all competition with a dense mat of stems and rhizomes. There is an impressive stand along the river Mole near Dorking and along the same river towards Hersham and Molesey.

PUTTING THE SHOT

It also has a seed dispersal mechanism capable of flinging its black, spherical seeds, like shot, twelve yards, it is claimed. This dispersal technique is common among the Balsam Family, the pods building up a tremendous tension within as they ripen and dry. The slightest vibration may set them off like canon. Indeed the force with which the seeds are propelled is capable of causing injury, hence the name given to Balsams in general by gardeners, "Touch-me-not".

STINKING POPS

The name Stinking Pops comes from this explosive tendency and the fact that the plants and sometimes the flowers can have an overpowering smell. "Bee-bums" is perhaps self explanatory. Bumblebees work the flowers with obvious enthusiasm, in the process getting themselves covered, especially in the "nether" region, with the white, dust like pollen.

From the honeybee's point of view it would seem an unlikely flower, being quite large and cavernous. However, the nectary appears to be easily accessible and open to their shorter tongues. The rest of the "works", that is the anthers and stigma are carried in the upper part of the corolla tube, so placed that the bees cannot avoid a good dusting over the whole of their back.

EVENING GHOSTS

Late in the day they seem not to bother cleaning themselves up before making their return journey, hence the ghost - like manifestations.

Even when they do attempt to clean the pollen from their bodies and pack it into their corbiculi, the plants still manage partially to thwart their efforts, for they are unable to reach the extreme upper surface of the thorax. The shape of the part left untouched is another characteristic give-away as to where they have been.

courtesy of B.E.E.S.

BLACKBERRY MEAD(1 GAL)

* 1.5 lbs black honey
* 1 lb clover honey
* 1 lb blackberries (frozen)
* 1/2 tsp pectic enzyme
* 1 tsp yeast nutrient
* red wine yeast

Any black honey will work, but thistle honey is recommended. Mix honey into 3 qts water and bring to boil. Boil 20 minutes, skimming off any scum that forms. Pour into primary over thawed blackberries, pectic enzyme and yeast nutrient. When cooled to 70-75 degrees, sprinkle wine yeast over surface. Cover and stir daily for 7 days.

Strain through fine nylon bag, squeezing pulp well to extract all flavour. Transfer to secondary, fit airlock and ferment additional month. Rack, top up and refit airlock. Age until clear, then stabilize. Wait 10 days and rack into bottles. Age at least one year. [Adapted from a traditional recipe]

USES FOR BEESWAX

Beeswax has many uses

- To help prevent food from sticking to frypans rub beewax on hot pan, and wipe with a clean cloth.
- Beeswax dissolved in cleaning fluid to the consistency of a thin paste makes the finest floor and furniture wax.
- Beeswax makes needles easier to sew with.
- Toughens and preserves thread and makes it easier to tread needles.
- Helps keep sewing machine, vacuum cleaner and other power belts from slipping;
- Beeswax on irons helps prevent the sticking of starched clothing. To apply: rub on heated iron, wipe clean with a cloth.
- Waterproofs fishing line, clothes lines, shoes and leather articles; eases sticking doors, drawers and windows.
- Lubricates and rustproofs tools, particularly saws and wood bits.
- Makes screws easy to drive into hard or green wood. Polishes waxes skis, snowboard, toboggans, etc...
- Archers use it on bow strings.
- Seals tree wounds, grafts and budding.
- Stops plumbing leaks.
- Indispensable for woodgrainers, auto-body men. yachtsmen, cobblers sailmakers, and many others.
- Beeswax melts at 145 degrees F. and Flashes at 563 degrees F.

ROYAL JELLY

Royal Jelly is the substance that turns an ordinary bee into the Queen Bee. It is made of pollen which is chewed up and mixed with a chemical secreted from a gland in the nursing bee's heads. This "milk" or "pollen mush" is fed to all the larvae for the first two days of their lives.

Scientists decided to try feeding the queen bee's diet to other animals with surprising results. The life span of pigs and roosters showed as much as a thirty- percent increases. Fruit flies fed royal jelly increased in size and in rate of production. Chickens given royal jelly laid twice as many eggs, and older chickens began to lay again.

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Chemical analysis of royal jelly found it rich in protein and the B vitamins (especially panothenic acid). However, analysis of royal jelly fails to break it down into all its different components. It cannot be synthesized.

The Ken Preedy Memorial Apiary

HOLDEN CLOUGH VISITS FOR 2002

Anyone wishing to help or even just watch will be made most welcome. They should, however, contact the 'Duty Manager' for the day in question to find out what the situation is and times etc. Casual visits without making contact could prove to be a waste of time.

DUTY MANAGERS

Bill Ainsworth	01282 614015	Ken Gaiger	01282 778887
Michael Birt	01706 222849	David Bush	01200 428152

SCHEDULE OF VISITS TO HOLDEN CLOUGH FOR 2002

Sept 15th Bill Ainsworth Sept 29th Ken Gaiger

We shall have to allocate some days to cleaning the apiary and preparing for Winter. Including erecting a new hut at the apiary.

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS FOR 2002

DATE	TIME	VENUE	ORGANISER	SUBJECT
Sun 22nd Sept.	2.30pm	Angela Moyle's	John Zamorski	Barbecue (Bring your own drinks!)
Sun 6th Oct	2pm	Castle Cement	Pauline Roberts	Honey Show & Auction
Wed 6th Nov.	7.30pm	The Brewery	Michael Birt	AGM & Discussion

NOTES ABOUT THE MEETINGS

SUNDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER

A get together with a Barbecue. Food provided and cooked by John Zamorski.

VERY IMPORTANT Angela & John really do need to know how many people will be at the barbecue in order to provide sufficient food. Please ring Angela on 01200 441515 or John on 01200 427661. Members, family and friends are welcome.

DON'T FORGET TO BRING YOUR OWN DRINKS!

SUNDAY 6TH OCTOBER

All of you who visited Thorns on what was a very enjoyable trip must have come away with some new ideas for entries into our 2002 Honey Show. The Members who make all the arrangements to get Castle Cement as our venue work very hard and it would be very nice if we could increase our exhibits there.Even if you do not put an entry in, please come and support as it is a very good afternoon with a great sense of fellowship. If we don't have an auction, we will have workshops again. Regards, Pauline

WEDNESDAY 6TH NOVEMBER

This is the date of the AGM at Samlesbury Brewery. This is not a boring business meeting although, of course, business has to be done. The Association values your ideas and opinions and our AGM's are often interesting social events. One point which will be raised is a possible increase in subscriptions to cover the National Association Capitation Fee. Let us have your views.

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE !!

Place an advert in BeeTalk and contact beekeepers World Wide (Well!, Jake's in Italy, Bridget's in Montserat 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 The Association are £11 for a full member and £2 for each additional family member.

BEE DISEASE INSURANCE COSTS ARE AS FOLLOWS

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**

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

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 and Colne	**Bill Ainsworth**	**01282 614015**
Padiham	**Ken Gaiger**	**01282 778887**
Accrington and Burnley	**John Wilson**	**01254 886120**

INFORMATION ABOUT 'BEETALK'

Planned Publication Dates:

December 2002 March 2003
June 2003 September 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

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'

MAKE A VERY SPECIAL NOTE !!

Our Honey Show is on Sunday 6th October and we really do need you to take part, let's make it the best ever. Very soon after is the Lancashire Honey Show. We did very well last year - let's do even better this time round.

Please! Please! have a word with Pauline Roberts on 01282 438615.

Scrapings

PATRON SAINT

December the 7th is St. Ambrose day, the patron St. of beekeepers, candle makers School children Students and those responsible for administration in the French army

CLEANING EQUIPMENT

Wax melts roundabout the boiling point of water. So remember to wash all extracting equipment etc. in cold or tepid water until all the particles of wax are removed BEFORE scalding them. Melted wax all over the equipment is not good . It is the very devil to get off.

TWO FEET OR TWO MILES?

The rule often given to a beekeeper wanting to move bees is 'two feet or two miles'. This need not be so. When moving a hive across an open space like a lawn, with no other hive around, much bigger jumps can be made. This is particularly true if one takes the trouble to rotate the hive on its stand for two or three days before the move. Turn it so that the back faces the direction of the move. When the bees seem happy', the hive can be moved backwards along that line in jumps of three-to-four metres. Any move more complex than straight lines can be done, but in that case it is simpler to move the hive to a distant site (two miles) for about a week and then return it to its new position.

Patience is a virtue in many things. The simplest way of all to re-arrange an apiary is to wait for winter. Move the hives to their new positions when cold weather has stopped the bees flying for a longish period, often in January.

Confining bees for about a week makes most of them re-orientate to their new positions when they fly. Cold weather does this for you with no stress. The whole operation should be done on a cold day, but whatever else you do, don't jar the bees!

CREOSOTE WILL VANISH

Jim Bennie, from Lanark, recently put up a new fence in his garden and decided to protect it with creosote. But he had second thoughts when a friend told him he'd heard the stuff was dangerous.

It turns out Jim was right to hesitate - the European Union decided to ban creosote because it was a cancer risk. But the issue hasn't gained much publicity and tins of the chemical are still on the shelves, where they'll stay until the ban comes into force in June 2003.
Sorry, Albert. Somebody's pinched your favourite topic (Ed)

VARROA MITES

Two to three thousand varroa mites can kill a stock of honey bees in Winter.

TWELVE BEES

It is said Twelve honey bees work all there lives to produce one tea spoon of honey.

DEFINITION OF A WORD

Mellifluous (muh-LIF-LOO-uhs) adjective

"Smoothly or sweetly flowing, as if like honey."

From Middle English, from Late Latin mellifluus, from melli-, from Latin mel (honey) + fluere (to flow).]

Some other words that come from the same root are marmalade, molasses, and, the unlikely mildew! One word that has somewhat similar sense and sound but different root is melodious (from melos: song).
I bet you didn't know that ! (Ed)

We had one of those . . .

Did you see 'Sunset Boulevard'? - No, not the Lloyd Webber show but the film with William Holden and Gloria Swanson. At an early point in the film, William Holden says something like ". . . . she was reclining on a chaise longue, smoking a cigarette in a funny cigarette holder". Just like the one in our picture. Little finger through the ring and 'fag' fixed firmly in the clamp at the other end.