



Bee Talk

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Registered Charity

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Editorial

SEPTEMBER 2008

THE END OF HOLDEN CLOUGH

Hi every one, just got back from the beekeepers meeting at David Bush's where they did a demo. of wax craft and the auction of Holden Clough stuff. The wax demonstration was well received and most of the auction stuff was given away which delighted every one!

KEN GAIGER

I have to report that Ken Gaiger is in dock again, some virus that is being difficult to identify. It is so difficult to identify that although he has been in Blackburn Royal for two weeks, he is to be kept there for a further two. He says he feels OK and he certainly looks OK.

HONEY CROPS

Going back to the recent meeting, it would seem that the poor weather we have been having has left the vast majority of us with a poor honey crop.

This is reported from members all over the area, So don't feel depressed if you have only a small amount of honey on, or none at all for that matter. By the way, if you are within flying distance of the heather moors and you still have your flower honey supers on, the flower honey will have been spoilt by now by the bees putting heather honey on top of it. Not a lot of good telling you now, I know, but you will certainly remember next year.

QUESTIONNAIRE

I sent out 100 Questionnaires about Colony Collapse Disorder and to date I have had 20 returns apparently this is about the number to be expected, rather better in fact. I'm not qualified to work out the ins and outs of this and will try to get some one a bit more knowledgeable to look at it.

LOSSES

In the mean time our losses would seem to be running at about 30% previously a loss of about 5% to 10% over the Winter period was thought to be acceptable. So we are in a serious position and losses are way over the top. There is no set method of dealing with varroa, in fact there are one or two very weird concoctions being used. We desperately need a fixed method of treatment that is simple and easily carried out.

OXALIC ACID

I would advocate using Oxalic acid in December and January; Apiguard at the first inspection in March; then Apiguard again as soon as supers are removed in August/September. Then, back to Oxalic acid in December/January It works in my experience and at less than £5 per treatment for Apiguard and pennies for Oxalic acid it only equates to three jars of honey. Any one with a better method that has been proved to work - please do let us know.

BITS AND PIECES

It's really a bit sad that we don't get more bits and pieces from members for "Members Pages". Scribble something down on a piece of paper or an email about something that happened; something you've seen or something you've heard. We all thrive on bits of gossip. Lets have a bit of nonsense, it makes the world go round .

THE HONEY SHOW

It's the time for our Annual Honey Show once again. It's always nice to be a winner but without all the entries that don't get an award, the honey show just wouldn't be a show. Do make the effort to put something in. You will be helping to make the show a success and one of the easiest ways to learn is to compare your entry against the winners. You'll find full details on page 17

WHAT'S A BLOG?

That's what I asked Arthur when he suggested I include a Blog in a website about British Black Bees. It is very experimental and by no means complete but we would like to have your comments. More details on page 9

(By the way, a blog is where I put entries - as in a journal - on the Black Bees Website, the difference being there is a place for you to add your comments about what I and others have said.)

FINALLY THE AGM

We will try to get through the boring bits of the AGM as quickly as possible and concentrate on having more of a social event- . The venue has changed, we shall have a guest speaker - not necessarily on beekeeping and family and friends are welcome. Take a look at page 8 For more details



3 TYPES OF INSECT

There are more similarities than differences between the three types of bee. They are all built of three parts - head, thorax and abdomen. On the head are mouthparts, made up of mandibles and a proboscis, one pair of compound eyes, three ocelli (simple eyes) and one pair of antennae. The thorax is made up of three thoracic segments on which are three pairs of legs and four wings paired. The first pair of legs incorporates a device for cleaning the antennae, the other legs carry implements for handling pollen and propolis. The whole structure is covered by a hard outer covering (an outer skeleton) which is built into plates and protects the insect as well as providing an attachment for muscles.

WORKERS have to do all the jobs within the nest as well as defending it from attack and doing the foraging, so they are adapted for this role by having tools of various kinds. On their heads their compound eyes have up to 6900 ommatidia each. The proboscis is fairly long (5.5-7 mm) to enable the bee to reach into flowers for nectar (it is also used in nectar processing) and the mandibles are strong, spoon-shaped, ridged structures used for eating pollen, manipulating and shaping wax, scraping propolis, feeding brood, grooming, fighting and feeding the queen. Almost the original Swiss knife. To carry the solid pollen and propolis, back to the nest, each worker bee has its pollen baskets on the modified tibiae of its hind legs. That leaves us with the abdomen. The four pairs of wax glands are found on the under side of the body. They produce the wax needed to build the comb which makes up the whole nest. Finally, the worker bee has a straight, barbed sting.

There are more similarities than differences between the three types of bee



THE QUEEN spends most of her time inside the nest just laying eggs. However, she does have to fly, both to mate in the early part of her life and when she leaves with a swarm later. She has to establish herself, at the beginning of her life, as the sole queen in the colony. The most obvious difference between her and her workers is her size.

Her large abdomen is necessary to accommodate her huge ovaries. She is larger all over but is somewhat lacking in other ways. Her compound eyes have fewer ommatidia (about 4000 in each eye) and her antennae, although they have the same number of segments as the worker, carry fewer sense organs. She does not forage and is fed throughout her life by worker bees so her proboscis is shorter but her mandibles, used only for tearing down queen cells, are toothed and quite sturdy. She has no pollen baskets or pollen-collecting apparatus, nor does she have wax glands. She does have a sting but it is curved, with tiny barbs and is usually used only to kill other queens.

THE DRONE is adapted to perform one function, to mate with a queen. To that end, he is bigger than the worker.

His thorax is bigger to accommodate the huge flight muscles that he needs to power broader wings to fly to drone congregation areas and chase queens.

His abdomen is larger because, in the act of mating, his reproductive system turns inside out and that needs powerful pressure from abdominal muscles. His sensory system needs to be well developed so his antennae have an extra segment

and carry many more sensilla than do those of the worker (about 10 times as many). His compound eyes contain up to 8600 ommatidia each and take up so much room that the three ocelli are pushed to the front of his face rather than the top of the head, as in the worker and queen.

The structures which he lacks, or possesses in simplified form, are related to the fact that he does not take part in any hive activities! The end of his abdomen is blunt. This is because, as a male, he has no sting (a female attribute which has developed from the egg-laying apparatus). He still needs food, but he does not spend his life probing flowers and maximising his

nectar production, so his proboscis is short. His mandibles are small and he does not co-ordinate them very well. He has no pollen baskets or wax glands. The Queen and the worker are developed from the same kind of egg, so the differences in them (which are enormous) must be due to the nutrition they receive during their development. So, there is probably more to nutrition in the development stage than meets the eye, in humans as well!!

WINTER STORES

In August, a colony that has a vigorous queen will continue breeding well into the Autumn - although at a reduced rate, and feeding in August is not necessary to stimulate breeding.

With luck there should still be an income from the late flowers. Feeding in August is only required in bad years or if a colony is short of food when we have taken the supers off and find the colony has insufficient stores in the brood chamber to get them through the Winter. This is a regular occurrence in our part of the World.

Feeding for winter stores should take place in September and should be completed by the end of the month. Thick sugar syrup (2 lb. white sugar dissolved in 1 pint of water) should be given in a rapid contact feeder. You should feed sufficient to give a good colony at least 30 lbs of winter stores.

Whilst we are at it let's get the feed question right: **Thick syrup** is 2 lb. sugar to one pint water. **Thin syrup** is 1lb. sugar to one pint water.

Why the two? **Thick syrup** is to feed the bees. It is nearly the thickness of honey and will go into the combs with little processing, and stored there. On the other hand, **Thin syrup** is more like nectar coming in from the flowers it needs a lot of processing before storing and is supposed to encourage the bees to increase their rate of breeding - perhaps it makes them think its Spring time. *Bill A*



THE CAUSES

Pennsylvania State researchers are making progress in pinning down the cause or causes of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD),

ISRAELI ACUTE PARALYSIS VIRUS

In 2007, a team led by Diana Cox-Foster, professor of entomology, reported a strong correlation between CCD and the presence of Israeli acute paralysis virus, making the pathogen a prime suspect in the disease.

Since that time, researchers have introduced IAPV to healthy honey bee colonies in a controlled greenhouse environment in an effort to induce a collapse.

Within one week of introducing the virus, they observed dramatic bee mortality, with bees dying outside the colonies across the room in the greenhouse.

Bees were found on the floor with paralytic-type movements, and guard bees were observed removing paralytic bees from colonies and flying across the room. The majority of these 'twitcher' bees were found to have IAPV.

POTENTIAL TRIGGERS

Within a month, infected colonies had declined to small clusters of bees, many of which had lost their queens. These data indicate that IAPV is a highly pathogenic virus. But they do not yet support a finding of IAPV as the sole cause of Colony Collapse Disorder.

Researchers still suspect that additional stresses are needed to trigger CCD. Among the potential triggers being investigated are environmental chemicals. Penn State scientists analysing pollen, wax, adult bees and brood (larvae) have found the presence of dozens of chemicals, including pesticides used by agricultural producers to protect crops and by beekeepers to control hive pests such as parasitic mites.

From APIS UK

Pinning
down the
cause or
causes of
CCD

HOW TO TREAT

I asked John Verran, our Regional Bee Inspector What is the simple way to treat varroa. He came up with the following:-

I have yet to come up with a complete answer. I've just extracted over 1,000lb of honey that ALL came in from the balsam (its very light colour with a water content of only 17.5%). I took it off two weeks ago and applied Apiguard at the same time, last Sunday I applied the second dose. Next Sunday I will give 1gallon of feed. I put the Apiguard on used envelopes (I have a big tub of the stuff) and the bees have 'disappeared' them so I think it has worked well. To reduce ventilation I put in my catch trays but I have not yet checked the mite drop, I'll do that when I put the feed on. I'll let you know the outcome.

In the depth of winter I will dose with Oxalic acid. The most important thing is that I have



checked my mite levels twice during the season and I was pretty confident that they were low, I shook swarmed several colonies with a high count back in May.

The shook swarms worked very well but I had to feed them to draw out comb (two or three 1/2 gallon

feeds) then came the bad weather and I checked frequently to see if they needed more feed but with little brood they were OK. They came strong just as the weather improved and the Balsam came into flower.

The best advice remains to treat with Apiguard early August then with Oxalic acid mid winter, I have taken the risk of loosing colonies by treating too late and my only redeeming feature is that I have been monitoring mite levels.

Cheers John

East Carmarthenshire Beekeepers Association

(This is the only way to keep your bees. Do as John says and hammer the varroa. Ed.)

SACRIFICIAL COMB

A day or so after the swarm is hived and the bees are busy drawing out foundation take a frame well covered with advanced but open brood from another hive and insert this into the centre of the swarm.

All the desperate female Varroa will "dive" into these cells to reproduce.

Once all the brood is sealed remove the frame, and destroy it, thus sacrificing the brood but in doing so removing most of the mites. If you wish to be even more certain then add another frame of unsealed brood once most of the first ones are capped. This will trap the last few mites for destruction. Leave the swarm to raise its own brood and then do an icing sugar treatment over a mesh floor, which will remove mites if any are left—some will almost certainly be! An added benefit of this will be that you can monitor the effectiveness of your comb trapping and so formulate your next IPM [integrated pest management] step.

Bob Gilbert

Reproduced from The Warwickshire Beekeeper, March 2008 through the BEES scheme

SANCTUARY

The world's first bee sanctuary has been created. The Bumblebee Conservation Trust (www.bumblebeeconservationtrust.co.uk) has joined forces with

RSPB Scotland to create a bee-friendly meadow beside Loch Leven, in Perth and Kinross.

(By the way, did you know that there are 250 different species of bee in Britain?) A colleague recommends a little tip to revive a dying bumblebee caught indoors: mix some honey with water on a teaspoon, offer to the suffering bee, having first carefully taken it into the great outdoors, and the sugar rush should do the trick.

From the Daily Telegraph

RAISE A FEW QUEENS.

Here is a well tried and simple way to do it and with this method you can expect to raise 7 or 8 queens. More than you need I'm sure.

Select a colony from which you wish to raise your queens and wait until early or late May. All that is required is a five frame nucleus hive and a frame or two.

FIRST DAY: Take the brood comb with the



Queen and bees on it, put them into the nucleus hive about three or four feet away from the parent colony.

Put another brood comb containing **emerging** brood and 2 others containing food and **pollen** into the nucleus hive box. Shake in bees from two more frames. Put on a feeder containing syrup. Reduce entrance to the minimum to prevent robbing.

SIXTH DAY: Go through the parent stock and select the cells you intend to raise Queens from, and mark with a drawing pin on the top bar. Go right through the stock and remove any other queen cells,

ELEVENTH DAY: Make another check on the parent colony to ensure there are no wild cells. Shake all the bees off if necessary, DO NOT shake the frames with the selected cells on.

SEVENTEENTH DAY: The queen cells on the prepared foundation will be near emergence. You can now make up more nucleus hives and give them a queen cell or de queen other hives and insert the ripe queen cells in the brood comb. Give the bees time to realise they are queen less say 24 hours. The nucleus hive can now be united with its parent colony or given a Queen cell. Killing the old Queen

Remember to follow the timing exactly.

The old Queen can be used as insurance and got rid of when you have succeeded with raising the Queens.

BEE GARDEN

I have, unwittingly of course, planted my garden in such a way that keeps my honeybees on one side of the path and my bumblebees on the other - alliums to the left, *Lysimachia clethroides* to the right - and from the hum surrounding me on these long summer evenings, I can't believe that British bee populations are on the point of collapse.

LOST HONEYBEES

However, the truth is that honeybee colonies have lost 30 to 50 per cent of their numbers since the varroa parasite arrived in Britain in the early 1990s, and, crucially, it is now reported that English honey may run dry by Christmas. Disaster! Which is why I was heartened by the news last week that researchers at the University of Warwick and Rothamsted Research have found fungi that kill the parasite.

CHEWING THROUGH PAPER

The threat to bees (and consequently to commercial crop pollination and, in turn, food production) has been taken seriously for some years, but what is so engaging about the fungus story is that it will mean bee "footbaths" at the entrances to hives, or the fungi being encased in paper (honeybees, apparently, love chewing through paper), by which means they can dose themselves. Please, let this mark the beginning of the end for the murderous mite. ●

ALCOHOL

Evidence of honey found in 9000 year old pottery thought to be used for brewing indicates that Neolithic man knew how to have a good night out courtesy of the bees.



PREPARE TO TREAT WITH OXALIC ACID THIS WINTER

Oxalic acid $\text{CH}_2\text{CO}(\text{COOH})_2$ is an organic acid. It is found in our own body cells, as we use it ourselves to break down sugars in our own bodies. It is naturally occurring in rhubarb and spinach. It can be neutralized with milk, and it is very poisonous in large quantities. A small amount of Oxalic acid is also naturally occurring in Honey.

OBSERVE SAFETY

December/February when the queen has stopped egg laying is the best time to treat for varroa mites with oxalic acid. The oxalic crystals are mixed with water and sugar as follows: 35-gram oxalic acid crystals + 1 litre of water + 1 kilo of sugar. It is important to take great care when mixing oxalic acid, and observe safety precautions

WEATHER FORECAST

When treating bees with the oxalic acid mix, make sure that the weather forecast promises reasonable weather, which allows the bees to fly out and empty their stomachs after treatment. If the bees cannot fly after treatment there is a risk of diarrhoea, as the bees empty their bowels in the hives with an increased risk of nosema.

The Oxalic acid mixture is **dripped** down on all occupied frames so that it runs onto the bees. Using 5 ml per seam of bees, but do not drip on to frames, which do not have bees on. Use a measured dosing syringe, these are available from Veterinary surgeons or agricultural supply merchants.

MONITORING

Most beekeepers do not use Apistan or Bayvarol now with the increasing problem of Varroa resistant mites, in the UK, and other European Countries. In order to treat the varroa mite effectively it is necessary to carry out monitoring of the mite population in the colony. Monitoring is carried out by laying an insert at the bottom of the hive, and counting the numbers that fall down. It has been shown that there is a linear connection between the **natural** mite deaths as counted on a plastic insert and the amount of varroa mite in the colony and brood. Studies have shown the following connection Total number of mites in a colony = average number of drops per day X 120.

DOUBLE MONTHLY

Be aware at the same time, that the amount of mites in a colony with brood will double monthly,

In areas with inadequate treatment of varroa mites, a huge invasion can take place from colonies on the verge of collapse. It is, therefore, necessary to monitor several times throughout a season.

NEIGHBOURS

The times are dependent on how effectively one's neighbouring beekeepers have treated their colonies. The first monitoring should take place at the beginning of May, and should

also take place at the beginning of June, July and August. If it is not possible to carry out these four monitorings then, as a minimum, monitoring should be carried out in June and August. As far as possible monitoring should be carried out on all colonies in the apiary.

TREAT ALL THE COLONIES

An average colony with an outbreak of Acute Paralysis Virus will probably die when there are about 5,000 mites present. In order to save the colony, treatment ought to be carried out much earlier when there is a maximum of 1,000 mites present. If, on average, 2 mites per day fall onto the insert in the course of a week's count at the beginning of May, then treatment should be carried out at the latest at the end of July. It is necessary to treat all the colonies in an apiary.

In order to treat the varroa mite effectively it is necessary to carry out monitoring of the mite population in the colony



Don't forget notices on pages 10 and 11

GERMANY BANS CERTAIN PESTICIDES

Germany has banned a family of pesticides that are blamed for the deaths of millions of honeybees. The German Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety has suspended the registration for eight pesticide seed treatment products used in rapeseed oil and sweetcorn.

CLOTHIANIDIN

The move follows reports from German beekeepers that two thirds of their bees died earlier this month following the application of a pesticide called Clothianidin. "It's a real bee emergency," said Manfred Hederer, president of the German Professional Beekeepers' Association. "50-60% of the bees have died on average and some beekeepers have lost all their hives."

SWEETCORN

Tests on dead bees showed that 99% of those examined had a build-up of Clothianidin. The chemical, produced by Bayer Crop Science, a subsidiary of the German chemical giant Bayer, is sold in Europe under the trade name Poncho. It was applied to the seeds of sweetcorn planted along the Rhine this spring.

TREATED SEEDS

The seeds are treated in advance of being planted or are sprayed while in the field. The company says an application error by the seed company which failed to use the glue-like substance that sticks the pesticide to the seed, led to the chemical getting into the air.

HIGHLY UNUSUAL

Bayer spokesman Dr Julian Little told the BBC's Farming Today that misapplication is highly unusual. "It is an extremely rare event and has not been seen anywhere else in Europe," He said. Clothianidin, like the other neonicotinoid pesticides that have been temporarily suspended in Germany, is a systemic chemical that works its way through a plant and attacks the nervous system of any insect it comes into contact with. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency it is "highly toxic" to honeybees.

This is not the first time that Bayer, one of the world's leading pesticide manufacturers with sales of €5.8bn (£4.6bn) in 2007, has been blamed for killing honeybees.

UNITED STATES

In the United States, a group of beekeepers from North Dakota is taking the company to court after losing thousands of honeybee colonies in 1995, during a period when oilseed rape in the area was treated with Imidacloprid. A third of honeybees were killed by what has since been dubbed colony collapse disorder.

FRANCE

Bayer's best selling pesticide, Imidacloprid, sold under the name Gaucho in France, has been banned as a seed dressing for sunflowers in that country since 1999, after a third of French honeybees died following its widespread use. Five years later it was also banned as a sweetcorn treatment in France. A few months ago, the company's application for Clothianidin was rejected by French authorities.



SAFE FOR BEES

Bayer has always maintained that Imidacloprid is safe for bees if correctly applied. "Extensive internal and international scientific studies have confirmed that Gaucho does not present a hazard to bees," said Utz Klages, a spokesman for Bayer CropScience.

BANNED ACROSS EUROPE

Last year, Germany's Green MEP, Hiltrud Breyer, tabled an emergency motion calling for this family of pesticides to be banned across Europe while their role in killing honeybees were thoroughly investigated. Her action follows calls for a ban from beekeeping associations and environmental organisations across Europe. Philipp Mimkes, spokesman for the German-based Coalition Against Bayer Dangers, said: "We have been pointing out the risks of neonicotinoids for almost 10 years now. This proves without a doubt that the chemicals can come into contact with bees and kill them. These pesticides shouldn't be on the market."

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Ken Gaiger is back in hospital, we wish him well and look forward to having him back as an active member. This however, means we have to change the venue of the AGM.

Colne Masonic Hall have kindly agreed to let us hold the AGM in their premises. We are also going to change things slightly and make it a bit more of a social event with families and friends invited. We shall aim to get through the actual business part quickly and this will be followed by an outside speaker (To be arranged). We shall have a potato pie supper with tea, coffee and soft drinks available.

Please ring Pauline Roberts on 01282 438615 to let her know how many will attend.

SUNDAY 16TH NOVEMBER AT 2PM
COLNE MASONIC HALL, 91 ALBERT ROAD, COLNE BB8 0BS

COLONY COLLAPSE IN SPAIN

The Spanish team of Drs. Mariano Higes Raquel Martin-Hernandes, and Aránzazu Meana gave compelling presentations detailing their investigation into Spanish colony collapses. They found *N. ceranae* to be the culprit. The symptoms appear to be strikingly similar to CCD (however, it is clear that there are colonies collapsing in the US without detectable nosema).

IT MAY SPREAD

Genetic evidence presented separately by Geoff Williams and Judy Chen indicate that *ceranae* is closer to *N. bombi* (from bumblebees) or *N. vespula* (from wasps and some other insects), which helps explain why the European honey bee lacks resistance to it, and suggesting that it may spread to other bees.

NO LONGER DIGEST FOOD

Higes and Meana explained that the pathogenesis of *ceranae* infection in a colony progresses through four stages: it builds slowly the first year, and can be detected mostly in foragers. The bees then compensate by rearing more brood, even through winter. There may be a "false recovery" during the second summer, during which the colony rebounds somewhat. Finally, the bees "lose ventricular function" (they can no longer digest food), stop eating (and stop taking medicated syrup, or pollen supplement), and simply starve to death in the midst of plenty. Most adults die far from the hive, leaving a handful of young bees and the queen. The Spanish researchers don't count spores, however. To them, a colony is either "clean," with zero spores, or infected, and on its way to eventual collapse unless treated with fumagillin. (Fumidill B).

START TAKING ACTION

This knowledge makes accurate spore counting moot, and home diagnosis with a 'scope even easier. When you first start finding spores at a low level, it means that you'd better start taking action, and don't expect the colony to deal with the disease by itself.

WHAT I'M SEEING IN CALIFORNIA

After checking dozens of samples from various yards in my own operation, and those of friends (especially of lagging colonies, dinks, and deadouts), I've found some trends. First, there appears to be a large location factor, possibly due to nutrition. Some yards have zero spores, whereas in others nearly every colony is loaded.

Most of our dinks and deadouts (even those with dead bees in front) showed zero to low spore counts (although a few showed moderate counts). This is opposed to the high correlation of nosema presence in CCD colonies. However, my late splits that just wouldn't build up were loaded with spores, and dwindled badly in fall.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

After hearing Higes' presentation, it is tempting to blame CCD on *N. ceranae*. However, it is clear that there are other factors or pathogens engaged in some colony collapses. Whether *ceranae* will become a major factor in colony losses in our future is yet to be determined, yet likely. In any case, it would be prudent for beekeepers to monitor nosema levels in their operations, and to understand their management and treatments options to deal with this parasite.

THE ITALIAN CONNECTION.

JENIE'S JOTTINGS.

The Month of May is normally the most exciting and splendid Month here with all the new Spring growth and all the awakening of the reptiles.

THE RETURN OF WINTER

This year having had a mild Winter and then a warm Spring it was quite a shock for every thing when Winter returned in the middle of May and for many weeks it was cold and wet. It brought all the Spring growth to a stand still and the poor bees were throwing out dead brood. I became concerned for the many swarms that had no time to build up and ended up feeding some.

DON'T MUCK ABOUT!

During this spell of inclement weather I had an enormous swarm which 'chanced' it in a brief dry spell. Having got set up to hive it, I watched as it went back home. Not to the original hive but the one next door to it. I've never seen so many bees in one hive before. There it stayed for several days waiting for the weather to change before it set off again. This time I managed to hive it but they still weren't settled and set off the following day again. While hiving them again I spotted the Queen, managed to catch her and put her in the hive telling her to stop 'mucking 'about and to stay there. It worked! She did too, third time lucky and since then they even produced half a super of honey for me.



This isn't Jeni's horse but it is a Bardigiano

All the wet weather gave me a chance to make up lots more frames. I never seem to have enough, even with uniting most of the swarms.

Hay-making was very late this Summer and went on into late July. This means that the herba-medica (alfalfa) is only now beginning to flower so there maybe a late crop of honey off that if the weather continues to be favourable.

WILD BOAR

"Icaro" my Bardigiano horse had a nasty experience with the bees. Having been frightened by wild boar he flew with "Majic" the filly, out of their field into the village. In his panic he ended up in the apiary where he knocked over three hives and became caught up in the fence. After trying to rescue him to no avail, as I needed wire cutters and more importantly a veil as I was being attacked by the very angry bees. 'Icaro' was also stung many times on his face, so the pair of us looked like we'd been beaten up. Fortunately the bees weren't damaged, just very angry at the disturbance. I think 'Icaro' will have learnt his lesson.

TOURIST HONEY

So far this year I have taken off about 80 kilos of honey and hopefully there will be some more.

I always like to take some off at the end of July as August is the holiday month with people retuning 'home' from all over the World and they like to take some Italian honey back when they go.

Tante Salute Jeni.

IF YOU HAVE A COMPUTER . . .

. . . Take a look at the website and blog on "Black Bees in Pendle". It is very much unfinished but I would like you to look at the experiment and let me know what you think. You can leave your comments on the blog or email me at bill@scotroad.co.uk.

You can find the site at www.arthurbick.co.uk. - Arthur is helping me set up the site, hence the domain name.



Notices

**DOWN WITH
VARROA**

**INFORMATION ABOUT
'BEE TALK'**
Planned Publication
Dates: March 2008, June
2008, September 2008,
December 2008

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These chemicals for treating bees can be
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Library. There is an extensive range of bee books
etc. that may be borrowed.
Our librarian, David Rayner brings some with him
to our meetings. Contact him on 01200 426898
for special requests.



FUTURE MEETINGS

SUN 21ST SEPT

2PM

BARBEQUE

John Zamorski

At Mr & Mrs Moyle's, Pendle House, Twiston BB7 4BZ

Always a 'Reight good do' and everybody is welcome. Please let John
Zamorski know if you are coming so he can arrange to have enough food
for you. Please bring your own drink and see if you can find a prize for the
raffle. Phone John on 01200 427661.

SUN 5TH OCT

2PM

ANNUAL HONEY SHOW

Caroline Caughlin

Castle Cement, Clitheroe BB7 4QF. Take a look at page 17 for more details

SUN 16TH NOV.

2PM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At Masonic Hall, 91 Albert Road, COLNE BB8 0BS

We've changed the venue take a look at page 8 For more details

MEMBERSHIP CLASSES

REGISTERED MEMBER. Subscription will be £17.00

PARTNER MEMBER. This is for partners of registered members living in the same household wishing to keep bees and includes full insurance cover. However they will not receive their own copy of BBKA News or Bee Talk . Subscription will be £10.00

COUNTRY MEMBER. This is for people who do not keep bees, but wish to receive BBKA News and Bee Talk. Attend branch meetings etc. This class of member does not include any insurance cover. Subscription will be £9.00

ASSOCIATE MEMBER. A member of our branch only, without any benefits from the BBKA or County. Will receive Bee Talk. Subscription will be £6.00

FOR INSURANCE PURPOSES

Under the new constitution, prompt payment is essential. Basically, payment will be required by the 31 December each year as **insurance** is now based on the current years membership. New and lapsed members insurance cover, will not start until six weeks after paying their subscription.

To help members, a reminder will be sent with December's Bee Talk. That for **insurance** purposes their subs will need paying right away. Bee Talk itself is also tied in with subscriptions. So if you don't get Bee Talk you probably have not paid your subs. and you will not have third party insurance

Philip Ainsworth Hon. Treas. Phone 07713161480



COMMITTEE MEMBERS CONTACT DETAILS

MEMBER	POST	PHONE	EMAIL ADDRESS
Brian Jackson	Chairman	01535 634503	bmjackson1@tiscali.co.uk
Bill Ainsworth	Vice Chair	01282 614015	bill@scotroad.co.uk
John Zamorski	Hon. Sec	01200 427661	member@johnzamorski.wanadoo.co.uk
Philip Ainsworth	Hon. Treas.	0771 3161480	philipainsworth@btconnect.com
Caroline Coughlin	Honey Show Sec	07702 824920	Caroline.coughlin@reebok.com
David Rayner	Librarian	01200 426898	davidrayner1@yahoo.co.uk
David Rayner	Education Officer	01200 426898	davidrayner1@yahoo.co.uk
Pauline Roberts	Programme Sec.	01282 438615	paulpaulineroberts@talktalk.net
Robert Bradshaw	Member	01254 261216	bob.bradshaw@sky.com
David Bush	Member	01200 428152	david.bush2@talktalk.net
Ron Dempster	Member	01282 699881	swicks580@btinternet.com
Bob Fulton	Member	01254 772780	home.brew@talktalk.net
Ken Gaiger	Member	01282 778887	
Joe Wrigley	Member	01200 447621	

DELEGATES TO THE CENTRAL COUNCIL

John Zamorski	Hon. Sec	01200 427661	member@johnzamorski.wanadoo.co.uk
Philip Ainsworth	Hon. Treas.	0771 3161480	email philipainsworth@btconnect.com

HOW QUEEN BEES ARE MADE

Most beekeepers realise that diet is the key to causing fertilised larvae to develop into queens or worker bees but new research by scientists at the Australian National University may explain why eating royal jelly causes honeybee larvae to become queens instead of workers – and in the process adds new weight to the role of environmental factors in the nature/nurture divide.

ROYAL JELLY

Scientists from the Research School of Biological Sciences at the university have discovered that a copious diet of royal jelly flicks a genetic switch in young bees that determines whether they'll become a queen, or live a life of drudgery. Their findings are published in the latest edition of the journal *Science*. "Royal jelly seems to chemically modify the bee's genome by a process called DNA methylation and disrupts the expression of genes that turn young bees into workers," explain the researchers.

DEVELOP AS QUEENS

When they 'silenced' a gene controlling DNA methylation without recourse to royal jelly, they discovered that the larvae began to develop as queens with the associated fertility, rather than as infertile workers. They believe this is the first time that DNA methylation has been functionally implicated in insects. The molecular process is common in vertebrates – including humans.

SAME GENETIC BLUEPRINT

Dr Richard Maleszka, of the university explains that if you have identical human twins, and one develops schizophrenia, then you need another mechanism to explain how this can occur when they have the same genetic blueprint.

He goes on to say that DNA methylation



links genomes to environmental factors like nutrition and modifies how genes express themselves. Discovering this in bees, which are a much simpler biological model than humans, means we have a better opportunity

of understanding more about how this process occurs. The researchers will continue to study how DNA methylation affects bees, as they suspect that the process could also be responsible for how the insects' brains develop, and may thus be connected to bee behaviour and even social organisation. The research suggests that environmental factors, such as how organisms are nurtured, can have a major influence on how they develop.

The current work grew out of the honeybee genome project, which mapped the entire genetic blueprint of bees.

This item was adapted from materials provided by The Australian National University.



A drawing by Silke Dale-Brosig (Emily Dale's Grand daughter)

A CHEROKEE LEGEND

THE CREATOR SENT THE BEES

Back in ancient times when the people were more pure and could converse with the animals and the Creator would visit with them, the people asked the Creator for something that was 'sweet' to the taste. So the Creator sent the Bee, but the Bee had no stinger.

Down came the Bee and it found a suitable tree in which they could build their hive, live in, produce honey, multiply and feed its young.

Soon the people came to the Bee and asked for some of the sweet syrup and the Bee gave each person a container full. The people loved the syrup and greedily ate it, then went back to the Bee for more.

WE WANT MORE

But the Bee replied, 'I have no more to give you for a while. You will have to wait.' The people were not happy, as they craved the sweet syrup. So they called upon the Creator, saying, 'the Bee does not give us enough of the golden syrup. We want more!!!'

FLOWER PEOPLE

The Creator listened and sent down the Flower People. The Flower People began to spread all types of flowers across the land giving the Bees greater access and variety of flowers to pollinate and make more honey. The Flower People spread all kinds of beautiful wild flowers around to attract the Bees; bright blue, red, orange, purple and yellow.

More Bees were created to help pollinate the flowers. The hive grew to be very large. The people seeing how big the hive was went to get more of the sweet syrup. So the Bees gave all the syrup to the people but left enough to feed their young.

The people devoured the syrup and wanted more. The Bee responded, 'We don't have anymore, you will have to wait.'

WAIT UNTIL SPRING

The people were angry and asked the Flower People to make more flowers so they could have more of the golden syrup to eat. The Flower People responded, 'We made all the flowers we could and they are all pollinated. You will have to wait until Spring.' 'No, said the people, 'We want more now!!'

So they went back to the bee's hive and tore it apart killing almost all of the Bees and taking the syrup.

The remaining Bees were angry. They asked the Creator what to do. The Creator was also annoyed at the behaviour of the people, so he told the Flower People to create some 'briar bushes' and for the Bees to eat the briars.

THE PEOPLE CAME BACK

The Bees did as the Creator said, they ate the briars and these were transformed into stingers. The Flower People created an entire briar patch around the Bee's tree.

The next day, the people came back and started toward the Bee's hive for more syrup; but the briars around the tree scratched and tore at their bodies. Some of the people made it through the briars to the hive.

THE BEES STUNG THE PEOPLE

Covered in welts, they yelled at the Bees, 'Give us some more syrup now, or we will do the same as we did yesterday, kill your young and destroy your home!' The Bees became angry and a loud hum came from the hive in the tree, and out they swarmed. The Bees stung the people all over until they were covered in welts and sent them running.

TREATED WITH RESPECT

After that day, the people treated the Bees, flowers, and plants with great respect and always promised to replace whatever they asked for and never be greedy or take more than they needed.



MEMBERS ONLY !



Bits and Pieces from the Members

I've typed this up from an article from the Jehovah's witness magazine "AWAKE".

The largest of the world's mangrove forests is in the Sunderbans, part of the vast Ganges Delta, which straddles India and Bangladesh. Among the people living there are the Mowalis, who depend upon mangroves for their livelihood. Theirs is one of the highest-risk professions in the country. Mowalis are honey hunters. In April and May each year, they venture into the shifting landscape of the mangroves to search for the honeycombs of the giant honey bee. The bees are large, growing to about four centimetres in length. And they are aggressive, having been known to kill elephants! So honey hunters carry torches made of mangrove vegetation, the smoke from which disperses the bees. Wise honey hunters leave part of the hive behind so that the bees can rebuild it, thereby sustaining the honey yield from year to year. The bees are not the only threat to the honey hunters. Others include crocodiles and poisonous snakes, which inhabit the mangroves. Also thieves may wait to ambush honey hunters as they leave the forest with their honey and wax. While these are a threat, the greatest peril is the Royal Bengal tiger. Every year, these animals kill between 15 and 20 honey hunters.

NEVER AGAIN WILL I COMPLAIN ABOUT THAT POOR LITTLE Varroa MITE!!!

Cath Cook.

Sorry this page is a bit 'Thin' but we have had very little in the way of comment, complaint or queries from you, the members.

Drop us a line or email right now to tell us how your Summer has been or how your stocks are looking. We will do our best to include it in the December issue of Beetalk.

(Arthur)

Studying for a 'BeeSc'
THE first degree in beekeeping is being offered by Sussex University. Students will learn the skills of caring for the insects and harvesting honey, which date back 3,000 years, for a BSc.

The UK's first Professor of Apiculture, Francis Ratnieks, will head a new £250,000 beekeeping research lab at the university near Brighton.

He believes the degree, which will take in other 'social' insects including ants and wasps, will give students an insight into the complexities of human society.



GOOD WINTERING STARVATION.

There is a misconception that honey can be taken from a hive without causing problems. False! Bees need, subject to the area they're kept in, approximately 45-60 kilograms of stores. Simple math's at three kilograms per frame tells you how much stores your bees will need. The results of keeping your bees short of winter stores will be obvious in a slow spring build up.

FAILING QUEENS.

It is obvious when pointed out that a failing or old queen won't make it through a hard winter, but time after time I find failed queens when analysing other's failures. A queen in her second full season has a 50-50 chance of failing over the winter. So my advice, autumn re-queen. A young, strong queen entering the winter has a far better chance of heading a strong hive in the early Spring, leading to bigger crops. An old queen in the winter will certainly not improve before the spring.

WET HIVES.

It is remarkable how many fail to ventilate the hive in the wettest time of the year. Warm air condenses on cold surfaces and forms ice; this then melts in the spring and often drips back into the cluster.

DISEASE AND DWINDLING

Without a proper autumn examination for disease a hive with any of the hive diseases, Varroa, Tracheal mites, Foul brood, Chalk brood, the list seems endless, is bound to fail. A hive seems to need a 'critical mass' to be successful. So if the hive is small because of queen problems a better solution might be to unite after culling the worst queen. One strong hive is better than two weak ones and can always be split come the next year, where two weak ones can fail, leading to no bees.

STOCK SELECTION

Use stocks bred for use in an area climatically similar to where they are to be hived. There is no point in expecting semi-tropical bees to survive in near Arctic conditions.

INSULATION

Add insulation over the inner cover to stop drafts upwards through the centre vent holes.

Courtesy of the Beekeeping Editors system and the newsletter of the Nottinghamshire bee keepers

DISEASES OF ADULT BEES

Adult honey bees seldom get sick. The queen excepted, they don't live long enough to incubate many diseases except in the winter cluster. Here is what to look for:

NOSEMA

In the spring, bees that hang around the hive front, wings at an odd angle, sometimes twitching, may have a mite or paralysis. Most commonly, it's Nosema, an infection of the bee digestive tract by the unicellular protozoan *Nosema apis*. Nosema is often symptomatic, and really needs confirmation by microscopic examination of the gut contents. Prevention is the best medicine.

SELDOM DIE

Colonies seldom die from Nosema, but can be severely weakened. *Nosema apis* infection prevents development of the glands that secrete royal jelly in young workers, so diseased bees can't properly feed brood. Infected queens slow down and often stop egg production, and the colony must take time to supersede, losing valuable brood-rearing weeks.

THE BEST TIME TO FEED

The organism is always present but it becomes a problem in the spring when bees are cooped up and unable to fly, or after periods of stress, such as being shipped. An effective control is available, the specific anti-parasitic drug fumagillin, trade named Fumidil B. It is effective only against the active parasite in the gut of the bee, not against spores, and it must be fed in sugar syrup. The best time to feed is in the fall, when activity of the parasite is at its lowest and when there is least danger of contaminating the honey crop. Package bees are normally treated in the spring to counter travel stress.

Fumidil B is expensive, at £12.41 for enough to treat 3 colonies. It comes as a powder and will store indefinitely in a refrigerator.

Your Association can sell you Fumidil B at the very much reduced rate of £7.50 per three doses. Blackburn B K A only. see Bill Ainsworth.

SEASONAL NOTES

HONEY - PREPARATION AND BOTTLING

Most people can make some sort of a job of extracting their honey crop, but that is only half the job. If you have surplus honey that you wish to sell or even give away, presentation is very important.

WARM IT

It soon becomes evident that cold honey will not pass through a fine straining cloth, so some means of warming it up is necessary.

Because honey is a bad conductor of heat it is important to warm it slowly over a long period. For this you will need a honey heater of some kind. Effectively these consist of an insulated box with a low heat source, and can be most easily constructed using a discarded fridge or freezer fitted with one or two conventional light bulbs under the bottom shelf. In the case of a chest freezer, which is ideal, a slatted floor can be made to go over the heat source.

LIGHT BULBS

The temperature required to sufficiently warm the honey enough to reduce its viscosity so that it will pass through a straining cloth is only 35 degrees C. You simply achieve this by experimenting with different wattages of light bulbs until you get it right. The length of time it takes the honey to warm up will depend on how cold it is to start with, but as a rough guide 12 - 24 hours should be sufficient.



CLOSE THE TAP!

If you have a bottling tank with a strainer, it is best to discard the strainer and tie the honey straining cloth to the top of the tank so that it droops down inside 20 or 30 cm. . Make sure the tap is closed and pour the warm honey slowly onto the cloth. This process will introduce some air bubbles into the honey so it is advisable to leave it for several hours before filling the jars.

GRANULATION

Depending on the composition of the honey, granulation will occur sooner or later. If you want the honey to stay clear, it may be carefully re-heated in the jars (with the lids on) for about 8 hours at 50° C. Because of the type of natural granulation that occurs; it may be coarse or rock hard, set honey is best achieved by a process known as seeding.

BUY A JAR OF HONEY

The easiest way to achieve this is to buy a jar of fine grain set honey. Warm it up so that it becomes runny but not melted and stir it into twice the volume of your warm clear honey. Every couple of days you can repeat the process until enough has been produced for immediate needs. Do not use it all but always keep some back to seed the next batch. If you can keep a separate bottling tank for the set honey, then you simply leave some in after each operation.

Jim Crundwell.

BEE JOKES

Q: Why did the queen bee kick out all of the male bees?

A: Because they kept droning on and on!

Q: Where do bees keep their money?

A: In a honey box!

Q: What TV station do bees watch?

A: Bee bee c one!

Q: What did the bee say to the naughty bee?

A: Bee-hive yourself!

Q: Why do bees have sticky hair?

A: Beacuse of the honey combs!

Q: What is black and yellow and buzzes along at 30,000 feet?

A: A bee is an aeroplane!

(Well, some of you must have kids !!)

BEES, DRONES & VARROA

Things don't change very fast do they. It was varroa then and it is varroa now. Get rid of them. You have thymol (Apigaurd or cheaper thymol and olive oil). Oxalic acid in winter. John Zamorskie tells us that Bavarol and Apistan still work, as not all varroa are immune to the stuff. Icing sugar has its place to. There are dozens of cures out there, of which I know nothing, but I should reckon that they will all have some effect. So don't just stand there DO SOMETHING.

WRITTEN IN 2005.

Something that has never happened to me before, two colonies died out some time about Christmas last year 2004. Most unusual so early in the season! They were not short of food and I found a small marked Queen in both colonies.

CAUSE OF DEATH

The cause of death was undoubtedly shortage of bees. Both colonies had but a couple of hands-full of bees. Below the 'critical mass' according to our atomic energy expert Ken Gaiger. So the Queen was not laying sufficient eggs to produce the necessary Winter bees, or if she was why were they not reared to become the Winter bees that are so necessary? I know it was a very poor back-end last year, but I think I fed them well enough, they left food behind when they died, difficult then to understand why there was a distinct lack

of bees to carry them through the Winter. I wrote a bit of an article in Bee Talk (June 2004 page 7) about small Queens and as yet, I'm not satisfied with the quality of the Queens that I rear and I have every intention of doing something about it.

LOSS OF WORKERS

Just recently in the last two weeks or so I've been reading (and I don't know where) that there is a feeling abroad that varroa or the virus that they spread around may be responsible for more bother and destruction than has been attributed to them so far.

There seems to be evidence about, that varroa or virus is interfering with the reproduction viability of Queens or may be the drones. So far it seems to be people reporting a distinct loss of workers with no obvious reason for it. I'm wondering if this is what is happening to my stocks?

BETTER QUEENS

This season I do intend to raise better Queens and get the varroa infestation down to a much lower figure. As I write this, it comes to mind that both the stocks referred to were more heavily infested last year than any of the other (I have just checked the record cards and it is so!)

Bill Ainsworth

PERHAPS NOT JUST AS BIG AS THIS . . .



. . . but our annual honey show is even more important for our association!

Do make the effort to enter something.

An entry form is included and do have a word with Carloline on 07702 824920 for more information and advice.

We can't all be winners but we can help to make it the best ever show. Entries need to be there between 12.30 and 1.30pm. The actual meeting starts at 2pm prompt.

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AN EMAIL FROM GOD

From: thealmighty@heaven.org
Subject: Progress report
Date: 21 December 2012 00:01
To: esmecobbins@fibber.net

Hi

'Hi' seems a strange way to address the human race. When I contacted Moses it was "And the Lord spake unto Moses". In those days the message was written with a stylus on a clay tablet - now it's the internet. In the days of Moses, just as now, the equivalent of today's media got hold of the story and instead of the message being a clay tablet it became a much more dramatic tablet carved in stone; instead of a simple set of guidelines it became the 'Ten Commandments'.

It's strange how that happens. Moses, like you, was a name picked at random from my address book but suddenly he becomes a significant, religious figure with stories of babies in baskets, parting of waters, burning bushes and meeting me on a mountainside but that's the media for you. Perhaps, Esme, you'll find yourself as the founder of a new religion. It's happened so many times, I think if it does happen, yours would be the seven thousand eight hundred and ninth new religion. Fortunately, being who I am, I have never had to be a follower of any one of them.



However, back to business. This is in the way of a progress report as to how your species, my most recent creation, is performing. Perhaps I shouldn't say it, but one or two things have been quite successful.

The Duck Billed Platypus was done on one of my jokey days but I've always been fond of donkeys and I like to think the honey bee was one of my successes - but you and your kind really have been the bee's knees, if you will forgive the pun.

You have probably wondered, like many others, as to the meaning of life and everything, well, you as one of my homo sapiens, are going to be let into the secret. Having been given the ability to reason, it has been fascinating to see the way in which you all used this facility. One of the strangest things is this belief which you have, that you are the centre of the Universe. As you can imagine it is one Hell of a job looking after the Universe but it has to follow Universal Law. Basically that means everything must conform to what you humans think of as the Laws of Nature - Birth, Life, Death and Decay. You know the sort of thing, a seed falls to the ground, a tree grows, it dies, decays and is returned to the Earth. This happens to all creatures and forms of life.

Esme, I am sure you, with your reasoning powers will realise that if it applies to everything, it must apply to Planets, Solar systems and even to the Universe itself. Take your Earth for instance, you perhaps see it as full of life with, trees, plants, insects, animals and fish. I have to tell you that in planetary terms it is dead. Life for a planet is when it is full of fire - changing and growing - molten rocks and volcanoes. Not as it is now, cold and still, with cracks and wrinkles appearing on the surface and all manner of things growing all over it.

Try to liken it to a tree. It moves and changes with the seasons. It grows leaves and seeds and is full of life. Then it falls to the ground, it becomes dry and lifeless. Slowly, the weather begins to break it down until it return from where it came - the earth. One of my jobs is to try to speed up the process, that's why there are fungi, beetles, termites, slugs and worms. All there for the single purpose of breaking it down so much more quickly. Are you beginning to get the picture Esme? The Earth has been like the tree - alive but now it's time to break it down and return the bits to the solar system. I tried various things to eat the vegetation, bore holes in the ground, even drill into rocks but they weren't really changing things - merely re-cycling.

That, my dear Esme, is where you come in and I am so proud of you and your species. You perform beautifully. I plant a little seed in your mind like "Go forth and multiply" and my word do you multiply! Oh! you have your little wars which remove a few million at a time but even the wars work towards the final target by inventing new technologies. Just look at that marvellous nuclear power. There couldn't be better way of burning up the fossilised fuels. I gave humans a brain and with very little prompting, you invent things and your imaginations run riot. You see Esme, I'm afraid your conceit blinds you to your real purpose which is to recycle the planet. Plants, animals, insects and birds simply couldn't do it but you can, and are doing just that. It took you some time to get going but, my word, this last few hundred years you really have made a difference.

So, hurtful though it may be to your human pride and the way you see yourself in the Universe, the truth is, Esme, you are simply a super efficient termite.

Your affectionately

Jehova

(Makes a change from the soapbox!)

Scrapings

FURNITURE PASTE POLISH

Mix equal parts beeswax and turpentine. This is also good for waterproofing booths, putting screws into wood, zippers, furniture and wood finishing.

ANY SIZE GOES

With effect from April 2009 the prescribed quantities for pre-packaged foods is to be deregulated so honey may be packed in any type and size of jar. Trading Standards Officers have been advised not to prosecute anyone caught applying the new rules.

CANDY RECIPE

Put the water from a 'full to the brim' 1lb honey jar into an 8" saucepan. Heat the saucepan and slowly add 2kg of white granulated sugar stirring constantly. When the mixture has come to the boil - turn off the heat and leave for a few minutes. A crust will start to form on the top of the mixture. Start stirring until the mixture begins to thicken and turn a milky colour. Pour out into three 500gr. Margarine Tubs. Keep the candy in a cool dry place with a lid on. I spoil my bees and add some honey to the mix. For every tablespoon of honey added, half a table spoon less water is used. Old fermenting honey won't hurt since the heat drives off any alcohol and kills any yeast.

HONEY BEE TRIVIA

By day 12/14 the drones are sexually mature. If the temperature is above 68° F (20° C) they meet in drone congregation areas. They don't hang out and drink beer but they're waiting for the queens to come by. They are attracted to the queens by the pheromones the ladies are putting out

BEE STINGS

A tip I was given by a chemist who was also a beekeeper.

"Always carry some Dissolvable Aspirin" (now marketed under Aspro Clear). If you ever have a sting (wasp or bee) place a tablet on your tongue and when it froths put the froth on the sting site. If you do this within 15 minutes of being stung, you should avoid any swelling and inflammation. I've used it on numerous occasions and it works for me.

Very recently I received some other advice from a doctor friend to always carry a 1p or 2p coin. If you get stung place the coin on the sting site, secure it in place with tape and again there will be no swelling. I've used this method too and it does work!

Apparently the copper in the coin counteracts the venom. Of course you scrape the sting and venom sack away before applying either method. Unfortunately the sting site is still itchy for a couple of days, but you can't have everything

Bob Logan

Courtesy of the Beekeeping Editors system and the newsletter of the Nottinghamshire bee keepers

17TH CENTURY HAIR POTION

From Natura Exenterata or Nature Unbowelled published 1655

Take a good number of bees that be labouring to make honey, dry them and make them to powder. Then put in common oyle and mingle them together and with the ointment, anoint the place you will have hair and certainly it will come.



This picture of beehives in the mountains of Cyprus is a first class illustration of what you SHOULD NOT do. The bees will drift with the wind to one end of this collection of hives and coming in fully laden will be accepted in any hive. Looking at the photograph, I will bet that the prevailing wind is from right to left ! The hives are much too close together and in a straight line.



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